

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY AND PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY FOR A
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

APR 25 2024

PROJECT TITLE – California Commercial Dungeness Crab Fishery Risk Assessment and
Mitigation Program Regulatory Amendments EIR

(former Project Title - California Commercial Dungeness Crab Fishery EIR)

State Clearinghouse No. 2022090320

Pursuant to the State of California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21091(a) and the Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Guidelines), the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has released for public review a draft environmental impact report (Draft EIR) that evaluates the environmental effects of amending Title 14 Section 132.8 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) codifying the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program (RAMP) for the California commercial Dungeness crab fishery. The regulatory amendments would refine and further develop existing RAMP provisions to reduce the risk and severity of marine life entanglements and improve identification of entanglements in California commercial Dungeness crab gear. The RAMP amendments would also strengthen California's regulatory authority to implement Conservation Plan measures to support the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS's) discretionary approval and issuance of an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) for the potential take of specified Actionable Species under Section 10 of the federal Endangered Species Act for the California commercial Dungeness crab fishery (the "project").

Project Title: California Commercial Dungeness Crab Fishery RAMP Regulatory Amendments

Draft EIR Review Period: April 26, 2024, to June 10, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.

Project Location: The project area encompasses the portion of the US Exclusive Economic Zone (the area within 200 nautical miles of the shoreline) extending from the California/Oregon border in the north to the California/Mexico border in the south. The Northern Management Area extends from Oregon to the Sonoma-Mendocino County line, and the Central Management Area extends from the Sonoma-Mendocino County line to Mexico. This would be streamlined into five Fishing Zones with the following latitudinal boundaries:

- ▶ Zone 1: From the California/Oregon border (42° N. latitude) to Cape Mendocino (40° 10' N latitude)
- ▶ Zone 2: From Cape Mendocino to the Sonoma/Mendocino county line (38° 46.125' N latitude)
- ▶ Zone 3: From Sonoma/Mendocino county line to Pigeon Point (37° 11' N latitude)
- ▶ Zone 4: From Pigeon Point to Lopez Point (36° N latitude)
- ▶ Zone 5: From Lopez Point to Point Conception (34° 27' N latitude)

Project Description: The proposed amendments to 14 CCR Section 132.8 (RAMP) constitute the proposed project for purposes of CEQA compliance. They are part of CDFW's comprehensive strategy to avoid, minimize, mitigate, and monitor entanglements of Actionable Species: blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*), Central America and Mexico Distinct Population Segments of humpback whale (*Megaptera novaengliae*), and Pacific leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), in commercial Dungeness crab fishing gear off the coast of California. The proposed amendments would add new RAMP components consisting of the management actions of restricting surface gear and active tending requirements as well as new buoy and line marking requirements. The proposed amendments would also modify existing RAMP components. These regulatory changes are being proposed to satisfy requirements for the ITP pursuant to NMFS feedback, help streamline implementation processes to conserve staff resources, and clarify existing language to facilitate implementation and enforcement.

Notice of Availability – California Commercial Dungeness Crab Fishery RAMP Regulatory Amendments Draft EIR

Document Availability: The Draft EIR is available for review online at: <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Notices/CEQA>.

Public Meeting: A public meeting will be held on May 23, 2024, beginning at 9:00 a.m. with a summary presentation followed by an opportunity for public comment on the Draft EIR. Participants can register for the Zoom webinar at: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Db-9lynmS2uKzK5rZGRISQ.

Public Review and Comment Period: A 45-day public review period for the Draft EIR begins on April 26, 2024, and ends on June 10, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. Please send your written comments via letter or email, with appropriate contact information, to:

Amanda Canepa
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Marine Region
20 Lower Ragsdale Drive, Suite 100
Monterey, CA 93940
R7CEQA@wildlife.ca.gov

Comments provided via email should include "CA Commercial Dungeness Crab Fishery RAMP Regulatory Amendments" in the subject line and the full name of the commenter in the body of the email.

Anticipated Significant Environmental Impacts: Based on the environmental analyses in the Draft EIR for the proposed project, implementation of the project would not result in any significant environmental impacts.

Cortese-Listed Sites: Section 15087(c)(6) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that this notice disclose whether the project area is listed on any of the lists enumerated under Government Code Section 65962.5 (Cortese List). As noted in Section 3.5, "Hazards and Hazardous Materials," of the Draft EIR, there is one contamination site, the Monterey Bay Sediments site, an inactive Military Evaluation site, that is within the portion of the project area where the commercial Dungeness crab fishery occurs.