



Updated: October 31, 2023

COMPLIANCE GUIDE FOR THE CALIFORNIA COMMERCIAL DUNGENESS CRAB FISHERY ELECTRONIC MONITORING PROGRAM

This compliance guide was prepared to help the commercial Dungeness crab fleet comply with data collection requirements under the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program (RAMP).

GENERAL

Q: What do I need for the 2023-2024 Fishing Season?

A: All vessels participating in the fishery must have an electronic monitoring system when participating in the California Dungeness crab fishery (see System Requirements for specifications on system capabilities).

Q: What is an electronic monitoring system?

A: An electronic monitoring system consists of equipment that is capable of tracking a vessel's geographic position.

Q: Why does the commercial Dungeness crab fishery need an electronic monitoring program?

A: The RAMP regulations mandate new data reporting requirements which are necessary to support collection of essential fishery information as of the 2023-24 season for the entire Dungeness crab fleet. Electronic monitoring will be used by managers to track fleet-wide trends based on fishing effort to help inform the potential for risk of entanglement with whales and sea turtles. Law enforcement personnel will also use it to monitor compliance in closed areas, depth restrictions, fair start, etc.

Q: Can I receive an exemption to the electronic monitoring requirement?

A: No, exemptions are not allowed.

Q: Are there any opportunities to obtain an electronic monitoring device?

A: Yes, the Department has procured a number of electronic monitoring devices that will satisfy the current requirements of RAMP as well as new requirements which are expected to be effective for the start of the 2024-25 season. The Department

encourages permit owners to obtain and activate this free device as soon as possible (while supplies last) because free units will likely not be available after this season. Regardless of whether you are able to obtain a free device, you must have an electronic monitoring system that satisfies the current requirements at the beginning of the 2023-24 season.

Q: How do I obtain a free electronic monitoring device?

A: Only Dungeness crab vessel permit owners may apply for a free electronic monitoring device and only one will be issued for each permit. To request a unit, please complete the Archipelago FishVue LIME Registration Form:
www.archipelago.ca/fishvue-lime-registration-form

Or scan the following QR Code:



Q: What costs am I responsible for with these free electronic monitoring devices?

A: Although the device is free, the vessel permit owner is responsible for activating and paying for a subscription service. Once you obtain the electronic monitoring device, you must first install it as the unit must be powered on to activate service. After installation, you can select and subscribe to a data plan from the Archipelago website. It is anticipated that there will be two plan options, an annual and season plan based on preference.

Q: My new Lime Unit shipped with a hydraulic sensor, do I need to also install it to be compliant with RAMP regulations?

A: No, hydraulic sensor installation is currently optional and not required by RAMP regulations. CDFW might consider adding this capability during a future update to the electronic monitoring regulations. Any data collected at this stage by the sensor installation would inform future adoption potential.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Q: What are the requirements for an electronic monitoring system?

A: RAMP regulations specify that vessels must have an operational electronic monitoring system affixed to their vessel. The equipment must be capable of recording the vessel's location using GPS coordinates at a frequency of no less than once a minute during fishing operations.

Q: Why is the ping rate set at once per minute?

A: Given the speed at which gear can be deployed and retrieved in this fishery, a ping rate of one ping per minute will allow the Department to differentiate between actively fishing and transiting and will be helpful in determining potential for co-occurrence with whales and sea turtles.

Q: Does data need to be reported or transmitted in real time?

A: Not at this time. Current RAMP regulations specify data shall be made available to the Department or authorized agent within 72-hours of request during the 2023-2024 Fishing Season.

Q: How does the Department get access to vessel tracking data?

A: Data must be made available to the Department within 72-hours of request. The Department recommends individuals work with their specific service provider to ensure their service agreement contains a provision granting the Department access to these data. Data must be provided to the Department within the specified time frame for an individual to be in compliance with the regulations. Note: This requirement will be modified for the start of the 2024-25 season so that data must be uploaded automatically.

EQUIPMENT

Q: What types of equipment can I use?

A: The regulations do not specify a particular vendor or type of equipment to provide maximum flexibility. The electronic monitoring system should comply with the requirements in the RAMP regulations (ping rates, data access, etc.). If you have questions about whether a particular system will comply, please contact the Department at WhaleSafeFisheries@wildlife.ca.gov.

Q: Can a single electronic monitoring system be used on more than one vessel?

A: Possibly. The regulations require any vessel participating in the fishery to record GPS coordinates showing activity for that vessel. So long as the location data can be identified to that specific vessel, the system could be used on more than one vessel. For example, if a fisherman has two permitted vessels that participate in the fishery during different periods of the season, the system could be used on both boats so long as both vessels were not fishing at the same time and the location data can be traced to each specific vessel.

Q: I have a vessel monitoring system (VMS) on my vessel already. Can I use that to satisfy the requirement?

A: No. VMS systems cannot be used because they do not satisfy the requirements specified in regulation. VMS ping rates for federally managed fisheries range between one to four pings per hour (as opposed to once per minute) and VMS data cannot be made available to the Department in the time frames required under the RAMP regulation.

Q: Can AIS be used to satisfy the requirement?

A: Possibly. While AIS appears to satisfy the ping rate, it is unclear whether this system will meet the other requirements specified in regulations pertaining to timing and availability of data and data storage. Individuals interesting in using AIS should contact the Department at WhaleSafeFisheries@wildlife.ca.gov.

Q: I have an electronic monitoring system that includes cameras and gear sensors. Can I use that to satisfy the electronic monitoring requirement?

A: As long as the equipment is capable of tracking and transmitting GPS data consistent with the RAMP regulations, an electronic monitoring system with cameras or gear sensors should satisfy the electronic monitoring requirement.

Q: Can I use a solar logger?

A: As long as the solar logger meets the requirements of the regulations (ping rate, data availability, etc.) it could be used. The RAMP regulations do not specify the type of power source for electronic monitoring equipment. Solar powered or hard-wired equipment may be used. If you intend to use a solar logger as the electronic monitoring device, please ensure that you have subscribed to a data plan through the vendor in order to activate it.

Q: What if my electronic monitoring equipment malfunctions or the battery runs out during a fishing trip?

A: It is an individual's responsibility to ensure that their equipment is fully charged and working properly before engaging in any fishing activity. Fishing without functioning electronic monitoring when electronic monitoring equipment is required is a violation of regulation.

OTHER

Q: Do I need electronic monitoring when I am done fishing for the season?

A: No, once you are done fishing for the season you are no longer required to have an electronic monitoring system on your vessel.

Q: Do I need RFID tags for my traps?

A: No. Although RFID tags or "radio frequency identification" tags are being tested in other trap fisheries, they are not required to be used on commercial Dungeness crab traps under the RAMP at this time. Regulations do not prohibit the use of this technology, so an individual may use RFID tags to track their trap gear.

Q: Who can I talk to if I have more questions?

A: Please direct any questions to WhaleSafeFisheries@wildlife.ca.gov.