

**Meeting Summary
DCTF Executive Committee
June 10, 2021**

Meeting Participants

EC Members Present	John Barnett, Bill Blue, George Bradshaw, Mike Cunningham, Gerry Hemmingsen, Nick Kreiger (Alternate for Larry Collins), Dick Ogg, Frank Sousa (Alternate for Geoff Bettencourt)
EC Members Absent	Zach Rotwein
Other Meeting Participants	Lindsay Bonito, Ocean Protection Council Noah Ben-Aderet, Ocean Protection Council Ryan Bartling, CA Department of Fish and Wildlife Lt. Santos Cabral, CA Department of Fish and Wildlife Joanna Grebel, CA Department of Fish and Wildlife Christy Juhasz, CA Department of Fish and Wildlife Cpt. Eric Kord, CA Department of Fish and Wildlife Sonke Mastrup, CA Department of Fish and Wildlife Asst. Chief Mike Stefanak, CA Department of Fish and Wildlife Tom Weseloh, Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture Rachelle Fisher, DCTF Administrative Team Carolyn Kraft, DCTF Administrative Team Support Kelly Sayce, DCTF Administrative Team

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome, introductions, agenda overview.

- The California Dungeness Crab Task Force (DCTF) Administrative Team (Admin Team) introduced and welcomed participants to the DCTF Executive Committee (EC) call.
- The EC is a subcommittee of the DCTF and cannot make decisions on behalf of the DCTF. The DCTF has directed the EC to begin discussions to address priority topics and help usher DCTF recommendations between DCTF meetings. The [2019-21 Work Plan](#) and submissions from the public (see [Guidelines to Submit Requests DCTF & Executive Committee Agenda Items](#)) also guide EC discussions. All meeting outcomes, including ideas and options developed by the EC, will be shared with the full DCTF for consideration during the next DCTF meeting that is anticipated for October 2021.
- Agenda topics, meeting agreements, and [guidelines for providing public comment](#) were reviewed. The Admin Team reminded participants that per the Bagley-Keene Open Meetings Act, new topics cannot be added to the agenda once it has been posted (a minimum of 10 days in advance of the meeting).
- A recording of the call will be available upon request for 30 days following the call. Please contact info@dungenesscrabtaskforce.com for more information.

2. Public comments on non-agenda items

- No public comment was received on this agenda item.

3. Updates on issues involving the Dungeness crab fishery, including, but not limited to, the status of DCTF recommendations identified during the October 2020 and March 2021 DCTF meetings, membership, legislation, biweekly reporting, lost gear retrieval program, marine life entanglements, data contributions to RAMP risk assessments, etc.

- **DCTF Membership:** The Ocean Protection Council (OPC) provided an update on the [request for nominations for non-commercial fishing representatives on the DCTF](#). Nominations have been solicited for two voting Members representing crab processing interests and one nonvoting Member representing nongovernmental organization (NGO) interests. Specific to the processor seats, OPC officially received one application by the June 1, 2021 deadline from Scott Hockett, Noyo Fish Company, for one of the processor seats. Following the deadline, two additional individuals expressed interest in applying, but those applications haven't been received. OPC is following up with those individuals directly and is willing to continue to entertain additional nominees (ideally by June 30, 2021 but will consider extending the deadline). An application was submitted by David Kasheta, Coastside Fishing Club, to represent the nonvoting NGO seat on the DCTF. OPC and Mr. Kasheta agreed it would be more appropriate for him to serve as the Alternate for Mark Capra, the current sport fishing representative. OPC urged EC Members to continue to spread the word about the ongoing need for nominations because they would like to fill the open seats before the next DCTF meeting (anticipated October 2021).
- **Gear Innovations:** OPC shared that the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation is seeking commercial Dungeness crab fishermen to participate in cooperative research to test fishing gear that may provide new options to mitigate whale entanglements. They are looking for four fishermen to test pop-up fishing gear and 10 to test Novabraid® sleeves next season. Fishermen will be provided with the test gear and receive training and a stipend for their participation. The trials are expected to begin when the season opens, but fishermen will have the flexibility to choose their own testing period (e.g., testing can begin early 2022 rather than during the season opener). If Dungeness crab fishermen are interested or would like more details, please contact Greg Wells at gwells@marinesanctuary.org or (949) 630-6951.
- **Alternative Gear:** During the [March 2021 DCTF meeting](#), the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) received an application for a type of pop-up gear to be authorized for use in the commercial Dungeness crab fishery as outlined by the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program (RAMP) regulations. CDFW reviewed the application and did not approve it. Detailed information about the application review process will be posted publicly on the [California Whale Safe Fisheries Page](#) and the Admin Team will share this information via the DCTF listserv when it is available.
 - An EC Member asked why the gear innovation application was turned down and whether gear innovation testing will be conducted during the fishing season. An EC Member asked if other gear innovation applications have been received.
 - CDFW explained that the gear innovation application did not meet the electronic monitoring requirements for the CDFW Law Enforcement Division (LED) to identify the gear's location and the system's cost was prohibitive to CDFW. It was clarified that some gear innovation testing can be done in-season, but there may be a need for approval by CDFW. Another gear innovation application was submitted by a fisherman but they withdrew their application to continue working on their idea.
- **Biweekly Reporting:** CDFW thanked those commercial Dungeness crab fishermen who submitted their biweekly reports throughout the 2020-21 season. CDFW noted that compliance at the beginning of the 2020-21 season was low with 51% of fishermen reporting. Based on recommendations from fishermen and the DCTF, CDFW increased their outreach efforts and sent a letter to the fleet about the requirement and sent email reminders before reports were due. These outreach efforts did improve compliance by improving initial rates to 80-90%, while never fully reaching 100% throughout the season. CDFW looks forward to increasing compliance rates in upcoming seasons.

