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Crab Trap Restriction Lifting in Fishing Zone 1, Trap Restriction Remains in Fishing Zones 3 and 4, and Commercial Dungeness Crab Season Delayed

[December 7, 2023](#)

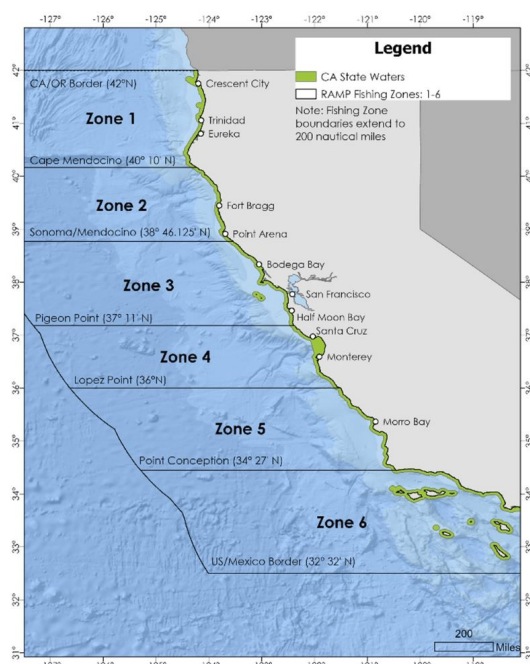
by [avandiggelen](#), posted in [Invertebrates](#), [Management](#), [Regulations](#)



Dungeness crab. CDFW image

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is [lifting the temporary recreational crab trap restriction](#) in the area between the California/Oregon state line and Cape Mendocino (Fishing Zone 1). The trap restriction in this area will be lifted on Saturday, Dec. 16, 2023 at 8:00 a.m. At that time use of recreational crab traps will be allowed in Fishing Zones 1, 2, 5, and 6.

The temporary crab trap restriction from the Sonoma/Mendocino County line to Lopez Point, Monterey County, (Fishing Zones 3 and 4) is continuing until lifted by the CDFW Director due to the presence of humpback whales in the area and the potential for entanglement from recreational crab trap gear. **Recreational crabbers**

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CDFW map of Fishing Zones in the Dungeness crab fishery (*click to enlarge map*).

Accompanying the trap restrictions, a Fleet Advisory for the recreational crab fisheries has been issued statewide. Avoid setting gear in areas where whales are present, and follow the best practices for crabbing described in the [Best Practices Guide](#).

Recreational crabbers using crab traps in Fishing Zones 1, 2, 5, and 6 must have a Recreational Crab Trap Validation. Validations are required even when under the age of 16, and when fishing from shore, pier, or other manmade structures. Validations are also required for passengers on party boats using crab traps to harvest crab.

Commercial crab seasons delayed

The northern California commercial Dungeness crab season remains delayed statewide due to high numbers of humpback whales and a recent confirmed entanglement of a leatherback sea turtle. CDFW anticipates the next risk assessment will take place on or around Dec. 21, 2023. That risk assessment is expected to inform a potential commercial fishery opener and further modifications of the recreational trap restriction.

For more information related to the risk assessment process, please visit the CDFW [Whale-Safe Fisheries web page](#). To learn more about Dungeness crab and the recreational and commercial fisheries, visit the CDFW [Crabs web page](#).

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