

CALIFORNIA DUNGENESS CRAB FISHING GEAR WORKING GROUP

November 30, 2017 Convening

Status Update: 2017-18 Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program (RAMP) Pilot

The California Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group (Working Group) convened on November 30, 2017 to continue to evaluate the relative risk of whale entanglements as part of the 2017-18 Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program (RAMP) Pilot ([click here](#) for more information about the RAMP). In an effort to maintain open lines of communication, and as a follow up to the preseason update shared with commercial and recreational fishermen on November 10, 2017, the Working Group has provided the following update:

- High concentrations of humpback and blue whales are being observed, particularly off of Monterey Canyon and the Gulf of the Farallones. Online sites such as [Whale Alert](#) and [Happy Whale](#) can provide current information on whale sightings in these areas.
- The Working Group is working with fishermen, members of the whale watch community, and whale researchers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the positions of whales relative to the positions of fishing activities through a range of data collection pilot projects and requests to the whale watch community to better understand depths at which whales are spotted.

Fishermen are encouraged to share observations of whale activity to help inform the Working Group's efforts. Text 310-738-2665 or email info@cawhalegroup.com.

To minimize the potential for whale entanglements in the 2017-18 Dungeness crab fishing season, the commercial fleet and recreational fishing community are requested to consult and follow the recommendations outlined in the [2017-18 Best Practices Guide](#), with specific attention to the setup of surface gear. Fishermen should be on alert and avoid fishing in areas where there are groups of feeding whales and/or schools of anchovy.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife, National Marine Fisheries Service, and Working Group advisors will continue to work collaboratively and watch for any changes in risk throughout the 2017-18 fishing season. The Working Group is working with agencies and researchers to evaluate, and be responsive to, the relative risk of entanglements.

This update will be share via the [DCTF email list](#), the [Working Group webpage](#), and [CDFW's Dungeness crab webpage](#). For more information about the Working Group's efforts and the 2017-18 RAMP pilot, including opportunities to provide feedback and share your expertise, visit <http://www.opc.ca.gov/whale-entanglement-working-group> or contact the Working Group at info@cawhalegroup.com.