CDFW reminded fishermen that biweekly reporting is an ongoing requirement beyond the 2020-2021 season as a result of the [RAMP regulations](#) that went into effect on November 1, 2020. The regulations require all vessels participating in the commercial Dungeness crab fishery to email/text CDFW on the 1st

and 16th of each month and include their permit number, number of traps, depth, and RAMP fishing zone. At the end of the season, all fishermen also need to report their lost traps.

- **Gear Retrieval:** CDFW issued four gear retrieval permits, one in San Francisco, one in Half Moon Bay, and two in Monterey Bay. CDFW reminded EC Members that lost and abandoned gear poses an entanglement risk. After the season ends, any gear still in the water is subject to violation. If fishermen or associations are interested in applying for a gear retrieval permit, please submit applications before August 31, 2021. This will allow time to participate before the gear retrieval program ends on September 30, 2021. For more details, please contact Morgan Ivens-Duran at Morgan.Ivens-Duran@wildlife.ca.gov.
- **Working Group:** Ryan Bartling, CDFW Senior Environmental Scientist, provided an update on the [Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group's](#) (Working Group) activities. During the 2020-21 fishing season, the Working Group completed 10 risk assessments and finished the last one in mid May 2021. This summer, the Working Group will update their Charter, evaluate membership needs, identify outreach opportunities, and develop ways to better integrate data and present it in a user-friendly format. The Working Group will also be recruiting more recreational fishermen to participate now that the RAMP regulations will apply to the Dungeness crab recreational fishery starting November 1, 2021. In October 2021, the Working Group plans to meet to prepare for the 2021-22 season and CDFW will provide an update on the [draft Conservation Plan](#).
 - An EC Member asked if there would be an opportunity for the public to comment on the draft Conservation Plan.
 - CDFW stated the public would be able to submit comments. The Admin Team asked whether the DCTF could discuss the draft Conservation Plan and provide feedback. CDFW agreed that a discussion during a fall DCTF meeting could be timely. The Admin Team will follow up with CDFW and the DCTF on this possibility.
- **Legislation:** Updates were provided on the status of [Senate Bill \(SB\) 80](#) and [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 534](#).
 - The Admin Team stated that position letters from the DCTF on [SB 80](#) and [AB 534](#) were sent as discussed and requested during the [March 2021 DCTF Meeting](#). AB 534, which would require ropeless/pop-up gear in all California fisheries by November 1, 2025, is not moving forward in the legislative process at this time.
 - Tom Weseloh, Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture, shared that SB 80 passed the California State Senate with a unanimous floor vote and is now in the California State Assembly Natural Resources Committee. While there have been minor amendments made to the bill, it is continuing to progress.
- **Socioeconomic Studies:** The Admin Team stated they have been tracking several relevant socioeconomic studies on the Dungeness crab fishery in response to the EC's request. There are no results to share available at this time. The Admin Team will continue to track this and share information when it is available.
- **CARES:** CDFW is working with stakeholders to prepare a spending plan for the distribution of funds allocated to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021. It is anticipated that the plan will be finalized in advance of Oregon and Washington plans. Applications from fishing participants to receive funding will be available in the summer.
- **30x30:** The [Governor's Executive Order](#) to conserve at least 30 percent of California's land and coastal waters by 2030 is moving forward, but slower than expected due to drought and fire priorities. For more information and to continue to track this initiative, visit the [California Natural Resources Agency website](#).
- **Offshore Wind:** CDFW shared that efforts to develop offshore wind projects along California's coast are underway and moving swiftly. The implications for these projects extends the entire length of the California coast. For those interested in learning more and participating in the engagement process,

information is available on the [California Energy Commission website](#) and the [Bureau for Ocean Energy Management website](#).

