



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
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**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
DECLARATION OF CRAB TRAP PROHIBITION IN THE RECREATIONAL DUNGENESS CRAB
FISHERY DUE TO RISK OF MARINE LIFE ENTANGLEMENT**

Pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 8276.1(b) and California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 132.8 ("Section 132.8") and Section 29.80(c)(7) ("Section 29.80(c)"), I find and declare that:

I

On May 15, 2026, I evaluated entanglement risk for the commercial and recreational Dungeness crab fisheries pursuant to Sections 132.8 and 29.80(c). I provided the California Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group (Working Group) and the Whale Safe Fisheries email listserv with notice of the risk assessment and all non-confidential data under consideration on May 12, 2026. Prior to this risk assessment and management response, Department staff reviewed all relevant information and consulted with the Working Group, and I consulted with the president of the Fish and Game Commission.

II

A CDFW aerial survey conducted on May 4, 2026, observed 14 humpback whales in Fishing Zone 3. Pursuant to 132.8(c)(2)(B)(2), I must implement a Fishing Zone delay or other protective management action in the commercial Dungeness crab fishery.

III

Based on data described in Part II and pursuant to Section 29.80(c), I must implement a protective management action in the recreational Dungeness crab fishery. Section 29.80(c) requires that any temporary prohibition on the use of crab traps extend the general crab trap prohibition outlined in Section 29.80(c)(4).

IV

Upon evaluation of the management considerations pursuant to Section 132.8(d), I have determined that the management action listed below protects humpback

whales based on the best available science. Additional information on the relevant management considerations is provided in the attachment to this declaration.

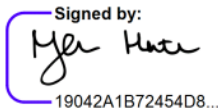
V

THEREFORE, under the authority granted by Fish and Game Code Section 8276.1(b) and Sections 132.8 and 29.80(c) of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, I am implementing the following management action:

1. Effective May 22, 2026, at 6:00pm, the deployment and use of crab traps in any recreational crab fishery is prohibited in Fishing Zone 3.

This management action is in effect until modified and all prior management actions remain in effect for the remainder of the statutory season or until modified by a Director's Declaration. The next risk assessment is expected to occur on or before June 1, 2026.

Updates and material regarding future entanglement risk evaluations in the commercial and recreational Dungeness crab fisheries will be made available on the [Department's Whale Safe Fisheries web page](#).

Signed by:

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5/15/2026

Meghan Hertel, Director

Date/Time

ATTACHMENT TO DIRECTOR MAY 15, 2026 DECLARATION OF CRAB TRAP PROHIBITION
IN THE RECREATIONAL DUNGENESS CRAB FISHERY DUE TO RISK OF MARINE LIFE
ENTANGLEMENT

Information referenced in this Attachment is further described in the Final Assessment of Marine Life Entanglement Risk and Management Recommendation dated May 15, 2026, and the Available Data and Preliminary Assessment document dated May 12, 2026, and located at the Department's [Whale Safe Fisheries website](#), which to the Department's knowledge represents the best available science informing this risk assessment.

These recommendations are supported by current Marine Life Concentrations, historical migration patterns and existing Management Actions already in place for Fishing Zones 1-2.