



# Commercial Dungeness Crab Fishery Overview

Christy Juhasz;  
[Christy.Juhasz@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:Christy.Juhasz@wildlife.ca.gov)

WG Orientation Meeting

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Santa Rosa

# Commercial Regulations

- Regulated by State Legislature
- Management Scheme: 3 S's
  - Sex – males only
  - Size – minimum size 6.25"
  - Season – occurs after molting period
    - 2 management areas at Sonoma/Mendocino county line



# Location & Timing of the Fishery

- Sept to Oct – domoic testing starts; delays ???
- Late-Oct to mid-Dec - quality testing period; latest delay until Jan 15
- Oct to July - RAMP risk assessments





# Dungeness Crab Trap Limit Program

Trap Limit Program caps overall number of traps.

Tiers of Max Crab Trap Allocation	Number of Permits	Total Number of Traps
500	58	29,000
450	53	23,850
400	57	22,800
350	54	18,900
300	55	16,500
250	163	40,750
175	112	19,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>552</b>	<b><u>171,400</u></b>



CDFW



CDFW

C. Juhasz

# Fishery Demographics

Vessel Size	Percent of Fleet
Small <30ft	18%
Medium 30-50ft	70%
Large >50ft	12%

Home Port	Percent of Fleet
Northern Area	41%
Central Area	46%
Out of State	13%





# Dungeness Crab Task Force (DCTF)



- Established in 2008
- Dungeness crab fishery advisory group – recommendations forwarded to Legislature, Commission and CDFW
- Comprised of 17 commercial seats, and other industry members
- 2019 - Continues to work on fishery management issues with focus on domoic, quality, fair start, trap limit program, etc.
- Receive informational updates developed by Dungeness crab Working Group – also provides feedback



# Identifiable Entanglement Gear Dungeness crab is Top Fishery

## Comparison: 2015 - 2016 Sources of Entanglement

Fishery type	Number of 2016 Reports	Number of 2015 Reports
Dungeness crab commercial trap fishery	22 (1 orca, 2 blue, 19 humpbacks)	11 (9 humpbacks, 1 orca, 1 gray)
Gillnet fisheries	2 (humpbacks)	5 (3 humpbacks, 2 gray)
Spot prawn trap fishery	3 (humpbacks)	0
Sablefish trap fishery	2 (humpbacks)	0
Dungeness crab recreational trap fishery	0	1 (humpback)
Spiny lobster fishery	0	1 (humpback)

Source: NOAA's 2016 West Coast Entanglement Summary Report,  
Feb 2017

# Domoic Acid Delayed Crab Seasons

- “Derby” fishery
  - Highest effort at start of season
- Domoic acid delays shifts effort later
- 2015-16 Federally Declared Disaster season
  - Shifted high fishery effort in spring months
  - Coincided with presence of whales

		NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT
FISHERY	Dungeness Crab Fishing Scheduled Season	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow			
WHALES	Humpback Whale Migratory Presence	Light Purple				Light Purple	Light Purple	Light Purple	Light Purple	Light Purple	Light Purple	Light Purple	Light Purple
	Gray Whale Migratory Presence		Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Orange	Light Orange					
	Blue Whale Migratory Presence	Light Blue						Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue

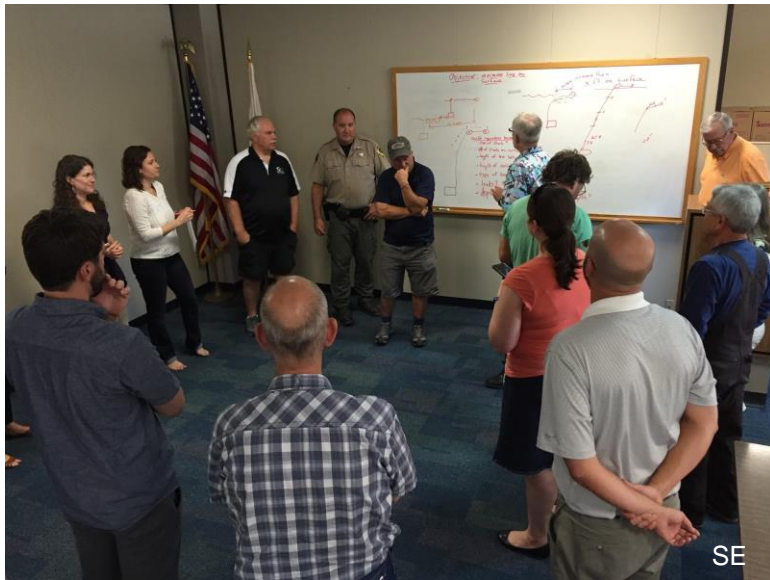
Source: K. Forney, NMFS/NOAA’s May 2017



# Dungeness Crab Working Group



- Multi-Stakeholder group established in 2015
- Projects/Experts provide better understanding of entanglements
- Piloting and provide input/feedback on RAMP
- Formalized in statute in 2019 – Section 8276.1 FGC
  - Director interim authority to address entanglement risk



