

California Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group (Working Group) Management Recommendation to inform the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Working Group Discussion Date: June 16, 2026

The Working Group discussed Marine Region's preliminary recommendation for the commercial and recreational Dungeness crab fisheries

For the commercial fishery, the Department recommended a continuation of the 15% Gear Reduction and 30-fathom depth constraint in Fishing Zones 1 and 2. **The Working Group provided broad support and limited opposition for the Marine Region's recommendation in the commercial fishery.**

For the recreational fishery, the Department recommended a continuation of the Crab Trap Prohibition in Fishing Zones 3-5 and a Fleet Advisory in all Fishing Zones. **The Working Group provided moderate support and limited opposition for the Marine Region's recommendation in the recreational fishery.**

Working Group Recommendation: Season Closure and Authorization of Alternative Gear for the Commercial Fishery; Crab Trap Prohibition in the Recreational Fishery in Fishing Zones 1-2

The Working Group provided a recommendation for the commercial fishery to implement a Fishery Closure in Fishing Zones 1-2 on June 30, 2026, and to authorize Alternative Gear on July 1, 2026. The recommendation also included implementing a Crab Trap Prohibition for the recreational fishery in Fishing Zones 1-2 effective June 30, 2026.

The key rationale provided was that marine life concentration triggers were met in Fishing Zone 1, and a high number of entanglements were observed this season, including a recent entanglement on May 25, 2026, where purple and black line was observed on the humpback whale fluke. It was noted that despite being currently under review by NMFS and CDFW, the entanglement should be considered a confirmed California Dungeness crab entanglement given the presence of purple/black line. Additional rationale included a history of entanglements in late June 2025 in northern Fishing Zones, and concerns for issuance of an Incidental Take Permit (ITP).

This recommendation received limited support and moderate opposition.