

Working Group Orientation Webinar

Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group

Tuesday, September 3, 2019

12:00 PM-5:00 PM

Rattigan Building | Santa Rosa, CA

*Hosted by Ocean Protection Council, CA Department of Fish and Wildlife,
and National Marine Fisheries Service*



Welcome and Introductions

New Working Group Participants

- Mike Cohen, Commercial Fishing, Port San Luis/Morro Bay
- Rick Harris, Processor Eureka
- Travis Hunter, Commercial Fishing, Eureka
- Lori Mazzuca, US Coast Guard, Monterey
- Noah Oppenheim, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations
- Daniel Quinley, CA Coastal Crab Association
- Susan Rotwein, Commercial Fishing, Trinidad
- David Toriumi, Commercial Fishing, Santa Cruz

Welcome

- **Name and affiliation**
- **Intention for the orientation meeting**

Welcome and Introductions

New Working Group Advisors

- Scott Benson, NOAA
- Fran Recht, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC)/Washington Whales Working Group

New Working Group Observers

- LCDR Lee Crusius, Observer for Lori Mazzuca, USCG
- Jon Gonzalez, Observer for Rick Harris, Producer
- Jenn Humberstone, Observer for Tom Dempsey, TNC

Orientation Goal

To provide recently appointed Working Group participants, observers, and advisors with an orientation on the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program (RAMM), and specifically the information that has informed the RAMM's development and ongoing operations.

Orientation Objectives

- Build a shared understanding of the RAMP's origins
- Gain background on the implementation phases of the RAMP
- Prepare for the full Working Group in-person meeting discussion, September 4-5, 2019

