

State of California
Fish and Game Commission
Final Statement of Reasons for Regulatory Action

Amend Section 28.30
Title 14, California Code of Regulations
Re: Barred Sand Bass Limit

I. Dates of Statements of Reasons

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|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| (a) Initial Statement of Reasons | Date: December 11, 2024 |
| (b) Pre-adoption Statement of Reasons | Date: March 18, 2025 |
| (c) Final Statement of Reasons | Date: May 13, 2025 |

II. Dates and Locations of Scheduled Hearings

(a) Notice Hearing

Date: December 11-12, 2024	Location: Sacramento
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(b) Discussion Hearing

Date: February 12-13, 2025	Location: Sacramento
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(c) Adoption Hearing

Date: April 16-17, 2025	Location: Sacramento
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III. Update

At its April 2025 meeting, the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) adopted the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) proposal to amend Section 28.30 of Title 14, California Code of Regulations to allow for a year-round bag limit of four barred sand bass, with no more than five basses in combination, with a sunset date of June 1, 2028. During this time, the Department will continue to work with stakeholders to fill priority research gaps and develop a long-term conservation strategy based on best available science to protect barred sand bass and their spawning aggregations.

IV. Summary of Primary Considerations Raised in Support of or Opposition to the Proposed Actions and Reasons for Rejecting Those Considerations

Public comments received through March 17, 2025, were responded to in the Pre-Adoption Statement of Reasons ("PSOR"). Comments received between March 18, 2025, and April 17, 2025, are summarized and responded to in Attachment 2.

V. Description of Reasonable Alternatives to Regulatory Action

(a) Alternatives to Regulation Change

No alternatives were identified by or brought to the attention of Commission staff that would have the same desired regulatory effect.

Without the proposed changes, the outstanding issues concerning the regulations currently governing barred sand bass would remain unaddressed.

In view of information currently possessed, no alternative considered would be more effective in carrying out the purpose for which the regulation is proposed, would be as effective and less burdensome to affected private persons than the adopted regulation, or would be more cost effective to affected private persons and equally effective in implementing the statutory policy or other provision of law.

(d) Description of Reasonable Alternatives that Would Lessen Adverse Impact on Small Business

While there are no direct cost impacts to small businesses from the proposed regulation, the entirety of the Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessels that lead chartered trips for recreational fishing of barred sand bass are impacted by the proposed bag limits. While the potential for a reduction in opportunity for this popular marine fishery could result in reduced sportfish expenditures in some sectors, these proposed regulations are not expected to reduce opportunities because the overall bag limit remains unchanged and because of the substitutability of kelp bass as a targeted species. No alternative considered would be more effective in carrying out the purpose for which the regulation is proposed or would be more cost effective to affected small businesses and equally effective in implementing the statutory policy or other provision of law.

VI. Impact of Regulatory Action

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

(a) Significant Statewide Adverse Economic Impact Directly Affecting Businesses, 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 Commission anticipates that the impact of the proposed regulations on the entirety of marine sport fishing activity is not expected to be sufficient to significantly impact sport fishing expenditures to businesses within the state.

(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 significant impacts on the creation or elimination of jobs, the creation of new businesses, the elimination of existing businesses, or the expansion of businesses in California. Sport fish-related businesses may have to adjust to changes in the composition of recreational fishing opportunities, but these changes are not expected to be substantial due to the fishery being kept open and from the sufficient substitutability of kelp bass and other nearshore species as an alternative species.

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

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

- (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.

Updated Informative Digest/Policy Statement Overview

Unless otherwise specified, all section references in this document are to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR).

The barred sand bass fishery is a historic recreational fishery in southern California that is open year-round and managed collectively with kelp bass and spotted sand bass. Current regulations include a five-fish bag limit (in any combination of the three species) and a minimum size limit of 14 inches (35.6 centimeters); these were established in 2013 due to concerns about the status of kelp bass and barred sand bass stocks. While no formal stock assessment exists for barred sand bass, abundance estimates, based on fishery independent data, suggest a severely depressed population in southern California. The presumed decline is likely due to a combination of environmental conditions, poor recruitment, and fishing pressure on easily targeted spawning aggregations.

