



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
DECLARATION OF FISHERY SEASON DELAY
IN THE COMMERCIAL DUNGENESS CRAB FISHERY AND
A TEMPORARY CRAB TRAP PROHIBITION IN THE RECREATIONAL 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 October 30, 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 October 23, 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

On October 15, 2026, aerial surveys undertaken by CDFW staff observed 34 humpback whales in Fishing Zone 2. On October 16, aerial surveys undertaken by CDFW staff observed 38 humpback whales in Fishing Zone 3. Pursuant to 132.8(c)(2)(A)(4) I must implement a Fishing Zone delay or other protective management action in the commercial Dungeness crab fishery.

III

Standardized data from commercial whale-watching trips in Fishing Zone 4 show continued presence of humpback whales, with the most recent weekly running average of 15.3 humpback whales in Monterey Bay. Pursuant to Section 132.8(c)(2)(A)(4), I must implement a protective Management Action in the commercial Dungeness crab fishery.

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IV

Two confirmed entanglements of humpback whales in California commercial Dungeness crab fishing gear and five confirmed entanglements of humpback whales in Unknown Fishing Gear were observed in the 2026 calendar year. Pursuant to 132.8(c)(1)(B)(1), the season shall not open until January 1, 2027.

V

Based on numerical triggers described in Parts II, III and IV and pursuant to Section 29.80(c)(7)(A), 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).

VI

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.

VII

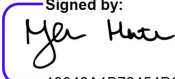
THEREFORE, under the authority granted by Fish and Game Code Section 8276.1(b) and Sections 132.8 and 29.80(c) of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, I am implementing the following management action:

1. The opening of the commercial Dungeness crab fishery in Fishing Zones 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 is delayed until at least January 1, 2027. Take and possession of commercially caught Dungeness crab is prohibited in the delayed Fishing Zones.
2. The deployment and use of crab traps in any recreational fishery is temporarily prohibited in Fishing Zones 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.
3. A Fleet Advisory is issued for the recreational Dungeness crab fishery for Fishing Zones 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

This management action is in effect until modified. The next risk assessment is expected to occur on or before December 17, 2026.

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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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Meghan Hertel, Director

10/30/2026

Date

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ATTACHMENT TO DIRECTOR OCTOBER 30, 2026 DECLARATION OF FISHERY SEASON
DELAY IN THE COMMERCIAL DUNGENESS CRAB FISHERY AND TEMPORARY CRAB TRAP
PROHIBITION IN THE RECREATIONAL 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 October 30, 2026 and the Available Data and Preliminary Assessment document dated October 23, 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.