Public Comment

- Jenn Humberstone, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), asked if CDFW was considering the cost to fishermen when reviewing applications for alternative gear (or exclusively cost to CDFW).
 - CDFW stated they are not required to evaluate the cost to fishermen, but it is still something they will consider.

4. Presentation from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife on electronic monitoring in the commercial Dungeness crab fishery followed by a discussion with the EC.

- Joanna Grebel, CDFW, provided a [presentation on the electronic monitoring requirements](#) outlined in the RAMP regulations (§132.8, Title 14, CCR).
- EC Members asked clarifying questions about the electronic monitoring requirements in the commercial Dungeness crab fishery and options for electronic monitoring tools that would comply with the regulations.
 - An EC Member noted that requiring a one-minute ping rate will increase costs for fishermen. Recently the federal ping rate increased and the costs for using VMS electronic monitoring doubled monthly. CDFW explained that the one minute ping rate was determined based on solar logger tests to monitor and track transiting. They explained that costs for electronic monitoring tools and functions vary based on the equipment and service provider.
 - An EC Member asked whether the electronic monitoring requirements apply to sport fishing and commercial passenger fishing vessels (CPFV) and whether electronic monitoring will be used to enforce potential depth restrictions during the 2021-22 fishing season. The Member also suggested that CDFW share the devices fishermen have used that meet the state's requirements in order to prevent fishermen from investing in technology that isn't sufficient and allows them enough time to purchase the equipment while supplies are available from vendors. CDFW noted that electronic monitoring will be required for fishermen who want to continue fishing should a depth restriction be implemented. By 2023, all participants in the commercial Dungeness crab fishery will be required to have an electronic monitoring device. CDFW agreed to compile a list of electronic monitoring devices that have met the requirements based on use by other fishermen. Asst. Chief Mike Stefanak from CDFW LED, requested that fishermen contact him directly if they have electronic monitoring devices that they suspect meet the state's requirements to discuss transiting and transmission capabilities. He can be reached at Mike.Stefanak@wildlife.ca.gov.
 - Various EC Members asked how and when fishermen will be required to submit the electronic monitoring data and whether bi-weekly reporting will no longer be required after electronic monitoring is in place. Various EC Members also provided CDFW with suggested options for collecting electronic monitoring data from fishermen.
 - CDFW shared that after 2023, fishermen will need to supply electronic data upon request by CDFW. CDFW may also request fishermen submit data at specific times throughout the season including under circumstances of elevated entanglement risk, during depth restrictions, etc. Bi-weekly reporting is required in the RAMP regulations and will continue to be required in the foreseeable future. Bi-weekly reporting allows CDFW to understand how much gear is in the water, which is crucial for the Working Group's risk assessments. Electronic monitoring will be valuable to understand where fishing is occurring in relation to whales and sea turtles. While still TBD, the amount of information requested via bi-monthly reporting may be further refined once electronic monitoring is in place.
 - A couple of EC Members discussed options for submitting data to CDFW. One EC Member noted that if CDFW doesn't need data in real time, fishermen could submit data

via thumb drives for CDFW. This could save some fishermen the costs of buying new equipment. Another EC Member agreed with CDFW and suggested having fishermen submit data weekly or have CDFW request the data as needed. CDFW noted that collecting hundreds of thumb drives is impractical. Data collection and management process requires further internal discussion by CDFW. AIS was identified as another option, and Dave Colpo, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, offered to help CDFW access AIS datasets if there was interest.