In consultation with fishing industry representatives, fishery researchers, and stakeholders, and with guidance from the Commission's MRC, the Department proposes modifications to Title 14, Section 28.30. Proposed language in 28.30, intended to limit take and possession of barred sand bass, includes a range of options for a sub-bag and possession limit for barred sand bass within the overall five-fish combined limit for kelp bass, barred sand bass and spotted sand bass, to be decided through the Commission public noticing process. The options are a range of bag and possession limits of 0-5 barred sand bass, varying seasonally, with a sunset provision ending June 1, 2028. This sunset provision allows for conservation of barred sand bass while the Department works with stakeholders on further reviewing data and developing models to evaluate potential future regulations that will help increase and sustain the barred sand bass population and support public fishing opportunities. The proposed regulation amendment is intended to reduce the overall number of barred sand bass taken by the fishery, specifically during the spawning months when barred sand bass are most vulnerable to fishing.

The proposed changes are as follows: Subsection 28.30(b) is proposed to be amended to specify bag limit changes to one species, barred sand bass, within the saltwater bass complex. This amendment is necessary to further protect barred sand bass spawning aggregations.

Add subsection (c)(1) which would create a limit within the spawning season on barred sand bass (June 1 through August 31) and (c)(2) which would create a limit during all other months. The square brackets indicate a range within which a final number will be determined by the Commission. Add subsection (d) which would provide for a sunset provision for subsection (c), repealing it as of June 1, 2028.

The subsections would read as follows:

(c) Barred Sand Bass Limit: Notwithstanding subsection (b);

(1) From June 1-August 31 a maximum of [0-5] barred sand bass may be taken or possessed.

(2) From September 1-May 31 a maximum of [1-5] barred sand bass may be taken or possessed.

(d) Sunset Provision: Subsection (c) shall remain in effect until June 1, 2028, and as of that date is repealed.

Benefit of the Regulations:

The Commission anticipates benefits to the State's environment by sustainably managing California's ocean resources. The barred sand bass population would benefit from reduced fishing effort during their spawning season when they are most susceptible to fishing, which ultimately supports a more sustainable fishery in the long term. The adoption of scientifically based limits provides for the maintenance of sufficient populations of barred sand bass to ensure their continued existence for the environment and for the businesses that rely on recreational barred sand bass fishing.

Consistency and Compatibility with Existing Regulations:

Article IV, Section 20 of the State Constitution specifies that the Legislature may delegate to the Commission such powers related to the protection and propagation of fish and game as the Legislature sees fit. The Legislature has delegated authority to the Commission to promulgate recreational fishing regulations (Fish and Game Code sections 200 and 205). Commission staff have searched the California Code of Regulations and has found no other state regulations that address the recreational take of barred sand bass. The Commission has reviewed its own regulations and finds that the proposed regulations are consistent with other recreational fishing regulations in Title 14, CCR, and therefore finds that the proposed regulations are neither inconsistent nor incompatible with existing state regulation.

UPDATE

At its April 17, 2025 meeting, the Fish and Game Commission adopted the Department recommendation of a year-round bag limit of four barred sand bass, with no more than five basses in combination, with a sunset date of June 1, 2028. During this time, the Department will continue to work with stakeholders to fill priority research gaps and develop a long-term conservation strategy based on best available science to protect barred sand bass and their spawning aggregations. The Commission requested the Department to provide an update on monitoring efforts in a year.

Attachment 1 – Pre-adoption Statement of Reasons

28.30– Responses to Public Comments: Barred Sand Bass Limit

Responses to written comments (1-22) received up to March 17, 2025, and to oral comments (23-71) received at the February 13, 2025, Fish and Game Commission meeting.

List of acronyms: BSB = barred sand bass; CPFV = Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel; CPUE = Catch per unit effort; CRFS = California Recreational Fisheries Survey; Department = California Department of Fish and Wildlife; ESR = Enhanced Status Report; ISOR = Initial Statement of Reasons; MSE = Management Strategy Evaluation; RecFIN = Recreational Fisheries Information Network; SA = stock assessment; summertime – months of June, July, August.

Comment #, Name, affiliation & date	Comment Summary	California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) Response
1. Rick Maurer, 1/21/2025	<p>1-a. From 50 years of personal diving experience in Santa Monica Bay, no shortage of BSB; observes large school ranging in size from 12-24 inches and larger. BSB are the most prevalent gamefish on artificial reefs.</p> <p>1-b. BSB should not be on the endangered list.</p> <p>1-c. Consider postponing making a regulation change decision until further study.</p>	<p>1-a. Comment noted. Additionally, the Department performs scuba surveys to count and size BSB during the fall months, and two of the sites are within Santa Monica Bay. The results of this ongoing study can be found in the meeting materials from the Marine Resources Committee meetings in July and November 2024 and the Notice hearing in December 2024.</p> <p>1-b. BSB are not endangered nor are they being considered for the endangered species list.</p> <p>1-c. This regulation package is not going to be delayed as the Commission deems there is sufficient information available to make an informed decision about the health of the BSB population and fishery.</p>
2. Tim Carpenter, 1/26/2025*	2-a. Opposed to BSB and kelp bass regulation changes being proposed at Discussion Hearing, which should be delayed until the necessary data is	2-a. Please see response 1-c.