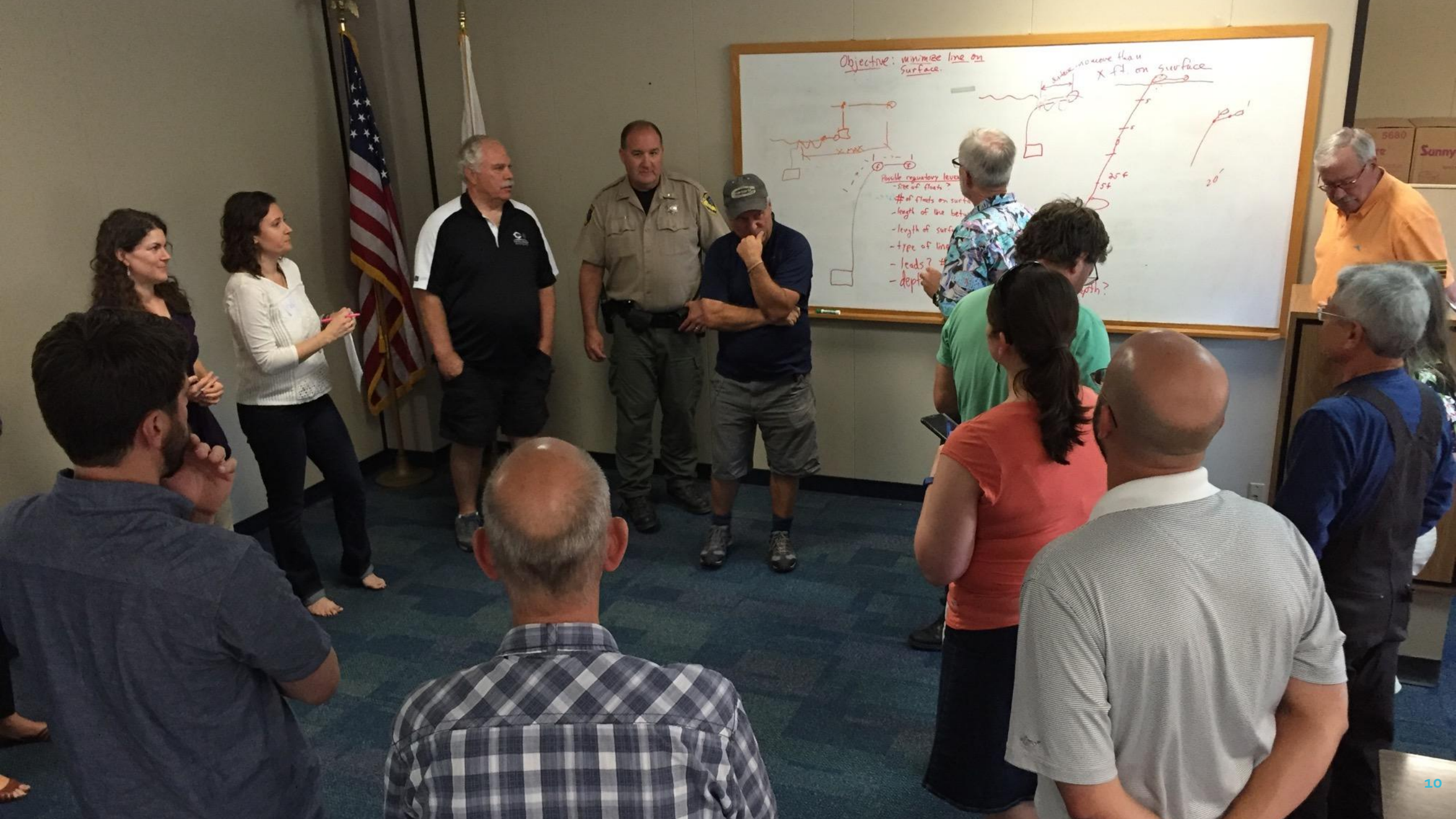
Meeting Agreements

- Listen to build mutual understanding
- Be patient when listening to others, do not interrupt
- Openly discuss issues with others, who hold diverse views, respect differences
- Explore ideas where common ground is the goal
- Speak openly and honestly, keep comments concise and focused
- Address any concerns about the discussion/meeting with the facilitator
- Minimize side bar conversations or take them outside
- Personal attacks will not be tolerated
- Silence cell phones

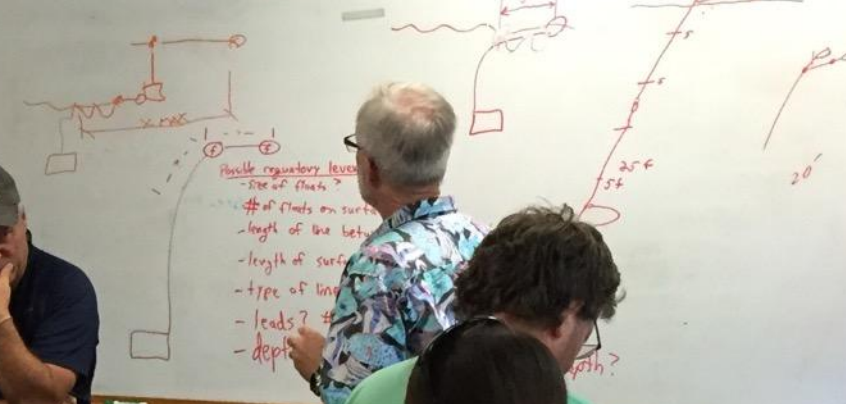
Facilitation Approach

- Informal discussion
- Hold questions until after the presentation is complete
 - Facilitators have paper if you need to write down an idea before it's lost

Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program (RAMP) 101



Objective: minimize line on surface.



- Possible regulatory levels
- size of floats
 - # of floats on surface
 - length of line between floats
 - length of surface
 - type of line
 - leads? #
 - depth?