# Best Practices Guide – Reducing Surface Gear

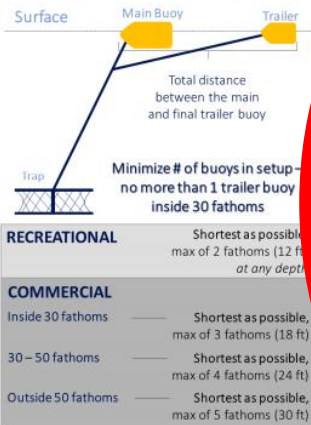
## California Dungeness Crab Fishing 2018-19 Best Practices Guide to Minimize Whale Entanglement Risk



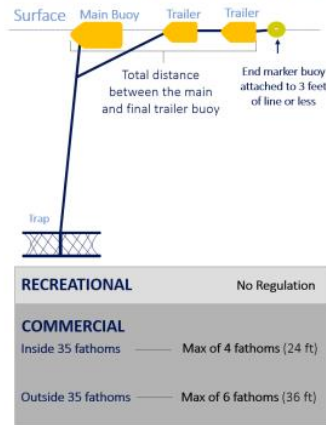
The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has confirmed a significant increase in reports of large whale entanglements over the last few years, specifically in California Dungeness crab fishing gear. This situation threatens the stability of the fishery and coastal fishing communities. Shifts in fishing practices toward increased surface line and the use of multiple surface buoys have been observed. Review of documented entanglements show a potential connection between slack surface line and the number of trailer buoys contributing to whale entanglements. In response, a Working Group developed this Best Practices Guide to highlight voluntary actions believed to be an important step towards reducing the risk of whale entanglement in commercial and recreational fishing gear. New regulatory measures limiting gear at the surface are currently in place for the 2018-2019 California commercial Dungeness crab season.



### Buoy Setup: Best Practices (Recommended)



### Buoy Setup: Regulations 2018-19 Dungeness Crab Season

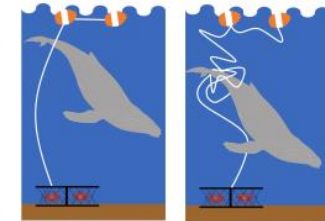


**New Regulations!**

Taking these important, proactive steps to reduce slack surface line will help to provide continued opportunities to harvest crab and maintain the fleet's access to the resource.

### BEST PRACTICES

- **No excess lines should be floating at the surface.** Floating line should only be between the main buoy and trailer.
- **When changing set location across depths, adjust the length of trap lines** by adjusting shots (i.e., measured length of line) to maintain taut vertical lines.
- **Avoid setting gear in the vicinity of whales** whenever possible.
- **Communicate the locations of high whale activity** with other fishermen.
- **Maintain gear to ensure lines and buoys are in good working condition** and will not break under natural conditions causing gear to become lost or irretrievable.
- **All gear should be clearly marked** consistent with applicable regulation.
- **Use the minimum amount of scope** required to compensate for tides, currents and weather.
- **Remove all fishing gear by 11:59 pm on the last day of the season** when gear is no longer allowed in the water.



Best practice for line profile: Keep line between pot and main buoy running taut and as vertical as possible

### Reporting Entangled Whales

Report entangled whales IMMEDIATELY to the NMFS whale entanglement response hotline at 1-877-SOS-WHALE (1-877-767-9425) or hail the U.S. Coast Guard on Channel 16. If possible, stand by for responders. Immediate reporting is critical to give the best chance for response teams to remove life-threatening gear from the whale and gather information to understand where, when, and how entanglements occur to reduce potential future entanglements.

By providing information about an entangled whale, you can play an integral role in the disentanglement operation. Photographs of the whale, the areas of entanglement, and the entangled gear is a great way to collect important information. Please maintain a distance of at least 100 yards for the safety of you and the whale.



### Respond Promptly if Contacted by NMFS or CDFW

If you are contacted by NMFS, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), or any other government agency regarding a whale entangled in your gear please respond and provide as much information as possible about your fishing gear and practices to help the agencies better reduce the risk of entanglements in the future.

**Do not attempt to disentangle the whale.** Removing the easily accessible lines at the surface will leave the life-threatening lines attached to the whale and may make it impossible for responders to detect and remove these lines. Disentangling a whale can be a very dangerous process and should be left to those trained specifically to do so.

