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West Coast Take Reduction Team

By November 30, 2025, NOAA Fisheries will establish a new Take Reduction Team (Team) to address the incidental mortality and serious injury of humpback whales in sablefish pot fishery along the West Coast of the U.S.

West Coast Take Reduction

On July 26, 2023, the United States District Court for the Northern District of California adopted a Stipulated Settlement Agreement (Agreement) between NOAA Fisheries and the Center for Biological Diversity to resolve claims in the matter of Center of Biological Diversity v. Raimondo (3:22–cv–00117–JD). Under the Agreement, NOAA Fisheries expressed its intent to issue a scoping notice by November 1, 2023 seeking information relevant to establishing a Take Reduction Team under Section 118 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act that would, at a minimum, consider the Category II Federal sablefish pot fishery, and may also be expanded to consider other fisheries in the Pacific Ocean that interact with relevant humpback whale stocks.

As part of this agreement, NOAA Fisheries committed to issue a notice establishing a Team by October 31, 2025, and to convene the first Team meeting by November 30, 2025. The agency published a notice on September 29, 2023 (88 FR 67254) seeking input on whether other Category I or II fisheries, beyond the Federal sablefish pot gear fishery, that incidentally kill or seriously injure the Central America/Southern Mexico-CA/OR/WA and Mainland Mexico-CA/OR/WA stocks of humpback whales, should be addressed by the Team.

Additional information relevant to establishing this Team includes information about the factors associated with risks of humpback whale or other large whale entanglements in U.S. commercial fisheries in the Pacific Ocean. This information could include available scientific or commercial data about the conduct of these fisheries, along with biological and ecological influences, and any other factors that affect the nature of interactions between large whales and U.S. commercial fishing gear. Finally, the agency sought to identify interested stakeholders who may wish to serve as TRT members.

Preliminary Scope of the West Coast Take Reduction Team

NOAA Fisheries has updated the preliminary scope of the Team to initially include two strategic marine mammal stocks (i.e., Central America/Southern Mexico and Mainland Mexico stocks of humpback whales) and the Federal sablefish pot fishery. This announcement represents a change from the initial preliminary scope announced to address 3 strategic stocks (the two humpback whale stocks and blue whales) and five commercial fisheries, including Federal sablefish pot, CA Dungeness crab pot, OR Dungeness crab pot, WA Dungeness crab pot, and CA spot prawn pot.

Scheduled Dates for TRT Meetings

Meeting 1: November 3-6, 2025, Vancouver, Washington

- Location: Hilton Vancouver Washington

Other meeting dates and locations TBD

For more information, please contact Lauren Saez (Lauren.Saez@noaa.gov)

More Information

- Take Reduction Planning
- Humpback whale species information
- Stock Assessment Reports
- Marine Mammal Protection Act List of Fisheries

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