Working Group Background

- Working Group established in Sept 2015 in response to increases in CA entanglements
 - Convened by state and federal agencies
 - Unique coalition of diverse stakeholders
- New approach to addressing whale entanglements
- Shared goal, thriving whale populations and a thriving Dungeness crab fishery



California Dungeness Crab Fishing 2017-18 Best Practices Guide to Minimize Whale Entanglement Risk



Support for Best Practices

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has confirmed significant increases in large whale entanglements over the last few years, and specifically in California Dungeness crab fishing gear. This situation threatens the stability of the fishery and coastal fishing communities. In response, a Working Group has developed this Best Practices Guide to highlight voluntary actions believed to be an important step towards reducing whale entanglements.

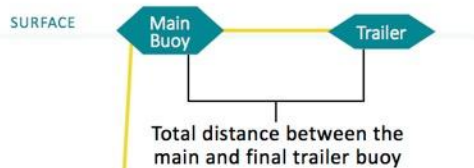


MMHSRP Permit# 18786 | Stephanie Marcos

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.
- **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. Lost gear contributes to marine debris and increases risk of whale entanglements.
- **All gear should be clearly marked** consistent with applicable regulation. All gear should be maintained so markings are clearly legible to facilitate correct identification of the origins of the gear involved in entanglements.
- **Use the minimum amount of scope** required to compensate for tides, currents and weather. Whales are more likely to become entangled with slack lines, which can potentially create a “floating snare”.
- **Remove all fishing gear by the end of the season** when gear is no longer allowed in the water.

BUOY SET-UP BEST PRACTICES



RECREATIONAL	shortest as possible, max of 2 fathoms (12ft) at any depth
COMMERCIAL	
Inside 30 fathoms	shortest as possible, max of 3 fathoms (18ft)
30-50 fathoms	shortest as possible, max of 4 fathoms (24ft)
Outside 50 fathoms	shortest as possible, max of 5 fathoms (30ft)

Minimize # of buoys in set up—no more than 1 trailer buoy inside 30 fathoms

Keep line between trap and main buoy running vertical and taut



1 fathom= 6 feet

Excess Slack Surface Line and Whale Entanglements

Ocean users, including members of the fishing community, are seeing a shift in fishing practices towards increased surface line and the use of multiple surface buoys. During a review of documented entanglements from recent years, fishermen, disentanglement responders, and others see a potential connection between slack surface line and the number of trailer buoys contributing to whale entanglements.

Efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of these voluntary recommendations in reducing the risk of whale entanglements will be made to inform future recommendations and/or management action. These best practices, together with investigating the co-occurrence (or overlap) between whale and fishing effort, are steps the Working Group is taking to address this challenging and complex issue.

For more information about the California Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group, including a fact sheet, background materials, meeting summaries, recommendations memos, and key resources like this Best Practices Guide, visit opc.ca.gov/whale-entanglement-working-group.

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



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.

Photographing Entangled Whales (>100 yards away)

WHALE: side view of dorsal fin (or hump); flukes (especially if underside is raised); head; any part of the body where gear may be present.

ENTANGLEMENT: buoy(s); tags; lines on the body; trailing lines (including distance from whale); netting (if present); other gear if present.

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. Gaining a better understanding of where, when, and how entanglements are occurring is essential in working to prevent entanglements in the future.

If you have suggestions for reducing entanglements in fishing gear, contact Dan Lawson, NMFS Protected Resources Division, at Dan.Lawson@noaa.gov or 562-980-3209.

The Best Practices Guide was developed by the California Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group.



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Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program (RAMP)

- Identify circumstances that elevate risk and develop pathways to address
- Fishermen, agencies, ENGOs, researchers working together to monitor, research, and develop recommendations
- RAMP used to identify levels of risk at key times throughout the season

Figure 1. Structure & Function of the 2018-19 RAMP

Working Group (WG)

- Develop and maintain **RAF**, which is a list of factors based on ongoing research to score entanglement risk
- Develop and maintain **MMT** which are voluntary and regulatory measures that respond to increased risk factors
- Conduct/review **RAF** process with **agencies**
- Identify membership of the **ET**
- Meet to review and refine core components of the RAMP
- Identify additional data needs, support data gathering

