

## Staff Summary for June 19-20, 2024

**24. Recreational Fishing Regulations for Federal Groundfish for 2025 and 2026, and Fillet Requirements at Sea****Today's Item**Information Action 

Consider authorizing publication of notice of intent to amend recreational regulations for (a) federal groundfish for consistency with and to complement federal rules in 2025 and 2026, and (b) fillet regulations for select groundfish and state managed finfish.

**Summary of Previous/Future Actions**

- Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) action      June 6-15, 2024
- **Today's notice hearing**      **June 19-20, 2024**
- Discussion hearing      August 14-15, 2024
- Adoption hearing      October 9-10, 2024

**Background**

The Commission biennially adopts recreational regulations for federal groundfish as necessary for consistency with federal rules that go into effect January 1 of odd-numbered years. Since 2004, the Commission has adopted recreational regulations for state-managed species associated with federal groundfish species in the same rulemaking.

At its June 6-13, 2024 meeting, the PFMC approved recommended recreational fishing regulations for federally-managed groundfish species for the 2025-2026 management cycle (at the time this summary was prepared, the outcomes of that meeting had not yet been distributed). The proposed action will require amending several state regulations for state waters for consistency with and to complement the new federal regulations expected to go into effect on or around January 1, 2025.

Changes to recreational fishing regulations may include, but are not limited to:

- repeal of minimum size limits for cabezon, greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos*, and California scorpionfish;
- modifications to seasons, depth limits, and bag limits in some or all groundfish management areas;
- modification of fillet requirements for select groundfish and state-managed finfish; and
- clarifying rules governing transit with groundfish aboard through areas closed to fishing.

Specific changes cannot be identified yet, and the initial statement of reasons (ISOR) cannot be completed, until after PFMC action at its June 2024 meeting. The Department is expected to provide additional information regarding PFMC's final recommendations during today's meeting. Commission staff requests the Commission authorize publication of the notice of proposed rulemaking, based on the information contained in the Department memo (Exhibit 1) and discussed today; an ISOR will be prepared subsequently.

## Staff Summary for June 19-20, 2024

**Significant Public Comments (N/A)****Recommendation**

**Commission staff:** Authorize publication of the notice as recommended by the Department.

**Department:** Authorize publication of a notice of intent to amend recreational fishing regulations for federal groundfish as necessary for consistency with and to complement federal rules for 2025 and 2026 and fillet regulations for select groundfish and state managed finfish, as described in the Department memo (Exhibit 1).

**Exhibits**

1. [Department memo, received May 29, 2024.](#)

**Motion**

Moved by \_\_\_\_\_ and seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ that the Commission authorizes publication of a notice of its intent to amend sections 27.20, 27.25, 27.30, 27.35, 27.40, 27.45, 27.50, 27.65, 28.27, 28.28, 28.29, 28.47, 28.48, 28.49, 28.54, 28.55, 28.56 and 28.65, Title 14, California Code of Regulations, related to recreational fishing regulations for federal groundfish for consistency with and to complement federal rules in 2025 and 2026, and fillet regulations for select groundfish and state managed finfish.

# Memorandum

Received May 29, 2024  
Original on file.

Date: May 28, 2024

To: Melissa Miller-Henson  
Executive Director  
Fish and Game Commission

From: Charlton H. Bonham  
Director

Subject: **Agenda Item for the June 19-20, 2024, Fish and Game Commission Meeting, Re: Recreational Fishing Regulations for Federal Groundfish for 2025 and 2026, and Fillet Requirements at Sea**

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) will recommend recreational fishing regulations for federally managed groundfish species for the 2025-2026 management cycle at its June 6-13, 2024 meeting. Based on these recommendations, federal groundfish fishery regulations for 2025-2026 are expected to publish by January 1, 2025, requiring amendment of several state regulations for consistency with and to complement the new federal regulations in state waters. The changes needed to state recreational regulations are expected to include repeal of minimum size limits for cabezon, greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos*, and California scorpionfish. Changes may also include modifications to seasons, depth limits, and bag limits in some or all Groundfish Management Areas.

Modification of fillet requirements for select groundfish and state managed finfish as specified in Section 27.65 will provide for enhanced clarity and enforcement. Minor regulatory language amendments to multiple sections are also anticipated, including clarifying rules governing transit with groundfish aboard through closed areas.

To ensure state regulations are in place before fishing begins in 2025, the Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) requests the Fish and Game Commission authorize publication of notice of its intent to amend recreational regulations for California for federally managed groundfish at its June 19-20, 2024 meeting. Approval of this request will allow for discussion and possible adoption of the proposed regulatory changes in the summer and late fall of 2024, in time for the amended regulations to take effect by January 1, 2025.

Title 14 sections to be amended by this action are expected to include 27.20, 27.25, 27.30, 27.35, 27.40, 27.45, 27.50, 27.65, 28.27, 28.28, 28.29, 28.47, 28.48, 28.49, 28.54, 28.55, 28.56, and 28.65.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Dr. Craig Shuman, Marine Regional Manager at [R7RegionalMgr@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:R7RegionalMgr@wildlife.ca.gov). The Department point of contact for this rulemaking is Senior Environmental Scientist Specialist, Melanie Parker, who can be contacted via email at [Groundfish@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:Groundfish@wildlife.ca.gov).

Melissa Miller-Henson, Executive Director  
Fish and Game Commission  
May 28, 2024  
Page 2

ec: Chad Dibble, Deputy Director  
Wildlife and Fisheries Division  
Department of Fish and Wildlife

Craig Shuman, Regional Manager  
Marine Region  
Department of Fish and Wildlife

Eric Kord, Assistant Chief  
Law Enforcement Division  
Department of Fish and Wildlife

Nathan Goedde, Assistant Chief Counsel  
Office of General Counsel  
Department of Fish and Wildlife

Ona Alminas, Env. Program Manager  
Regulations Unit  
[Regulations@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:Regulations@wildlife.ca.gov)  
Department of Fish and Wildlife

David Thesell, Deputy Executive Director  
Fish and Game Commission  
[fgc@fgc.ca.gov](mailto:fgc@fgc.ca.gov)

Sherrie Fonbuena, Analyst  
Fish and Game Commission