

The information below was provided by Jennifer Renzullo of the CA Lost Fishing Gear Recovery Project for the Dungeness crab task force (DCTF) and their Executive Committee's (EC) consideration. Neither the DCTF nor the EC were associated with the two meetings listed below although a couple members of the DCTF participated in those conversations.

The CA Lost Fishing Gear Recovery Project is looking to the DCTF and EC for their input on the need for and mechanisms to create a long-term trap recovery project. Ms. Renzullo has had conversations with a number of fishermen to brainstorm on what a proposal for creating and funding such a program could look like. Details of an initial proposal from those conversations are listed below. Also enclosed is a newsletter from the Humboldt Fishermen's Marketing Association to provide additional context to this topic.

Oct.7, 2014 Eureka Subcommittee met to design a framework for a statewide crab gear retrieval project funded by the crab fishery.

Oct.8, 2014 Crescent City fishermen met to discuss this proposal

Crab Gear Retrieval Project

Proposal designed by Eureka

1. Gear out of water on close of season – 4 in favor, minority position – two weeks after season
2. Pot retrieval project starts day after season closes
3. Pots retrieved by program, impounded for retrieval fees to each individual fisherman for his/her gear. Mandatory payment required
4. Program funded by pot tag fee. Money goes in dedicated escrow type account w/ Fish and Game
5. Partial funding comes from pot recovery sales – money goes to escrow account less boat fees

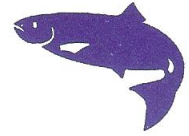
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Almost a Newsletter
September 26, 2014

Crab Gear Retrieval Program

HFMA board members and Eureka, Trinidad, and Crescent City Dungeness Crab Task Force members were invited to attend a meeting on September 24, 2014 at 6PM. The meeting was called to provide an update on the status of the Northern California Crab gear retrieval effort and to discuss future plans.

In attendance were, Jennifer Renzullo, Joe Rodriguez, Jimmy Bishop, Tom Fulkerson, Don Stanley, Kevin Pinto, Bob Borck, Kevin Collins, Mike Cunningham, David and Vivian Helliwell, Ken Bates, and Linda Hildebrand.

Here is a summary of the meeting discussions:

Back in February of 2014 Jennifer Renzullo from U.C. Davis approached H.F.M.A. to be involved in the first ever crab pot retrieval project in California. (See HFMA Newsletter February 1, 2014) HFMA and U.C. Davis negotiated a contract funded by National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for this project and by July, three boats (one from every port) began pumping lost gear. Here are the results to date:

1. 300 pots were recovered in Crescent City, 250 plus pots were recovered from Trinidad and Eureka
2. More than 90% of the boats whose gear was retrieved had gear that was truly lost -- 1 -10 pots. A small minority of fishermen, especially in Crescent City still have whole strings left in the ocean in September, more than two months past the season closure. So, a small percentage of the fleet is causing the greatest impact.
3. Efforts to sell the retrieved gear have been successful. Eureka and Trinidad paid back over \$8000.00 to date. Crescent City paid back \$6625.00.
4. \$9000.00 remains from the original grant and \$14, 00.00 earned back from lost gear sales, for a total of \$23,000.00 for additional gear retrieval this season.
5. Fishermen involved in actual gear retrieval were compensated for fuel and paid \$75.00 per pumped pot, \$50.00 per pulled pot and \$20.00 for broken lines during pumping.
6. The vast majority of people was happy to pay full price to get their gear back and were in support of having a permanent gear recovery program in place.
7. There are easily as many pots remaining in the ocean as have been retrieved to date.

Jennifer stated that this grant funding was intended to test methods for recovering gear, to assess how much gear is left in the ocean, and why. Now we have collected all the information needed. It was agreed amongst those present at the meeting that it would be advantageous to Dungeness crab fishermen in California to expand this gear retrieval program statewide and identify funds from the fishery to fund the program permanently.

Why is this Important?

1. There are a lot of pots out there!!!
2. Department of Fish and Game are confiscating gear in the South and issuing citations for fishing after the close of the season.
3. Oregon and Washington have programs to the north.
4. NMFS changed designation for whale entanglement because of documented whale entanglements. Between 2000 and 2012, off the coasts of California, Oregon and Washington, there has been an

- average of 10 large whales per year that have been seen entangled in fishing gear. 46% of these are in trap gear. You could be required to carry an observer or invest in modified fishing gear.
5. Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch List lowered Dungeness crab from "sustainable" down to "good alternative" because of the lost gear issue. **Your market is being affected!** *gear issue is separate from this designation*
 6. 10% of permit holders are leaving the majority of gear out, giving a bad image to the 90%.
 7. New crab gear becomes tangled in ghost traps every year costing crab fishermen money.
 8. Crab pots interfere with other fisheries.
 9. Requires everyone to be responsible for their own gear.
 10. Retains personal property rights. Lots of local support!
 11. If crab fishermen don't address this issue, some environmental NGO will.

Jennifer presented a model for how this gear retrieval program could be expanded statewide and be funded by the fishery. This idea was well received by meeting attendees, with a few modifications. The group put together a sub-committee to draft a formal proposal to be presented to other ports and task force members. The sub-committee consists of Mike Cunningham, David Helliwell, Don Stanley, Craig Goucher, and Bob Borck. Jennifer is trying to identify funds that will cover expenses for her and two fisherman to travel to other ports to talk about this proposal before the October 29th task force meeting.

This pro-active approach to the lost crab gear program will go a long way to keep you fishing, preserve your markets and retain the value of your crab permit.

Other News

Eureka is receiving the first ever market squid deliveries. Pete Guglielmo, of Southern California Seafoods has taken significant risk to set up and unload market squid from four purse seiners. Southern California Seafoods is working with Wild Planet at Fishermen's Terminal to unload up to 200 tons of squid per fishing night. The logistics of this operation are daunting. 200 tons of squid requires 60 tons of ice (we only make 35 tons per 24 hours and most of it is used by the local fish companies and the drag fleet). Pete is trucking ice from Monterey and Crescent City. 15 to 20 trucks per night, transport iced fish to Watsonville for freezing while another 15 to 20 trucks head north with bins and ice for the next day's fish. The City of Eureka is getting \$5.00 per ton dockage and the fish company and boat crews are being housed in local motels and fed in our cafes. . This is exactly why HFMA spent 20 years to get this facility built. The Eureka City Council has seen a presentation on this fishery and this comes at a perfect time to remind the City of the need for a new cold storage plant

I spent the night on the F/V Trionfo, Neil Guglielmo's 70 foot Delta seiner. The daytime meter marks are pretty small --- like you wouldn't turn around to look again. Squid builds up throughout the night around the seiners and light boats which are anchored up. Eventually when the squid gets to the surface and there looks like enough fish to make a set, the seiner starts the set right around the light boat.

The incidental catch rate is almost zero. I saw one mola mola (it jumped the cork line), a few smelt, a couple of crabs, and some jellyfish. Both the fish pump on board and the de-watering box are designed to exclude fish. These guys hope for a few more days of fishing after this southerly passes, and before the squid spawn and die.

E-mails wanted

HFMA is being dragged into the modern age. In order to save money (postage and printing) and to be timelier in informing you of what's going on, we need your email address! Call (even if you think we have your email address) (443-0537) or stop by the office - Monday and Wednesday - 10 -1PM, or e-mail us at hltfish@att.net. Get the latest info on your home computer!

With help from Kevin Collins, Jennifer Renzullo and Linda Hildebrand
That's my report,


Ken Bates