Agencies

- Monitor data & entanglements (risk, actual)
- Convene **WG** for **RAF** process (pre, during, post)
- Convene **ET** when **RAF** indicates ↑ risk
- Provide information to **WG & ET**
- Implement fishery management recommendations by the **ET**
- Ultimate decision makers on voluntary management measures
- Notify the fleet of recommended voluntary measures

Evaluation Team (ET)

- Assemble upon short notice via **CDFW** request if ↑ risk
- Identify/request additional representation as needed
- Review information & if needed, request information to verify/clarify situation
- Discuss **MMT** options
- Determine what action from the **MMT** is warranted (if any)
- Transmit recommendation and information used for determination to the **Director**
- Brief **WG** on implementation of **MMT** (end of season)



Working Group & Agencies Review Factors That May Elevate Risk
(e.g., pre-season)

DELAY: Is there indications that the season will be delayed beyond 2/1?

FORAGE: Are there indications of anomalous ocean/forage conditions during the upcoming season?

WHALES: Are humpback whale concentrations moderate to high when the CA Dungeness crab fishery opens?

ENTANGLEMENTS: Are humpback whale entanglements at elevated levels this past year/spring?

If "no" to all questions, **ET is NOT convened** and "green" measures resume

If "yes" to any one question, **ET is convened**

Identify/request additional representation as needed
Evaluate available data

Discuss management options to address risk

Management Measures Toolbox (MMT)

Low Risk

Moderate Risk

High Risk

Agencies seek/provide additional information

Request information to verify/clarify situation

Evaluation Team (ET)
Identify if management action is warranted
Relay recommendation(s) to Director

Agencies/Director
Implement ET fishery management recs
Notify the fleet

RAMP Risk Factors

- Entanglements
- Species concentrations (humpback whales, blue whales, and leatherback turtles)
- Forage/ocean
- Fishing dynamics

