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Sent: Tuesday, September 24, 2019 4:40 PM
To: Bartling, Ryan@Wildlife <Ryan.Bartling@wildlife.ca.gov>
Cc: gshester@oceana.org; tbrock@oceana.org
Subject: Oceana and Earthjustice comments on integrated RAMP proposal

Hi Ryan,

Thanks for presenting the Department's integrated RAMP proposal to the working group earlier this month. Geoff and I put together some fairly high level, preliminary comments on the proposal that we wanted to share with you. We realize that the proposal is still evolving and will continue to provide you with our updated thinking as things progress.

- Maintain the precautionary, science-based approach in the proposed integrated RAMP. We agree that lack of information must result in more precautionary management measures. We also agree that the take levels that trigger management responses must be based on best available science and legal requirements governing permissible take under the MMPA and ESA.
- Alternative mitigation management measures (i.e. other than closures) must be supported by data/evidence if they are to be used in the Conservation Plan. We agree that measures like break-away lines and yale grips should not be used as management responses to risk unless and until they are demonstrated to prevent entanglements. Pingers should not be permitted as a means to avoid entanglements, as they are not effective for this purpose and would likely create unintended harm to marine wildlife.
- 100% gear monitoring of real-time trap location (either through AIS or solar logger) should be required as part of this rule in order to better identify entanglement risk, design more tailored time-area closures, and determine compliance with and effectiveness of management measures that require gear to be removed or reduced.
- Regulations must be consistent with ESA definition of take, which includes both lethal and sub-lethal entanglements. Take limits must be annual, not based on multi-year averages.
- The lag time in detecting an entanglement justifies more precautionary triggers based on "entanglements" and also suggests that real time predictions and observations should play a larger role in triggering management action.
- Thresholds of number or density of ESA whales & turtles within a survey area should be transparent, and properly vetted such that they accurately indicate when an elevated risk is present.
- We support the use of MBWW daily sightings data, NMFS aerial survey data, and ACCESS vessel surveys as sources of information to inform the RAMP.
- Need to more actively foster development of ropeless gear such that the RAMP regulations actually authorize the use of ropeless gear in closed areas. This should be informed by testing and demonstration between now and summer 2020—if the only emphasis is on "shovel-ready" means or some TBD criteria, likely to stifle development of ropeless gear. Ropeless gear eventually could provide means for multiple trap fisheries to reduce threats to wildlife while maintaining fishing opportunities.
- We encourage further development and use of forage modeling to add predictive ability to the RAMP. Relying primarily on entanglements as triggers for management is problematic because

of the lag time in observing and confirming entanglements and frequent uncertainty regarding where the entanglement occurred. In addition, aerial surveys, while valuable, are often difficult to schedule and resource-intensive. An objective overarching risk model should incorporate predictions and observations when available to indicate risk areas at a fine spatial scale. We suggest this be the focus of federal ESA Section 6 grants.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions or want to talk through any of these points.

Thanks,
Andrea

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