This guide was developed by the California Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group. For more information, including a fact sheet, background materials, and other key resources like this Guide, visit [opc.ca.gov/whale-entanglement-working-group](http://opc.ca.gov/whale-entanglement-working-group).



For questions about this Best Practices Guide, email [info@cawhalegroup.com](mailto:info@cawhalegroup.com). If you have suggestions for reducing entanglements in fishing gear, contact Dan Lawson, NMFS Protected Resources Division, at [Dan.Lawson@noaa.gov](mailto:Dan.Lawson@noaa.gov) or 562-980-3209



# Working Group 2019 Tasks Ahead



- Continued Gear modification testing (Demo Day - Sept. 6)
- Department draft RAMP regulations – Nov. 1, 2020
- Drafting Conservation Plan for Incidental Take Permit under Federal ESA – May 15, 2020

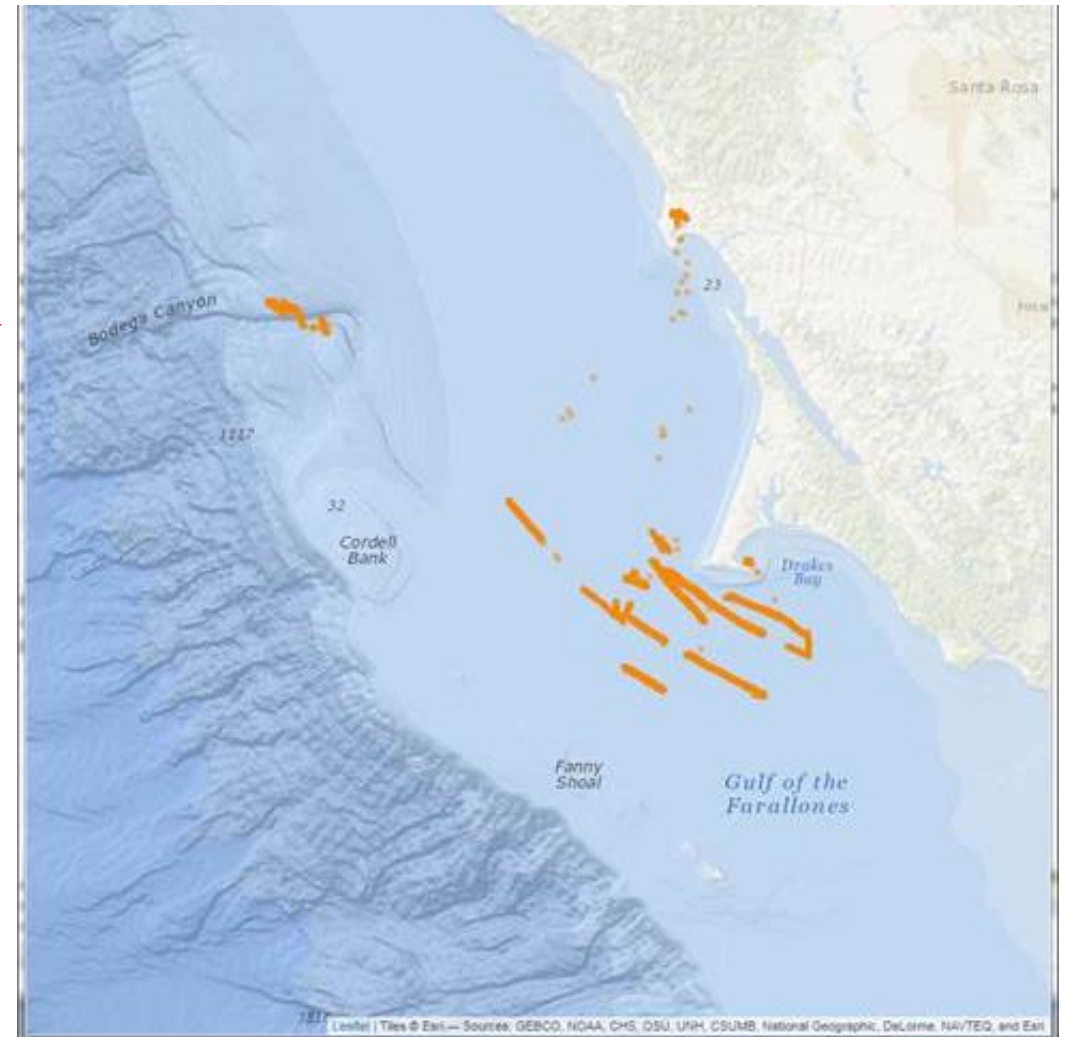


<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Whale-Safe-Fisheries>

<http://www.opc.ca.gov/whale-entanglement-working-group/>



# Fishing Dynamics – Electronic Monitoring



# Fishing Dynamics – Electronic Monitoring