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<p>*This comment and several others were considered sufficiently related to and representative of 176 comments** received between 1/8 and 1/30/2025. See rulemaking record exhibit 5.B.</p> <p>**All comments are included in rulemaking record exhibit 14.</p>	<p>collected, analyzed, and made available for public review.</p> <p>2-b. Supports all fishing regulations that promote fishery sustainability.</p> <p>2-c. Wants to see the data collected and/or scientific analysis results supporting proposed regulation changes.</p> <p>2-d. Perception of declined catch rates alone does not justify proposed regulation changes.</p> <p>2-e. Many anglers have shifted to other species, leading to the illusion of decline.</p>	<p>2-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>2-c. The BSB fishery data and scientific research used in this regulatory package can be found in the meeting materials from the Marine Resources Committee meetings in July and November 2024 and the Notice hearing in December 2024. More information about BSB can be found in the ESR for BSB on the Department’s website.</p> <p>2-d. Catch rates are just one of the metrics that are used to evaluate the BSB fishery. Fishery-dependent data, fishery-independent data, and analyses published in peer reviewed scientific literature are used to evaluate this fishery. Some examples of these include: CPFV landings, landing estimates from RecFIN, effort, habitat preferences, movements and migrations, age and growth, larvae abundance, juvenile and adult BSB abundance and size distribution, and catch-and-release versus retention rates.</p> <p>2-e. The Commission acknowledges that the offshore fishing for pelagic species like bluefin tuna, yellowfin tuna, dorado, and yellowtail has been exceptional for the past decade; however, the</p>

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	<p>2-f. In 2013 FGC cut the daily bag limits by 50%.</p> <p>2-g. No recent stock assessment has been performed.</p>	<p>southern California short range nearshore CPFVs and private boats are still fishing for BSB and other nearshore species. The nearshore fleet has had to change what nearshore fishes they target because the BSB spawning aggregations have been absent for nearly a decade, so they have been forced to fish for other species to make a catch. In 2023 and 2024, when BSB aggregations were present, the nearshore CPFV fleet focused their effort to target BSB. This leads the Commission to believe that when spawning aggregations of BSB are present, the short range nearshore CPFV fleet and private boats will focus their effort on targeting spawning BSB and will switch to target other species if these BSB spawning aggregations are not present.</p> <p>2-f. Comment noted.</p> <p>2-g. The Commission acknowledges that no formal SA has been done for BSB. The Master Plan for Fisheries describes a scaled management approach that is applied to all fisheries and the overall management framework can range from an ESR to an ESR along with a complex fisheries management plan. BSB are managed with an ESR along with rulemaking on an as-needed basis. Abundance estimates suggest a severely depressed population in southern California. The</p>

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	2-h. CDFW's report fails to acknowledge the migratory nature of the BSB populations.	<p>presumed decline is likely due to a combination of environmental conditions, poor recruitment, and fishing pressure on easily targeted spawning aggregations. The Department is pursuing the idea of a formal SA conducted by Department staff, as well as using an Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for testing prospective management options.</p> <p>2-h. The fishing industry has a hypothesis that BSB migrate hundreds of miles from southern and central Baja California, Mexico to southern California to spawn. This hypothesis comes from captains that have seen BSB spawning aggregations and have believed to have seen them migrating up the coast from southern and central Baja California, Mexico. Results from several acoustic and spaghetti tagging studies do not support this hypothesis. The acoustic tagging studies done in the 2010s, have shown BSB have a small home range where they spend most of the year. During the summer months, most of the tagged fish left their section of reef and were detected at local spawning aggregations. This is a migration of 10-30 miles. These BSB were then detected back at their home reefs after the spawning season. In the 1960s and 1990s, over 8,000 spaghetti tags were deployed into BSB. Recaptured spaghetti tagged BSB were either caught where they were initially tagged or at local</p>