- An EC Member suggested that CDFW consult the federal fisheries that use VMS for guidance on how to efficiently manage data. Another EC Member stated that the solar logger is a simple system, but can be tedious since he has to declare his fishing activity on each trip since the algorithm can't deduce his activities based on his tracks. Another EC Member thought solar loggers could be a good option due to its simplicity and ease of use.
 - CDFW did consider the VMS system, but it was cost prohibitive and noted that they are not considering a fishing declaration process for each trip. CDFW explained that currently, solar logger data is stored in a cloud system, which is maintained and operated by Pelagic Data Systems. CDFW accesses the data with written authorization from fishermen.
- CDFW explained there may be a need to update the RAMP regulations (i.e., RAMP 2.0) to accommodate for learning in the electronic monitoring process. An EC Member asked whether CDFW planned to provide opportunities for fishermen to inform RAMP amendments. CDFW expects to make adjustments in early 2022 based on lessons learned and confirmed there will be a public process with opportunities for public comment.
- A couple of EC Members agreed that electronic monitoring is a priority topic for the DCTF to track and agreed to discuss further at the October 2021 DCTF meeting. CDFW asked that DCTF Members send additional questions about electronic monitoring to Joanna Grebel at Joanna.Grebel@wildlife.ca.gov in advance of the October 2021 meeting to help her prepare responses in advance of this discussion.

Public Comment

- Jenn Humberstone, The Nature Conservancy, expressed appreciation for the flexibility in electronic monitoring device options. She requested clarity on CDFW's data needs, noting that ad hoc data sharing could be expensive when trying to aggregate data. Talking through this aspect is critical because the Working Group uses aggregated data as part of the risk assessment process. Ping rate requirements, data algorithm needs, and determining how raw data will be processed are all important topics that need further discussion and clarity.
- Richard James, Marin County Resident, suggested using tracking technology that renders a boat inoperable if it crosses a certain line could be used. He asked whether CDFW was working with the tech industry to help ensure electronic monitoring tools are developed to meet the requirements of the RAMP regulations. He suggested that geofencing is a potential solution, which would allow fishermen to be able to download fishing boundaries/restrictions in real-time to improve clarity of when and where fishermen can fish.
 - CDFW responded they are not aware of tech that renders boats inoperable, but found the idea to be interesting. The Admin Team noted that there is technology that defines the Marine Protected Area (MPA) boundaries for GPS units. CDFW commented that some chart plotters have the MPA boundaries uploaded, but not all. Mr. Colpo noted that shapefiles are available for MPAs, federal areas, ports, etc. and that vendors have offered to add them to assist in this type of work.

5. Identify priority topics for summer/fall Executive Committee meetings.

- The Admin Team reviewed priority topics that have been identified for the DCTF and EC to discuss

further. The DCTF identified priority topics for further discussion during the October 2020 and March 2021 DCTF meetings including topics listed in the [2019-21 DCTF Work Plan](#) and updates from CDFW on the interpretation of “possession” and the waiver process outlined in (§132.2(b), Title 14, CCR). During the June 10, 2021 call, the EC identified the draft Conservation Plan, RAMP regulation updates, electronic monitoring options, an update on LED’s application of the DCTF’s October 2020 recommendation for in-season waivers, and the 2021-23 DCTF Work Plan as priorities for DCTF discussion.

