

Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group High-Level Summary of Participant Activities, October 2015-May 2016

June 21, 2016

As a first step to reconvene the Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group, the facilitation team contacted each participant to confirm their commitment to continuing to carry out the Working Group's charge. During these discussions, participants shared details about any activities they had engaged between October 2015-May 2016 related to the [Working Group's 2015 recommendations](#).

The following is a brief summary of "interim" Working Group activities conducted during the timeframe. The intention of this summary is to help inform Working Group discussions about the function, progress, and gameplan of each Implementation Team anticipated for the July 2016 in-person meeting.

Note: This may not be a comprehensive summary and can be further informed during upcoming Working Group discussions.

● **Funding**

- *Working Group:* Ocean Protection Council staff worked to secure funding for Working Group administrative and facilitation support. Following a number of conversations with potential funders, The Nature Conservancy has agreed to fund the Working Group.
- *Disentanglement Network:* A request for \$100k to provide support to the Whale Disentanglement Network was put forward to the Legislature by Lieutenant Governor Newsom.

- **Gear Modifications:** Bob Maharry and Brian Nolte updated their gear configurations and made other gear alterations. Bob, Brian, Jim Anderson, and Tom Mattusch worked with other fishermen to discuss how best to deploy their gear so that it is in alignment with the Best Practices Guide, and began to test a variety of options including the use of red lines, orange rope, weak links with 350lb breaking strength, weighted versus neutral buoyancy line, etc.
- **Aerial Survey:** On May 1, 2016, Doug Laughlin and Tom Mattusch participated in an initial flyover with LightHawk to assess the type and quality of data that could be collected through aerial surveys. Dan Lawson, National Marine Fisheries Service, was instrumental in helping to coordinate these efforts. A report of the effort is available [here](#). Geoff Shester participated in another flyover with LightHawk on June 16, 2016. A summary of those efforts will be available in the coming days.
- **Enhanced Reporting Implementation Team:** Meetings with the Enhanced Reporting Implementation Team were held on [May 12](#) and [May 31](#), 2016 to discuss the Working Group's role during entanglement events and explore interest in applying for funding through the National Fish and Wildlife "Electronic Monitoring and Reporting" Grant Program, respectively.
- **Recommendations to Reduce Entanglements:** On May 24, 2016, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) issued a [letter to all commercial Dungeness crab permit holders](#) to solicit support and cooperation in immediate recommendations to reduce whale entanglements in Dungeness crab fishing gear. The recommendations were provided by National Marine Fisheries Service Protected Resources Division (NMFS) upon request from

CDFW, and the letter was developed through a collaborative approach between CDFW, NMFS, members of the Monterey Bay fishing community, and Working Group participants.

- Some Working Group participants developed an ‘announcement’ to highlight their support for the letter and related recommendations.
- **Lost Fishing Gear Recovery Program:** Fishermen out of Half Moon Bay, including Jim Anderson, worked with Tom Dempsey to secure funding to pilot a lost fishing gear recovery program. A synopsis of the pilot project is available on the [Dungeness Crab Task Force web page](#).
- **E-Catch:** Tom Dempsey worked with groundfish fishermen, especially in the Half Moon Bay area, to develop and test an electronic data logging system. During that time, there were discussions about how the tool could be useful to the commercial Dungeness crab industry’s efforts to reduce gear/whale interactions.
- **Funding Projects:** Dan Lawson shared two potential funding opportunities (through the Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s Electronic Monitoring and Reporting Grant Program) that could potentially fund projects associated with the Working Group’s 2015 recommendations.