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	2-i. Fish counts do not accurately reflect population decline (e.g. many anglers practice catch-and-release of all BSB and KB).	<p>spawning aggregations. The average recapture distance was 18 km (± 15 km) in the 1960s and 7 km (± 9 km) in the 1990s. In the hypothesis from the fishing industry, BSB would be found to be moving among the aggregation sites, resulting in much larger recapture distances. However, this was not documented in these studies, so the Department believes BSB found at southern California spawning aggregations are from locally living BSB. The BSB that likely cross the US/Mexico border are those at the Imperial Beach/Tijuana aggregation site, since the aggregation site is partially in Mexican waters. It is still believed these BSB are sourced from the local area, not from central or southern Baja California, Mexico.</p> <p>The main contribution of Mexican BSB to southern California is thought to be through large sporadic larvae pulses. During warm water years, upwelling in northern Baja California is interrupted, which can allow for BSB larval transport into southern Californian waters.</p> <p>2-i. The Department started a catch-and-release study starting in 2013 after the new regulations were implemented to look at the ratio of released to retained bass, both kelp bass and BSB. The results of this study finds that after the first year after the</p>

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	<p>2-j. Economically and physically disadvantaged anglers will be adversely affected.</p> <p>2-k. BSB serves as an introductory species for new saltwater anglers.</p>	<p>regulation implementation that most basses were released. From 2014 to present about 50% of BSB are released and the other half are kept. This is a stark contrast to kelp bass where about 85% of kelp bass are released and the remaining 15% are kept.</p> <p>The Department also collects data on released fish from the surveys conducted by the California Recreational Fishery Survey (CRFS). Counts and sizes of released fish can be collected by onboard CPFV samplers, while counts of released fish are reported for other fishing modes, such as private/rental boats.</p> <p>2-j. BSB are not the only nearshore species available to CPFVs, private boats, and shore-based fishers to target. Since 2013, BSB have constituted less than 10% of the summertime landings for short range CPFVs, with most years in this range less than 5% of landings. There are a variety of easy to catch nearshore species for everyone to target besides BSB like kelp bass, California scorpionfish (aka sculpin), ocean whitefish, rockfishes, California sheephead, surfperches, croakers, etc.</p> <p>2-k. The Commission acknowledges that BSB is an easier saltwater fish to target for novice anglers. Especially during spawning aggregations, BSB are</p>

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		voracious and will eat a variety of bait and artificial lure presentations. Part of becoming a responsible angler is learning to practice sustainable fishing practices. The goal of any regulatory package is to make the fishery more sustainable, which will allow for future generations to enjoy the fishery.
3. Chris Arechaederra, Coastal Conservation Association of California, 1/29/2025	<p>3-a. CCA CAL represents the varied interests of CA ocean anglers and believes strong conservation can coexist with responsible, sustainable consumptive outdoor recreation.</p> <p>3-b. CCA CAL leadership has worked with CDFW as a stakeholder for the BSB Working Group.</p> <p>3-c. Catch rates of BSB alone are not sufficient to support a zero take of BSB from June 1 to Aug 31 put forth by some Commissioners at the Dec. 11, 2024, meeting.</p> <p>3-d. Much angling effort has shifted over the past several summers to Southern CA's offshore species. Some CPFVs barely fished for BSB in 2021-2023.</p> <p>3-e. Insufficient data were used to justify the creation of a no-take season.</p>	<p>3-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>3-b. The Commission and Department acknowledge and thank CCA Cal leadership for past and continued partnership in the BSB working group.</p> <p>3-c. See response 2-d.</p> <p>3-d. See response 2-e.</p> <p>3-e. The Department supports the proposed sub-bag limit of 4 BSB; however, the Department has used and presented a multitude of information to evaluate the BSB fishery and there is sufficient</p>

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	<p>3-f. Catch rates have declined for the past 12 years because of the 2013 bass (BSB, KB, SSB) regulation change.</p> <p>3-g. There has been no recent SA for BSB, so the true abundance of BSB is unknown and a maximum sustainable yield cannot be calculated.</p> <p>3-h. CDFW's report fails to adequately acknowledge the migratory nature of BSB</p>	<p>information that could support a seasonal closure if the deems it necessary. The information sources used to evaluate this fishery are from fishery-dependent data, fishery-independent data, and analyses published in peer reviewed scientific literature. Some of these include: CPFV landings, landing estimates from RecFIN, effort, habitat preferences, movements and migrations, age and growth, larvae abundance, juvenile and adult BSB abundance and size distribution, and catch-and-release versus retention rates.</p> <p>3-f. This statement is incorrect based off the CPFV logbook landings and RecFIN landing estimates. The decline in landings and CPUE started in 2005, not 2013, and bottomed out in 2016. Spawning aggregations disappearing from southern California was the key reason why BSB landings declined. The Commission does acknowledge that the regulations implemented in 2013 may have contributed to the continued decline in landings since the bag limit was reduced by half and the size limit was increased by 2 inches.</p> <p>3-g. See response 2-g.</p> <p>3-h. See response 2-h.</p>

