

Public comment submitted to the California Dungeness Crab Task Force (DCTF) on August 7, 2018

Hello Kelly and Rachele, I would be comfortable sharing the summary of the gear retrieval program with DFW and the DCTF. In the meeting summary I would like to see the point of fishermen being brought into the group to represent ports that do not currently have representation on the Working Group, mainly Santa Cruz for me. I saw the part about how to recruit new members into the group, just not in the sense of unrepresented ports. I feel like a WG call before the September meeting would be a good idea. Thank you for the opportunity to participate and contribute in such an important issue.

I, Calder Deyerle, participated in the 2018 Lost Crab Trap Gear Retrieval Program out of Moss Landing, covering the ports of Moss Landing, Monterey and Santa Cruz. I was supplied with a list of waypoints of potential lost crab pots by the Monterey Bay Fisheries Trust Gear Retrieval Program Coordinator. I also had a list of crab trap buoys spotted by Karin Forney while conducting an aerial survey for the Dungeness Crab Gear Working Group to gather spatial data on the distribution of whales and fishing gear in Central California. The aerial survey was conducted on June 30th, the final day of the 2018 Dungeness Crab season, so some fishermen, including myself, were still bringing in the last of their crab pots for the year. I brought in a couple of stray pots on that day as well. I was busy fishing for Rockfish and Sablefish during the month of July, I covered an extensive area and have had my eyes out for lost crab pots while returning from many different fishing trips for groundfish. Most of the word of mouth reports of lost pots that I investigated ended up being buoys for either Scientific Collection traps or Hagfish traps. In both cases I spoke with the fishermen directly and verified the gear was being currently fished. On August 3rd I drove up to Santa Cruz to look for a couple of supplied waypoints and did not find any gear. The waypoints were in a very high trafficked area off of Santa Cruz, so either there was a report of floating buoys that had parted off of a trap, or someone else had already retrieved the gear. I did a drive by of all the aerial survey waypoints on the way there and back and did not find any stray gear. I found two lost crab pots on the south side of the Monterey Canyon, one of which belonged to myself and the other to a fisherman out of Monterey Harbor. I knew I had lost a pot in the location I found mine, and did not find it on earlier excursions because the trap had moved down the wall of the canyon and was now in too deep of water for the length of the rope. It was low slack tide and calm conditions on the 3rd and the trailer buoy was barely sticking above the surface. I feel like I did a thorough job of cleaning up The Monterey bay off of Monterey and Moss Landing, and I investigated the reports made off of Santa Cruz, so I feel like it was a successful mission.

Some lessons learned from doing the 2017 and 2018 Gear Retrieval Program out of Moss Landing are as follows. I feel like different areas in the state have different dynamics that are important to consider when setting up a Gear Retrieval program for the future. These points are not for the whole state, rather the particular geographic location of Monterey Bay.

I would like to see one fisherman out of each harbor in charge of the gear retrieval in the crab fishing grounds closest to their port. Local knowledge and immersion in the community is essential to doing a thorough gear clean up. The fishermen from each harbor should have a pre-gear clean up season meeting to discuss where they will concentrate their efforts. I think putting one person in charge instead of a couple people would make that one person feel the pressure to get it done. I think each person should do two dedicated days of gear clean up per year and be compensated \$500 for each day. I do not like charging local members of the community for the retrieval of their pots, plus there are not many pots to find here, so a monetary incentive dictated by number of pots found would not work for this area.

Whoever is in charge of collecting locations of lost pots should have an area for notes if necessary, knowing the particular circumstance of the lost gear report could help in

understanding what it really is that's being reported. Reports should be solicited from whale watching operation captains and fishermen involved in salmon, hagfish or other fisheries. Whale watching captains should be informed on what gear is being currently fished and what the buoy setups of those fisheries tend to look like. It would be extremely helpful to have the waypoints plotted onto a Google earth type map in order to make a smooth operational plan and to correct or weed out any waypoints that are way out of whack. Reaching out to people who have already contributed waypoints before the end of the gear retrieval period should be done to make sure they have not spotted any more potential lost pots. In the future, an after crab season aerial survey could be a very useful tool in identifying the location of lost gear.