

## CA Spot Prawn Pot Fishery

**Fishing gear type:** Trap/Pot

**Current category:** Category II\*

**Basis for current classification on LOF:** The mean annual mortality and serious injury of humpback whales (CA/OR/WA stock) is greater than 1% and less than 50% of the stock's Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level. The mean annual mortality and serious injury is 0.2 animals/year, or 8% of the stock's PBR (PBR=2.5).

**Current list of marine mammal species/stocks injured/killed (a<sup>(1)</sup> indicates those stocks driving the fishery's classification):** Gray whale, Eastern North Pacific; Humpback whale, CA/OR/WA<sup>(1)</sup>.

**Estimated number of current participants:** 27

**Take Reduction Teams/Plans that affect this fishery:** None.

**Year added to the LOF:** 1996

**Category when originally listed:** Category III

**Basis for original classification on the LOF:** This fishery was classified as Category III because, while there were reports to the CA stranding network of gray whale entanglements in lobster pot gear, the entanglements did not appear to result in mortalities. There were no reported entanglements of other stocks.

**Estimated number of participants when originally listed:** 603

**Past names, if any:** CA lobster, prawn, shrimp, rock crab, and fish pot (until 2009).

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**Gear description/method for fishing:** Strings of 10–50 oblong cylindrical traps are commonly fished at depths between 100 and 150 fathoms with regulation prohibiting traps less than 50 fathoms. Fishing is also concentrated around sub-marine canyons.

**Target species:** Spot prawn.

**Spatial/temporal distribution of effort:** This fishery operates from Central CA southward to the Mexican border. North of Point Arguello, the season is open from August 1–April 30. South of Point Arguello, the season runs from February 1–October 30.

**Levels of observer coverage each year<sup>†</sup>:** There has not been observer coverage in this fishery.

**Management and regulations:** This is a limited access fishery managed by the state of CA. A tiered permit system has been implemented allowing a maximum of 150 or 500 traps to be fished at one time depending on the fishing history associated with the permit. A maximum of 300 traps may be located within state waters (inside 3 miles), regardless of permit tier.

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<sup>\*</sup> The fishery is classified based on mortalities and serious injuries of a marine mammal stock greater than 1% and less than 50% (Category II) of the stock's Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level.

<sup>†</sup> Observer coverage levels include the latest information reported in the most current final Stock Assessment Reports (SAR).

## History of Changes on the LOF

2011 LOF: Estimated number of participants reduced from 29 to 27.

### 2009 LOF:

- Split from the Category III “CA lobster, prawn, shrimp, rock crab, and fish pot” fishery and listed as a separate Category II fishery based on mortality and serious injury of humpback whales (WA/OR/CA). A humpback whale was entangled and seriously injured in spot prawn pot gear in 2005. This single humpback whale interaction equaled a mean annual mortality and serious injury level of 0.2 animals/year, or 8% of the stock’s PBR (PBR=2.5).
- This fishery has 29 participants.
- Added the following species/stocks to the list of species/stocks incidentally killed/injured in this fishery:
  - Humpback whales (WA/OR/CA stock): Based on a serious injury entanglement event in 2005. A superscript “1” listed after this stock to indicate that takes of this stock are driving the classification of the fishery.
  - Gray whales (Eastern North Pacific stock): Entanglements of gray whales in trap and pot gear have been reported; however, NMFS had not yet determined which specific fisheries were involved. Gray whales were added to the list of species/stocks killed or injured in the Category III “CA lobster, prawn, shrimp, rock crab, and fish pot” (from which this fishery is split) in 2007; therefore, it remained listed under this separate fishery. Data related to interactions with gray whales and the newly categorized Category II trap and pot fisheries will be reviewed and discussed in future LOFs.

*Changes on the LOF when the “CA spot prawn pot” fishery was included in the larger “CA lobster, prawn, shrimp, rock crab, and fish pot” fishery*

2007 LOF: Added humpback whale (Eastern north Pacific), gray whale (Eastern north Pacific), and harbor seal (CA) to the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery based on 14 sightings of entangled trap (11 cases) or pot (3 cases) gear between 2000 and 2005. Also, the stranding database recorded a dead gray whale and a harbor seal entangled in pot or trap gear. Data was insufficient to warrant elevation to Category II for the 2007 LOF, but NMFS stated its intent to monitor trap/pot interactions with large whales on the west coast and revisit classification in future LOFs, if warranted.

1999 LOF: Added southern sea otter (CA) added to species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery based on fisher reports of 4 otters taken in 1992.