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	<p>populations. BSB will stay in Mexico and not migrate north to spawn if the conditions are unfavorable and the migratory patterns are cyclical.</p> <p>3-i. We need to assess the numbers of BSB that migrate back and forth across the US/Mexico border.</p> <p>3-j. CPFV landings do not accurately reflect age structure and recruitment because juvenile BSB live in areas not fished by CPFVs, which will even actively avoid areas with many sub-legals.</p> <p>3-k. Economically disadvantaged and underprivileged anglers will be disproportionately adversely affected, who often rely on BSB for subsistence; a zero-take season violates the principles of JEDI.</p> <p>3-l. BSB serve as an introductory species for young anglers and a no-take season will deprive many of the opportunity to be introduced to a passion for fishing and love of the ocean.</p> <p>3-m. Dismantling CDFW's recommendations and dismissing the working group's input discourages</p>	<p>3-i. The Department is going to be working with the BSB working group to determine which scientific studies can be accomplished before this regulation sunsets in 2028. One of the studies being considered is a natural tagging study that uses the microchemistry of the BSB otoliths to determine where they have lived and traveled.</p> <p>3-j. Comment acknowledged that CPFVs do not fish in the habitat where BSB recruit.</p> <p>3-k. See response 2-j.</p> <p>3-l. See response 2-k.</p> <p>3-m. Comment noted.</p>

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	future collaboration with stakeholders to reach agreement on issues.	
4. Bekki Vanderelst, Dana Wharf Lady Anglers, 1/29/2025	<p>4-a. Opposed to establishing a no take season for BSB from June 1 to Aug 31.</p> <p>4-b. Catch rates alone should not be used as a definitive indicator of population health.</p> <p>4-c. Many have shifted effort focus to other species.</p> <p>4-d. There has been no recent, comprehensive stock assessment.</p> <p>4-e. The Department has failed to acknowledge the migratory behavior of barred sand bass.</p> <p>4-f. A no take season would disproportionately affect disadvantaged and underprivileged anglers and tribal communities.</p> <p>4-g. Collaboration between the Department and stakeholders can lead to more balanced and effective conservation solutions.</p>	<p>4-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>4-b. See response 2-d.</p> <p>4-c. See response 2-e.</p> <p>4-d. See response 2-g.</p> <p>4-e. See response 2-h.</p> <p>4-f. See response 2-j.</p> <p>4-g. Comment noted.</p>
5. Laurie Davies, Assemblywoman, 74th District, 1/30/2025	<p>5-a. Strongly opposed to any new restrictions on BSB fishing.</p> <p>5-b. California's sport fishing industry is a major economic driver, job creator, and essential contributor; the coastal cities in her district (Dana Point, San Clemente, Oceanside, and others),</p>	<p>5-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>5-b. The Commission acknowledges the importance of the sportfishing industry to the southern California economy. The BSB fishery is no longer the primary target of the southern</p>

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	charter boat operators, tackle shops, and hospitality businesses all heavily rely on tourism, small business revenue, and local job creation sportfishing provides; any new restrictions to BSB fishing will harm the local economy and fishing community in her district.	Californian short range nearshore CPFV fleet, and conservation measures used to restrict the amount of BSB take should have minimal financial impacts to the CPFVs and sportfishing landings. In the 1990s and early 2000s, BSB made up 50% or more of the summertime landings of short range nearshore CPFVs in southern California; however, the summertime landings of BSB in the past decade have been a fraction of the historic landings. From 2014-2022 BSB made up less than 5% of the total summertime landings for the short range nearshore CPFV trips in southern California. This is a result of the disappearance of the BSB spawning aggregations in southern California. To stay in business and offer fishers productive fishing trips for the past decade, CPFVs and their sportfishing landings have had to target other species like: California scorpionfish (aka sculpin), rockfish, kelp bass, ocean whitefish, and other nearshore species. Furthermore, a switch from BSB to other species is unlikely to have spillover indirect economic impacts on the bait suppliers in the area, as the primary bait for BSB are anchovies, while many suppliers primarily carry sardines for its use as a multispecies baitfish; therefore, bait suppliers are unlikely to see any costs for transitioning to an alternative bait species as they are already doing that.

