



Pop-Up Gear in the 2026 Commercial Dungeness Crab Fishery

Alternative Gear and Location Marking Information

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has established a process to allow for the use of innovative gear that reduces the risk of marine life entanglement in the commercial Dungeness crab fishery.

What is Pop-Up Gear?

Pop-up fishing gear uses buoys and lines attached to cages, just like traditional crab traps, however the buoys and lines of pop-up gear remain coiled on the seafloor. When a commercial fisherman is ready to retrieve their gear, a remote signal triggers the release of the buoy which carries the line to the surface and allows commercial crabbers to locate the trap.

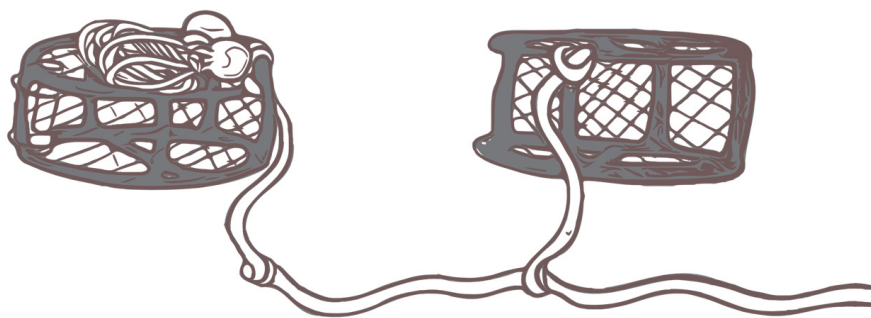


Sub Sea Sonics Pop-Up unit - Bart Chadwick

Individuals who are interested in using pop-up gear can find more information in the [Alternative Gear Section of the Whale Safe Fisheries webpage](#) or send a [message to the Whale Safe Fisheries team](#). Pop-up gear can only be used in closed fishing zones after April 3rd, 2026.

There are **special conditions** that apply when using pop-up gear and both the **General and Gear Specific Conditions** must be adhered to by all vessels using pop-up gear. Examples of special conditions include data reporting requirements, marine protected area transiting requirements, and restrictions on the number of traps that can be deployed. For more information on the special conditions, please visit the [Whale Safe Fisheries Webpage](#).

A typical pop-up gear configuration involves a string (trawl) of up to 25 traps connected by a groundline with pop-up units on one or both ends.

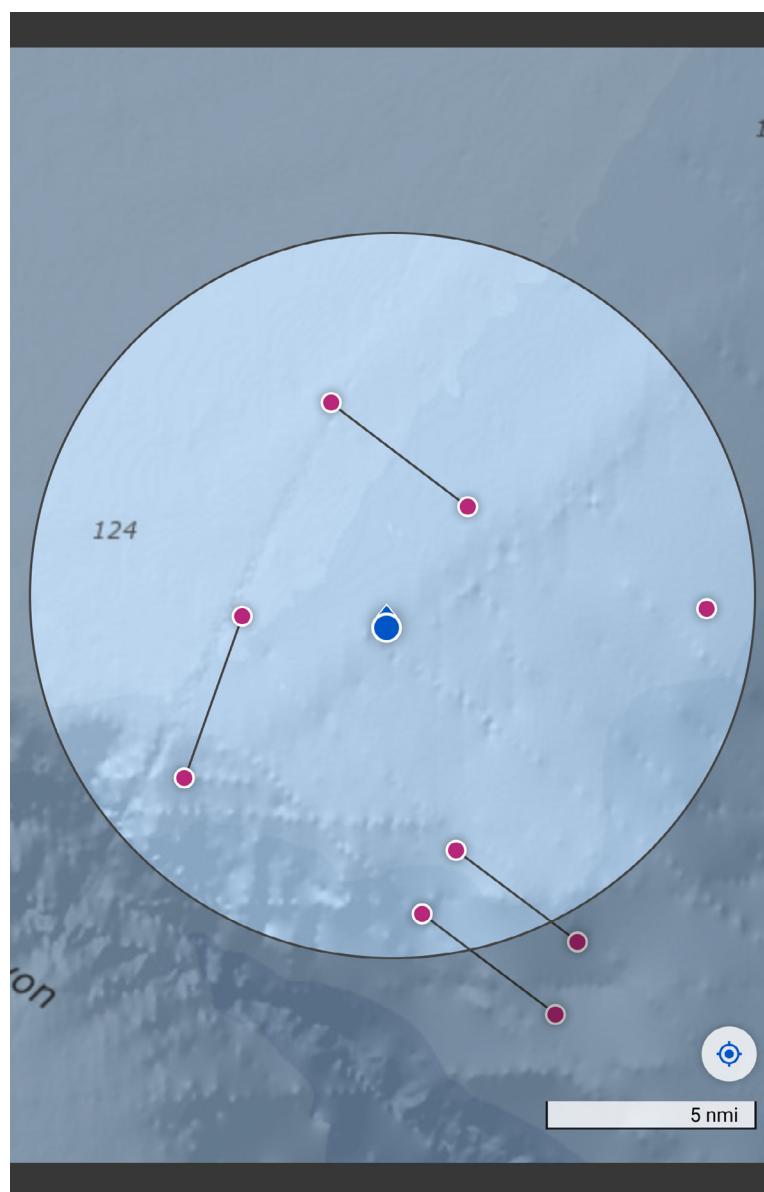


CDFW - Ellie Brauer

Avoiding Gear Conflict

To avoid gear conflict, participants in other fisheries (particularly trawl fisheries) and individuals deploying gear in the Experimental Fishing Permit program can view the locations of deployed pop-up gear from the alternative gear program virtually. Individuals need to be in close proximity to the deployed pop-up gear to view its location.

To view the locations of virtually marked gear, download the EarthRanger ER Buoy app from the [Apple](#) or [Google Play](#) store. Gear is visible to nearby users within a 5-nautical-mile radius but is displayed anonymously.



EarthRanger ER Buoy app