

## Staff Summary for June 17-18, 2026

**11C. Department Marine Region****Today's Item****Information** **Action** 

Receive updates on items of note since the previous Commission meeting.

- I. *Recreational ocean salmon and Pacific halibut*: Update on annual regulations and automatic conformance to federal regulations.
- II. *Recreational Dungeness Crab*: Public discussion of action taken by the Department director in the recreational Dungeness crab fishery to prohibit the use of crab traps in Fishing Zone 3 (Sonoma/Mendocino county line, 38°46.125' N Latitude, to Pigeon Point, 37°11' N Latitude) and continue the crab trap prohibition in Zones 4-5 (Pigeon Point to Point Conception, 34°27' N Latitude) effective at 6:00 p.m. on May 22, 2026.

**Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)****Background**I. ***Recreational ocean salmon and Pacific halibut***

The Department's Marine Region is expected to provide verbal updates, including automatic conformance of annual recreational ocean salmon and Pacific halibut regulations to federal regulations as provided by Section 1.95. A Department Marine Region news release provides information related to the recreational ocean salmon season, such as season dates, locations, and harvest guidelines based on Pacific Fishery Management Council recommendations from its April 7-12, 2026 meeting in Portland, Oregon (Exhibit 1).

II. ***Recreational Dungeness crab***

This item is for public discussion of actions taken by the director of the Department in the recreational Dungeness crab fishery to protect migrating whales. Subsection 29.80(c), specifies rules for the use of crab traps and authorizes the director of the Department, after consulting with the Commission president or designee, to prohibit the deployment and use of recreational crab traps in order to protect humpback whales, blue whales and/or Pacific leatherback sea turtles when concentrations of these species meet specific numerical triggers. When the director implements a management action pursuant to subsection 29.80(c), she must notify the Commission and request that the Commission schedule a public discussion of the management action at its next regularly scheduled meeting (today).

On May 22, the Department director took action to implement a recreational crab trap restriction to protect migrating humpback whales in Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program (RAMP) Fishing Zone 3 from the Sonoma/Mendocino county line to Pigeon Point, effective at 6:00 p.m. that day. The crab trap restriction on RAMP fishing zones 4 and 5, from Pigeon Point to Point Conception, in effect since March 27 at 6:00 p.m., remains in place. Use of alternative gear (including hoop nets and crab snares) is still allowed in zones 3-5. The management actions were announced in a Department Marine Region news release (Exhibit 2), which also included approved alternative gear methods

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and a reminder to implement best practices as described in the Department's [Best Practices to Minimize Marine Life Entanglements guide](#).

**Significant Public Comments (N/A)**

**Recommendation (N/A)**

**Exhibits**

1. Department news release: "[Ocean Salmon Fishing Comeback Continues](#)," dated April 12, 2026
2. Department news release: "[Recreational Crab Traps Restricted in Central Management Area to Protect Whales from Entanglement while Commercial Dungeness Crab Fishing Opportunities Continue](#)," dated May 15, 2026

**Motion (N/A)**



# CDFW NEWS

April 12, 2026

## Ocean Salmon Fishing Comeback Continues



***Commercial Fishing Returns After 3-Year Closure; Recreational Anglers to See More Open Days in 2026***

Significant improvements in key California salmon populations -- specifically Sacramento River fall-run Chinook and Klamath River fall-run Chinook -- will allow for more ocean salmon fishing opportunities this year. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is pleased to announce that commercial ocean salmon fishing is back after being closed three straight years and that recreational ocean salmon anglers will have more opportunities in 2026.

“Seeing our salmon populations recover is incredibly heartening and demonstrates what’s possible when we all work together -- state and federal partners, tribes, sport anglers and commercial fishing interests, NGOs and others – to do what’s best for salmon,” said CDFW Director Meghan Hertel. “Salmon are part of the cultural fabric of California, and I’m delighted more Californians will have the opportunity to enjoy these magnificent fish whether that’s in the water, on the end of their fishing lines or on their dinner plates.”