RAF Key Elements

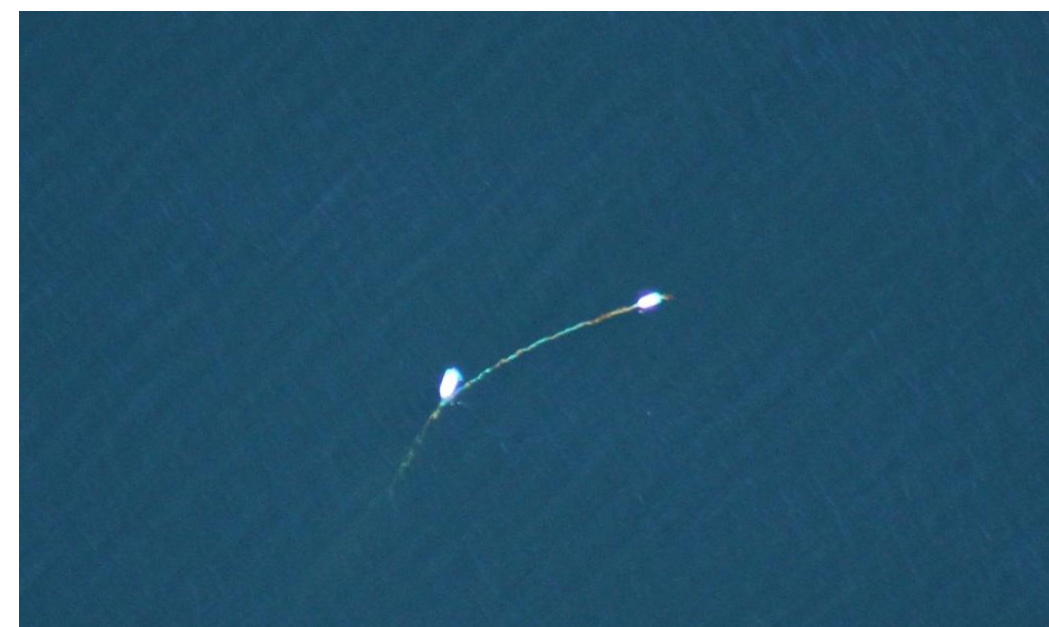
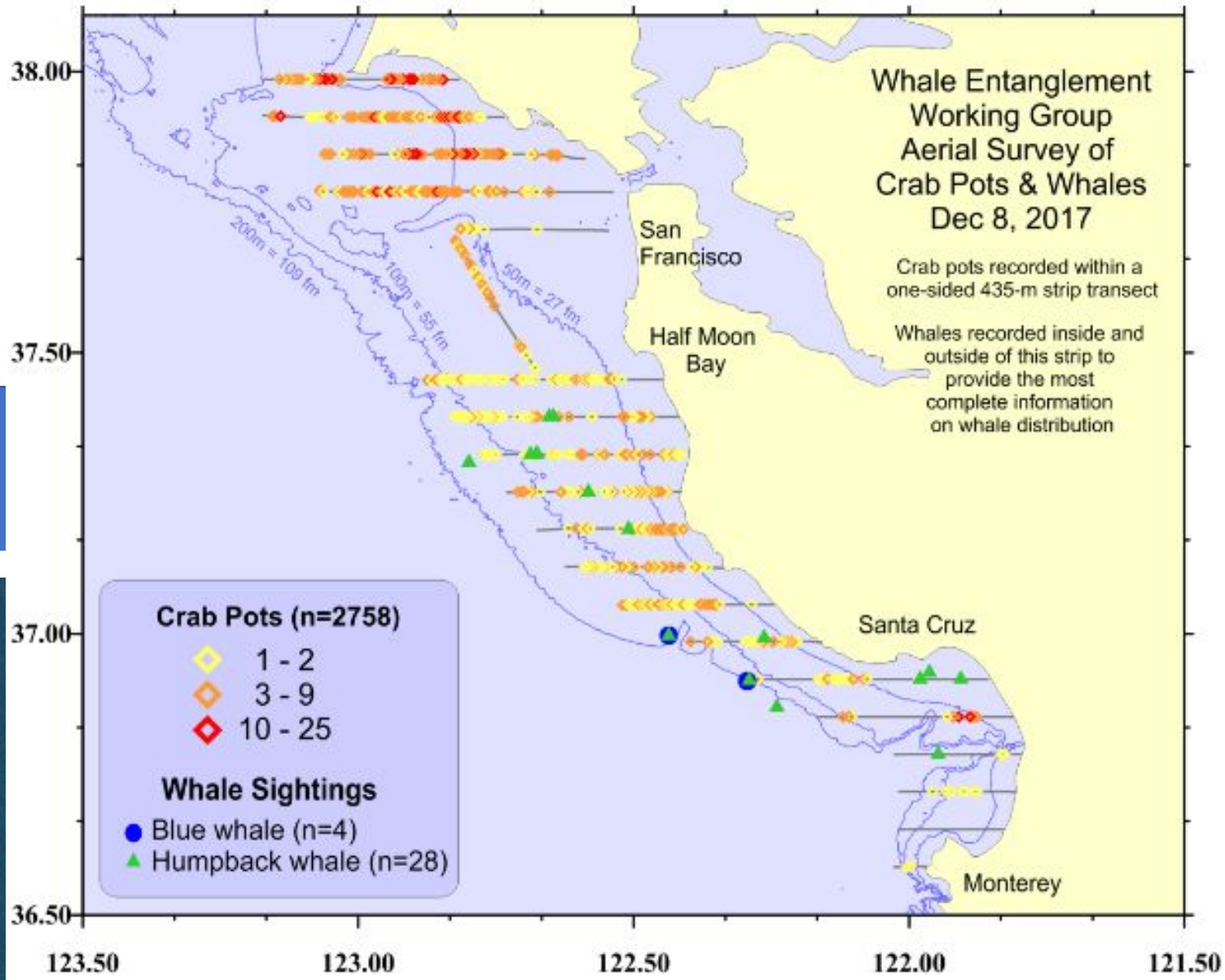
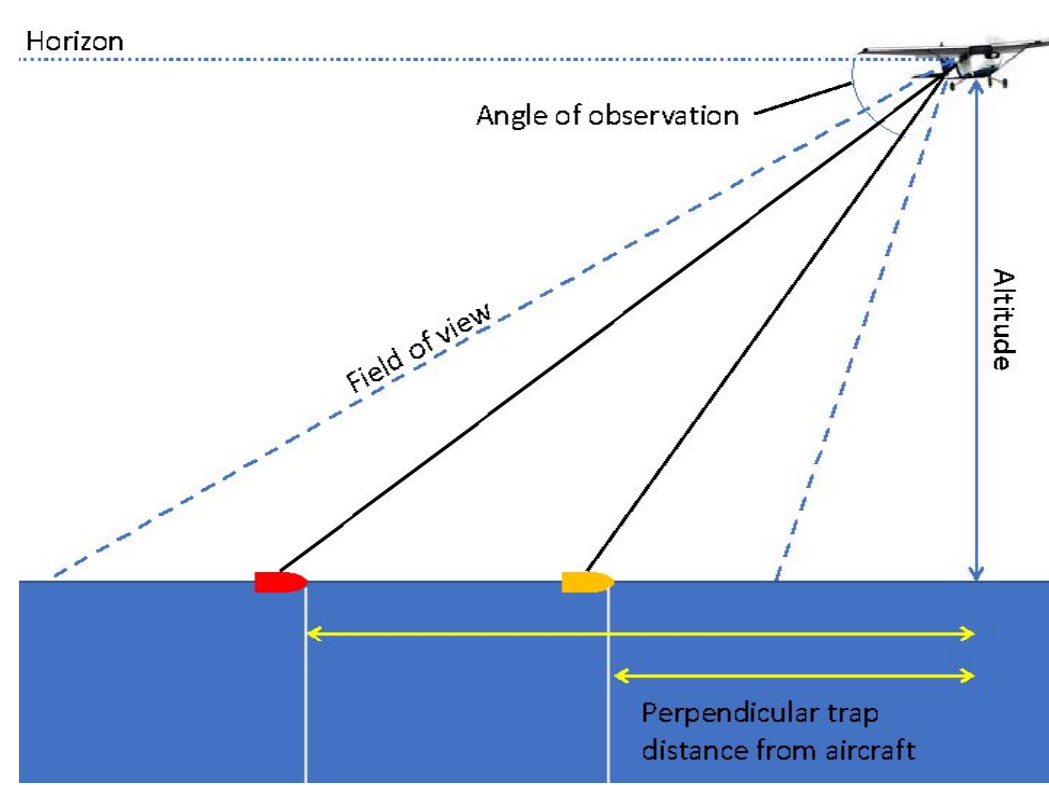
- Objective criteria, where possible, identified by the Working Group as conditions or circumstances that present reasons to be concerned about current or upcoming entanglement risks. These criteria may exist as individual stand-alone;
- Combinations of factors or scenarios that have been identified as likely or expected to work in concert to increase entanglement risk; and
- Overarching judgement of CDFW (in consultation with NMFS and the Working Group)

