

**TITLE 14. Fish and Game Commission  
Notice of Proposed Changes in Regulations**

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the Fish and Game Commission (Commission), pursuant to the authority vested by Sections 8403 and 9022 of the Fish and Game Code and to implement, interpret or make specific Sections 8403, 9001.6, 9001.7 and 9022 of said Code, proposes to amend Section 180.6, Title 14, California Code of Regulations (CCR), relating to commercial hagfish traps.

**Informative Digest/Policy Statement Overview**

Current statutes provide that Pacific hagfish, *Eptatretus stoutii*, (hagfish) may be taken by Korean style traps or 5-gallon bucket traps; specify the maximum number of traps allowed by trap type; require a general trap permit; prohibit possession of other species or gear while targeting or having in possession hagfish, and prohibit the use of popups on buoy lines for bucket and Korean traps (Sections 9000.5, 9001, 9001.6, Fish and Game Code). Fish and Game Code subsection 9001.6(a) is only a limitation on the use of Korean and bucket traps, not a limitation on the type of gear that may be used to take hagfish. Current regulation provides that all escapement holes, except for the entrance funnel, must have a minimum diameter of 9/16 inch (Section 180.6, Title 14, CCR) to minimize take of immature hagfish.

**Proposed Regulation**

The proposed changes to Section 180.6, Title 14, CCR, will allow hagfish to be taken in 40-gallon barrel traps and will allow the use of up to two ground lines and up to 25 barrel traps per vessel. The proposed regulation specifies that if using barrel traps, no other trap type may be used or possessed aboard the vessel, and popups are not authorized for use with buoy lines attached to barrel traps.

**BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSED REGULATIONS**

The proposed regulations could reduce or eliminate negative interactions with cetaceans and other fishing gear, and lost fishing gear, particularly in areas utilized by multiple fisheries. The larger capacity of this trap type could reduce stress or mortality of captured hagfish due to crowding.

Adoption of sustainable fishing regulations including gear type provides for the maintenance of sufficient fish populations and ensures their continued existence.

**EVALUATION OF INCOMPATIBILITY WITH EXISTING REGULATIONS:**

Section 20, Article IV, of the State Constitution specifies that the Legislature may delegate to the Fish and Game Commission such powers relating to the protection and propagation of fish and game as the Legislature sees fit. The Legislature has delegated to the Commission the power to regulate the commercial take of finfish using traps (Sections 8403 and 9022, Fish and Game Code). No other State agency has the authority to promulgate commercial fishing regulations. The proposed regulations are compatible with Sections 180, 180.2, 180.4 and 180.5, Title 14, CCR, which address other aspects of commercial take of finfish using traps. The Commission has searched the CCR for any regulations regarding the use of traps for the commercial take of hagfish and has found no such regulation; therefore the Commission has concluded that the proposed regulations are neither inconsistent nor incompatible with existing State regulations.

**NOTICE IS ALSO GIVEN** that any person interested may present statements, orally or in writing, relevant to this action at a hearing to be held in the Embassy Suites – LAX North, 9801 Airport Boulevard, Los Angeles, California, on Wednesday, October 7, 2015, at 8:30 a.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard. Written comments may be submitted at the address given below, or by email to [FGC@fgc.ca.gov](mailto:FGC@fgc.ca.gov). Written comments mailed or emailed to the Commission office, must be received before 5:00 pm on October 5, 2015. **All comments must be received no later than October 7, 2015 at the hearing in Los Angeles, California.** If you would like copies of any modifications to this proposal, please include your name and mailing address.

The regulations as proposed in strikeout-underline format, as well as an initial statement of reasons, including environmental considerations and all information upon which the proposal is based (rulemaking file), are on file and available for public review from the agency representative, Sonke Mastrup, Executive Director, Fish and Game Commission, 1416 Ninth Street, Box 944209, Sacramento, California 94244-2090, phone (916) 653-4899. Please direct requests for the above mentioned documents and inquiries concerning the regulatory process to Sonke Mastrup or Sherrie Fonbuena at the preceding address or phone number.

**Travis Tanaka, Environmental Scientist, Department of Fish and Wildlife, (831) 649-2881 or [Travis.Tanaka@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:Travis.Tanaka@wildlife.ca.gov), has been designated to respond to questions on the substance of the proposed regulations.** Copies of the Initial Statement of Reasons, including the regulatory language, may be obtained from the address above. Notice of the proposed action shall be posted on the Fish and Game Commission website at <http://www.fgc.ca.gov>.

#### Availability of Modified Text

If the regulations adopted by the Commission differ from but are sufficiently related to the action proposed, they will be available to the public for at least 15 days prior to the date of adoption. Any person interested may obtain a copy of said regulations prior to the date of adoption by contacting the agency representative named herein.

If the regulatory proposal is adopted, the final statement of reasons may be obtained from the address above when it has been received from the agency program staff.

#### Impact of Regulatory Action/Results of the Economic Impact Analysis

The potential for significant statewide adverse economic impacts that might result from the proposed regulatory action has been assessed, and the following initial determinations relative to the required statutory categories have been made:

- (a) Significant Statewide Adverse Economic Impact Directly Affecting Business, Including the Ability of California Businesses to Compete with Businesses in Other States:

The proposed action will not have a significant statewide adverse economic impact directly affecting business, including the ability of California businesses to compete with businesses in other states.

The proposed regulation will offer commercial hagfish fishermen an option to use fishing gear that could reduce financial loss related to lost fishing gear.

- (b) Impact on the Creation or Elimination of Jobs Within the State, the Creation of New Businesses or the Elimination of Existing Businesses, or the Expansion of Businesses in California; Benefits of the Regulation to the Health and Welfare of California Residents, Worker Safety, and the State's Environment:

The Commission does not anticipate any impacts on the creation or elimination of jobs, the creation of new business, the elimination of existing businesses or the expansion of businesses in California or any benefits to the health and welfare of California residents or worker safety.

The Commission does anticipate possible benefits to the State's environment due to the anticipated reduction in lost fishing gear.

- (c) Cost Impacts on a Representative Private Person or Business:

The agency is not aware of any cost impacts that a representative private person or business would necessarily incur in reasonable compliance with the proposed action.

The use of the proposed trap is voluntary. However, should a fisherman choose to change gear types, the approximate cost of one barrel trap is \$60, ground line (including buoy and two weights) cost could range from \$75 to \$150. Based on the current minimum wage, the cost for labor to construct new traps is estimated to be \$27.00 per trap.

- (d) Costs or Savings to State Agencies or Costs/Savings in Federal Funding to the State: None.
- (e) Nondiscretionary Costs/Savings to Local Agencies: None.
- (f) Programs Mandated on Local Agencies or School Districts: None.
- (g) Costs Imposed on Any Local Agency or School District that is Required to be Reimbursed Under Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4, Government Code: None.
- (h) Effect on Housing Costs: None.

#### Effect on Small Business

It has been determined that the adoption of these regulations may affect small business. The Commission has drafted the regulations in Plain English pursuant to Government Code Sections 11342.580 and 11346.2(a)(1).

Consideration of Alternatives

The Commission must determine that no reasonable alternative considered by the Commission, or that has otherwise been identified and brought to the attention of the Commission, would be more effective in carrying out the purpose for which the action is proposed, would be as effective and less burdensome to affected private persons than the proposed action, or would be more cost effective to affected private persons and equally effective in implementing the statutory policy or other provision of law.

FISH AND GAME COMMISSION

Dated: August 11, 2015

Sonke Mastrup  
Executive Director