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) finalized its recommendations for California’s recreational and commercial ocean salmon seasons and harvest limits at its April 7-12 meeting in Portland, Ore. The PFMC will forward its recommendations to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), which will implement them into federal regulations. A summary of the recreational season dates, locations and harvest guidelines are available at [CDFW’s Ocean Salmon Fishery Information web page](#).

“The health of our salmon populations fluctuates with environmental conditions, and we’ve seen just how vulnerable these fish are to recent droughts, changing river conditions and a warming climate,” said California Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot. “This year’s return of ocean salmon fishing is an encouraging sign as we advance California’s long-term, science-based Salmon Strategy. Together with a range of partners, we’re restoring habitat, removing barriers, improving flow and reconnecting rivers to give salmon a better chance to survive in all conditions. This work is about balance - - making improvements and modernizing water management to help nature thrive and our communities prosper.”

California’s [Salmon Strategy for a Hotter, Drier Future\(external link\)](#), put into action beginning in 2024, is laying the groundwork for California to restore and rebuild salmon populations. State agencies, tribes and other partners are making significant progress in achieving goals that include restoring and expanding habitat for salmon spawning and rearing, removing barriers and updating infrastructure for salmon migration. California has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in recent years to support salmon throughout their various life stages.

More open fishing days come as welcome news following complete closure of recreational ocean salmon fisheries in 2023 and 2024, and only six open days in 2025.

In 2026, CDFW will implement in-season management in both commercial and recreational fisheries to ensure catch of rebounding salmon stocks does not exceed seasonal harvest guidelines. This is the first year of vessel-based trip limits and seasonal harvest guidelines for California's commercial salmon fishery following the first use of an in-season management framework during California's limited recreational ocean season in 2025. In-season management allows fishery managers to close salmon seasons early should harvest guidelines be reached.

In-season monitoring to actively manage commercial and recreational ocean salmon fisheries to align with harvest guidelines is identified as a priority action item in the [California Salmon Strategy for a Hotter, Drier Future\(external link\)](#).

Sport anglers are advised to check for updated information when planning a salmon fishing trip. Season dates, harvest guidelines/catch limits, bag/possession, vessel limit information and gear restrictions can be found on [CDFW's Ocean Salmon Fishery Information web page](#) or by calling the CDFW Ocean Salmon Regulations Hotline at (707) 576-3429. Public notification of any in-season change to conform state regulations to federal regulations is made through the NMFS ocean salmon hotline at (800) 662-9825.

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# CDFW NEWS

May 15, 2026

**Recreational Crab Traps Restricted in Central Management Area to Protect Whales from Entanglement while Commercial Dungeness Crab Fishing Opportunities Continue**



California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Director Meghan Hertel has assessed entanglement risk under the Risk Assessment Mitigation Program (RAMP) and [announced a crab trap restriction in the recreational Dungeness crab fishery](#) in Fishing Zone 3 (Sonoma/Mendocino County Line, 38°46.125' N. Latitude to Pigeon Point, 37°11' N. Latitude). This change, which will go into effect at 6 p.m. on May 22, 2026, is intended to minimize entanglement risk as humpback whales return to forage off the coast of California.

A crab trap restriction was implemented in Fishing Zones 4 and 5 (Pigeon Point to Point Conception, 34°27' N Latitude) on March 27, 2026. CDFW reminds recreational crabbers that take of Dungeness crab by other methods (including hoop nets and crab snares) is allowed through the close of the season. All open Fishing Zones remain under a Fleet Advisory for the recreational Dungeness crab fishery. CDFW also reminds all fishery participants to implement best practices as described in the [Best Practices Guide](#).

The commercial fishery remains open in Fishing Zones 1 and 2 (California/Oregon border to the Sonoma/Mendocino County line) under existing trap reductions and depth constraints. Fishing Zones 3-5 (Sonoma/Mendocino County line to Point Conception) have transitioned to use of authorized Alternative Gear (aka Pop-Up gear) through the remainder of the season.

CDFW anticipates the next risk assessment will take place in early June 2026. For more information related to the risk assessment process, please visit [CDFW's Whale Safe Fisheries page](#). For more information on the Dungeness crab fishery, please visit [wildlife.ca.gov/crab](http://wildlife.ca.gov/crab).

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