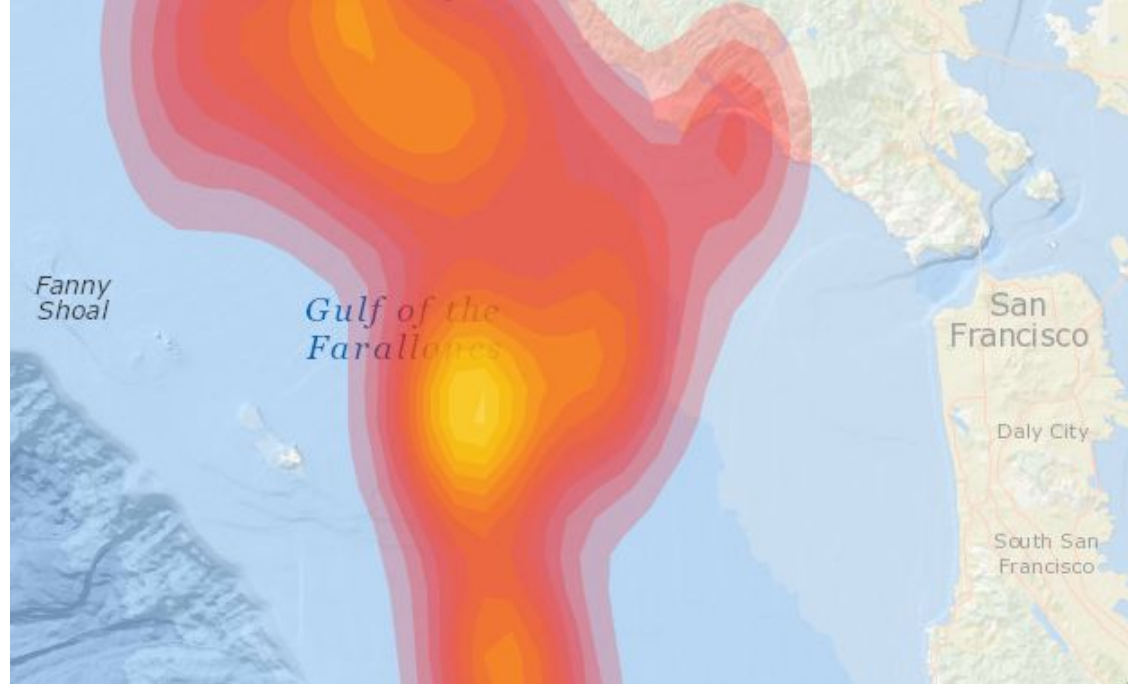
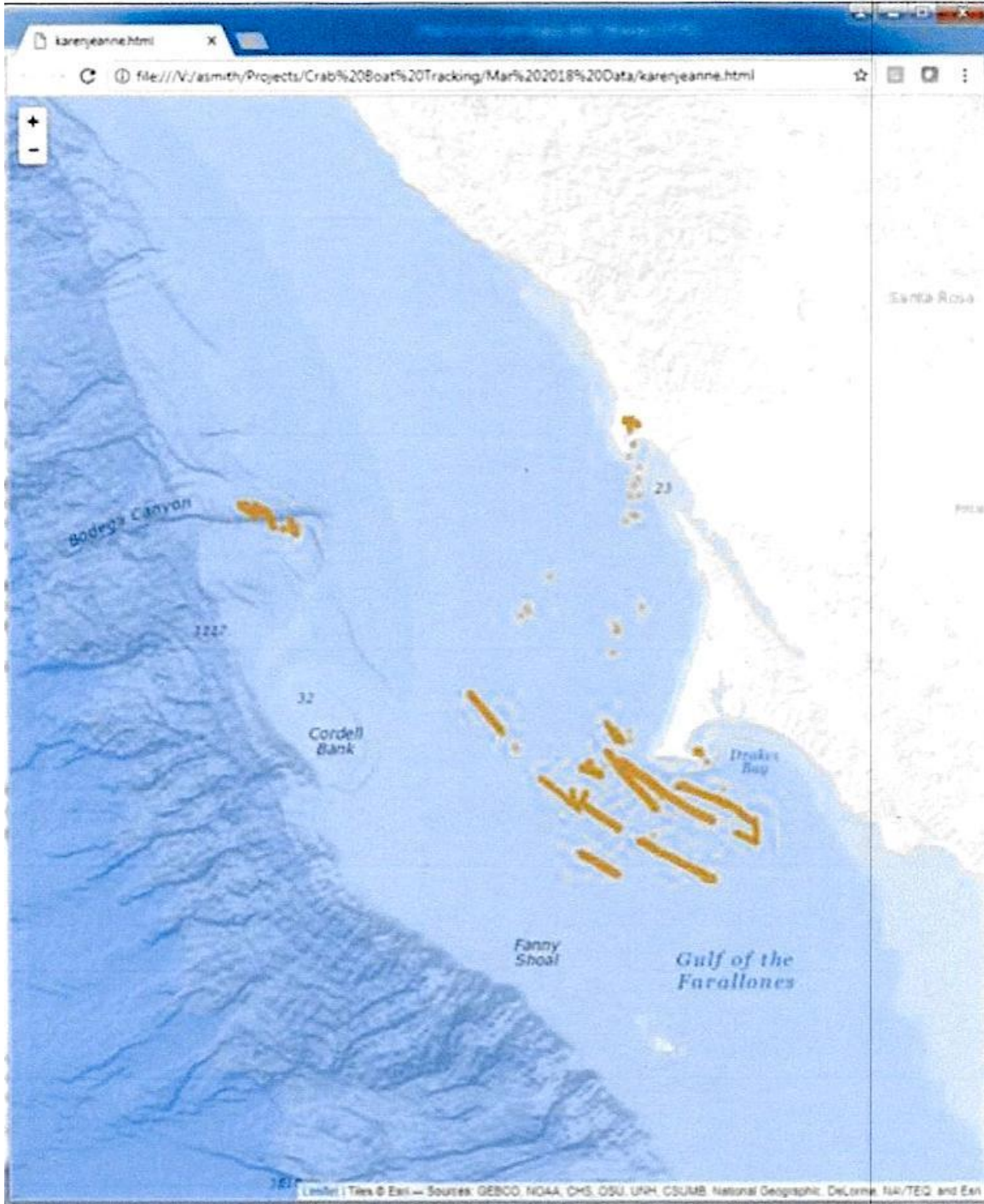
Questions