- The Admin Team asked the EC what their priority topics were for summer 2021 EC discussion(s). The Admin Team also asked CDFW what their priorities are for DCTF discussion. CDFW identified electronic monitoring, the RAMP regulations, guidance on gear reductions under a RAMP delay, gear innovations (e.g. stringing gear), and industry-led surveys to inform the RAMP.
- EC Members asked clarifying questions and discussed priority topics for the next DCTF Meeting and next EC conference call.
 - A few EC Members requested clarification on what DCTF Members were considering for a commercial fishery [buy-out program](#), including available funding, need and reasoning, and whether the buy-out would be a full tier buy-out or a tier level reduction. The Admin Team explained that during a previous buy-out conversation, the EC decided to pause on discussing this topic to determine what the goals of the fishery are more broadly. If a new buy-out discussion takes place, the DCTF would need to decide the goals of a buyout and funding sources. Various EC Members agreed that more details would need to be considered and discussed in terms of a buy-out including whether it could be used as a means to reduce the number of traps in the fishery or the number of vessels/permits.
 - A couple of EC Members requested clarification on priority topics regarding [Tri-State](#) and whether there are benefits to the Central Management area if they join. The Admin Team explained that there have been prior requests for the DCTF to discuss a recommendation requiring quality testing south of the Mendocino/Sonoma county line. The EC highlighted that including the Central Management Area in Tri-State would also have implications for the season start date which would impact the Thanksgiving markets.
 - An EC Member expressed interest in discussing in-season waivers and the need to have a two-week recovery time to prevent delays in picking up gear that is left in the water after a breakdown. LED confirmed that’s how CDFW staff handled in-season waiver requests this year. A two-week limit was applied and in every instance there was a weather window providing a focused effort to recover the gear successfully. LED has worked to implement the DCTF’s recommendation and would be open to having a sidebar conversation with the EC Member to discuss his continued concerns.
 - A few EC Members requested a discussion about gear reduction at the beginning of the season when there are RAMP delays. The purpose would be to support the Working Group’s pre-season discussions. If they determined the season could only open with a gear reduction, the DCTF could identify what level of gear reduction would be acceptable for fishermen to start fishing versus delaying the fishery. CDFW suggested this could be an opportunity for the DCTF to evaluate management actions that were implemented by the Director in conjunction with the Working Group. The Admin Team will follow up with CDFW to discuss whether coordinating with the Working Group on this topic would be in conflict with the [Bagley-Keene Open Meetings Act](#).
 - An EC Member expressed interest in discussing industry-led surveys and how to improve credibility for CDFW so those surveys can consistently inform the RAMP and ensure that a lack of data doesn’t prevent fishing. CDFW stated that the information from the pilot industry-led surveys during the 2020-2021 season was useful and would welcome the opportunity to help the fleet design and organize a survey and expand the effort to all ports. Since TNC provided funding to support the surveys, the Admin Team asked Ms. Humberstone to provide insights on this discussion. Ms. Humberstone shared the Working Group’s perspective that the surveys were a success and is happy to share a presentation with the EC and/or DCTF that covers design, trade

offs for professional observers vs. others, and how to ensure the program is sustainable and cost effective.

Public Comment

- The EC received no public comment on this agenda item.

6. Adjourn

- Strategic Earth noted that their contract to facilitate the DCTF ends on June 30, 2021. CDFW has issued a public Request for Proposals (RFP) to continue DCTF facilitation needs from July 2021 to June 2023. Strategic Earth is applying to the RFP and anticipates there may be some time before the DCTF facilitation contract is in place (with Strategic Earth or another selected entity). Strategic Earth will do their best to navigate things thoughtfully and ensure smooth transitions.
- The EC identified the following priority discussion topics for a summer EC meeting: a buy-out program including funding considerations and goals, an early season gear reduction when there is a RAMP delay, gear innovations to reduce the number of lines in the fishery (e.g., stringing gear), and how to coordinate, fund, and legitimize industry-led surveys for the RAMP. Tri-State, as related to quality testing in the Central Management Area, was identified as less of a priority, but there is still interest in revisiting.
- The EC also identified priority topics for an October 2021 DCTF meeting including the draft Conservation Plan, RAMP regulation updates, electronic monitoring options, an update on LED's application of the DCTF's October 2020 recommendation of in-season waivers, and the 2021-23 DCTF Work Plan. Some of the items identified as priorities for the summer EC meeting(s) may also be considered for the next DCTF meeting.
- The Admin Team summarized the next steps that emerged from the call discussion. The following next steps were identified in addition to the next steps listed in the summary:
 - **The Admin Team will:**
 - **Produce a summary of this conference call and post it on the DCTF webpage once it has been reviewed for accuracy by the EC**
 - **Develop an agenda for the summer EC Conference Call and circulate it in accordance with the Bagley-Keene Open Meetings Act**
 - **Share the rejected CDFW alternative gear application when it is publicly available**
 - **Coordinate with Ryan Bartling, CDFW, on the timing for public comments on the draft Conversation Plan and consider how to align with DCTF conversations/meetings**
 - **Support follow up on electronic monitoring discussion with CDFW and share any electronic monitoring questions received from the DCTF and public with CDFW in preparation for a fall DCTF meeting**
 - **Post CDFW's June 10 Electronic Monitoring presentation to the EC on the DCTF webpage**
 - **Coordinate with the Working Group on discussions related to early season gear reductions in place of a season delay as a result of the RAMP**
 - **Coordinate with TNC and Jon Gonzales on a presentation to the EC and/or DCTF on industry-led surveys**
 - **CDFW will:**
 - **Develop a list of "approved" electronic monitoring devices that meet the functionality requirements outlined in the RAMP regulations and will meet CDFW data coordination needs. However, CDFW will not endorse any device.**

- **Work with fishermen to further develop electronic monitoring, discuss existing tools (e.g., plotters), and explore data transmission options that meet CDFW's needs.**