

2019-2020 BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

FOR MINIMIZING MARINE LIFE ENTANGLEMENT

Whale and sea turtle entanglement is a concern for fishermen, the public, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), Ocean Protection Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). **The California Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group** developed this guide as part of a proactive and comprehensive approach to addressing entanglements in Dungeness crab gear. Taking these important steps will help maintain the fleet's access to this valuable resource.



BEST PRACTICES

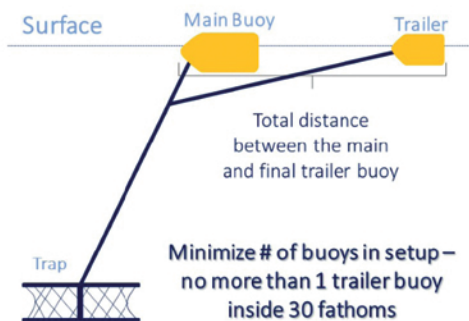
- **ADJUST** trap line length when changing set location across depths by maintaining optimal scope.
- **MINIMIZE** knots, leads and scope when compensating for tides, currents, and weather.
- **ELIMINATE** excess lines floating at the surface. Floating line should only be used between the main buoy and the trailer.
- **REDUCE** slack surface line.
- **KEEP** vertical lines taut.
- **AVOID** setting gear in the vicinity of whales and sea turtles.
- **COMMUNICATE** locations of high whale activity to other fishing boats.
- **REMOVE** fishing gear before 11:59 pm on the last day of the season.
- **PROMPTLY** remove gear not being actively fished.
- **MARK** gear consistent with regulations.
- **MAINTAIN** gear to ensure lines and buoys are in good working condition so they do not break and get lost.
- **RETRIEVE** lost or abandoned commercial Dungeness crab traps as authorized in Title 14, CCR Section 132.2 and 132.7.



**KEEP LINE
BETWEEN
POT AND
MAIN BUOY
TAUT
AND
VERTICAL**

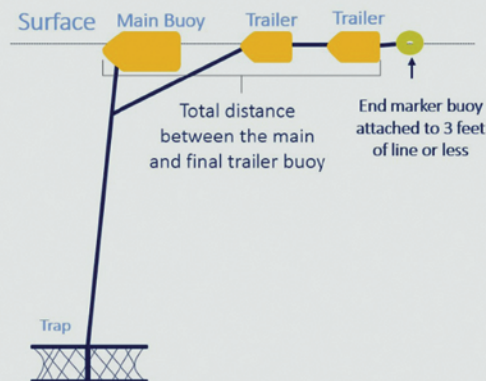
REDUCE SLACK SURFACE LINE

Buoy Setup: Best Practices (Recommended)



RECREATIONAL	Shortest as possible, max of 2 fathoms (12 ft) at any depth
COMMERCIAL	
Inside 30 fathoms	Shortest as possible, max of 3 fathoms (18 ft)
30 – 50 fathoms	Shortest as possible, max of 4 fathoms (24 ft)
Outside 50 fathoms	Shortest as possible, max of 5 fathoms (30 ft)

Buoy Setup: Regulations



RECREATIONAL	No Regulation
COMMERCIAL	
Inside 35 fathoms	Max of 4 fathoms (24 ft)
Outside 35 fathoms	Max of 6 fathoms (36 ft)

IMMEDIATELY REPORT ENTANGLEMENTS

- **CALL NMFS RESPONSE HOTLINE: 1-877-SOS-WHALE.**
- **HAIL THE COAST GUARD: CHANNEL 16.**
- **NOTE** date, time, location and take a photo.
- **STAND BY** for responders.
- **MAINTAIN A DISTANCE OF 100 YARDS** for the safety of you and the whale.
- **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO DISENTANGLE** the whale. Removing the easily accessible lines at the surface leaves others attached to the whale and may make it impossible to detect or remove them.
- **RESPOND** promptly if contacted by NMFS and CDFW.

More information at:

opc.ca.gov/whale-entanglement-working-group

and

wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Whale-Safe-Fisheries

NMFS MMHSRP
Permit #18786-03
Photo Credit
Jodi Frediani



For questions about this Best Practices Guide, email: info@cawhalegroup.com

If you have suggestions for reducing entanglements in fishing gear, contact Dan Lawson at the NMFS Protected Resources Division:

Dan.Lawson@noaa.gov or Ryan Bartling at California Department of Fish and Wildlife: Ryan.Bartling@wildlife.ca.gov.

For other related inquiries email: WhaleSafeFisheries@wildlife.ca.gov