RAMP Risk Factors

- Entanglements
- Species concentrations (humpback whales, blue whales, and leatherback turtles)
- Forage/ocean
- Fishing dynamics

RAMP in Action







Fiomarine Fiobuoy AC100
Designed in Australia

← Fiomarine
4 successful
deployments and
retrievals (60-240 ft)

→ Desert Star
1 successful deployment;
did not pop up
on 2nd attempt



Desert Star ARC-1XD
Designed in California 24

2017-2018 Pilot: Lessons Learned

- Coordination and communications to date
 - On-the-water updates
 - Preseason and midseason risk assessments
 - Regular updates to fishing and whale leadership
- Continuing to fine-tune risk factors
- Need to make clearer connections between evaluating risks and identifying possible management measures
- Commitment to working with the fleet, researchers and others to support data collection efforts

2018 Recommendations

- Coordination and communications to date
- OPC to direct general funds for RAMP operations and support, including data gathering, gear innovation, and evaluation
 - Synthesis of whale data needed
- Establish a transparent and clear process to assist the state in prioritizing research and development projects
- CDFW to prioritize engaging with other fixed-gear fisheries
- Improve interagency coordination between CDFW, Fish and Game Commission, US Coast Guard, etc.

2018-19 Risk Assessments

- 2018-19 RAMP Preseason Assessment – October 30 & November 6, 2018
- 2018-19 RAMP Evaluation Team Assessment – January 11, 2019
- 2018-19 RAMP Midseason Assessment – February 14, 2019
- Evaluation Team Advisory – March 19, 2019

Questions

Looking Ahead

Looking Ahead

- How RAMP will be considered during September 4-5
 - RAMP Rulemaking
 - CP/ITP process
 - Settlement

Questions