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	5-c. Current regulations are effective; there are no proven conservation benefits to be gained from new restrictions.	5-c. Comment noted. See response 8-c.
6. Jaime Diamond, Stardust Sportfishing, 1/30/2025	<p>6-a. Owner of Stardust Sportfishing in Santa Barbara, thanks the Department for hosting the working group and all who participated, the process can serve as an excellent template for future collaborative fisheries management.</p> <p>6-b. Reports consensus at the 2024 BSB Working Group that collecting data for a formal SA must be the highest priority; lists types of data that should be collected for the SA, including those that align with priorities listed in the BSB ESR.</p> <p>6-c. Industry highlighted research into transboundary movements (across US/Mexico border) as a priority.</p> <p>6-d. Industry highlighted research into refining recruitment estimation methods.</p> <p>6-e. Industry highlighted the need to evaluate impacts of recent management changes (2013).</p>	<p>6-a. The Commission and Department acknowledge and thank Stardust Sportfishing for past and continued partnership in the BSB working group.</p> <p>6-b. There was consensus among the CPFV fleet/angling representatives that a formal SA must be the highest priority. The Department is pursuing the idea of a stock assessment conducted by CDFW staff, as well as using a MSE for testing prospective management options.</p> <p>6-c. See response 3-i.</p> <p>6-d. The Department is going to be working with the BSB working group to determine which scientific studies can be accomplished before and after this regulation sunsets in 2028.</p> <p>6-e. The Department continually analyzes both fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data for the BSB fishery, while always considering other factors that may influence management changes. To read more about the BSB fishery and impacts of</p>

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	<p>6-f. Expressed concerns regarding the misrepresentation of population trends due to shifting effort and climate change; expressed concerns over the presentation of data without context.</p> <p>6-g. Growth slows significantly from 12-14 inches which allows for extra years of spawning to occur and does not believe this was reflected in information provided by the Department.</p> <p>6-h Regulatory changes could negatively impact coastal communities and disadvantaged anglers; fishing provides a vital food source for many recreational anglers.</p> <p>6-i. Charter fleet continues to offer assistance for collaborative sampling; will take time to collect and analyze needed information but is essential for sound management and creating a clear roadmap showing how proposed changes will address assumed problems through science; looks forward to working together.</p>	<p>regulations please read the BSB ESR and the ISOR associated with this regulatory package.</p> <p>6-f. See response 2-e.</p> <p>6-g. The Department does incorporate this growth rate information (described in Walker et al. 2020; see BSB ESR for full citation) in analyses.</p> <p>6-h. See response 2-j.</p> <p>6-i. Comment noted. Additionally, the Commission and Department appreciate the offer of continued engagement moving forward. The Department has been in discussions with the charter and private fleets regarding different options for collaborative sampling efforts which include customized catch card technology used in other states.</p>

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7. Robert Falcone, Point Loma Sportfishing, 1/30/2025	<p>7-a. Point Loma Sportfishing Association of San Diego has been in San Diego Bay for 78 years providing fishing trips ranging from ½ day to 16 days and ½ day trips especially important for introducing new anglers to the sport.</p> <p>7-b. BSB are a vital part of the Southern California fishery and if the goal is to increase fishing opportunities in the long run it would be counterproductive to enforce regulations so restrictive they force businesses to close and would precipitate a severe economic downturn for the local CPFV fleet.</p> <p>7-c. The following factors should be thoroughly studied before any decisions about regulations are made: BSB migration across the border should be studied in collaboration with the Mexican government and universities, study the behavior, spatial distribution, and population dynamics of juvenile BSB in local coastal waters, assess whether reducing current catch levels will influence future local fish stock, exploration of existing data sets that assess local BSB recruitment strength at smaller sizes.</p> <p>7-d. Consider the broader impact of these changes on the sportfishing fleet and the preservation of recreational fishing access because we are already facing hardships from economic downturns,</p>	<p>7-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>7-b. See response 5-b.</p> <p>7-c. See responses 1-c and 2-h.</p> <p>7-d. See response 5-b.</p>

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	<p>escalating fuel prices, fishing area closures, establishment of MPAs, seasonal closures, depth limitations on bottom fishing, increasingly stringent regulations of key species such as kelp bass and BSB that have already adversely affected local sportfishing businesses, the vermilion rockfish daily sub-limit, other contributing factors such as water pollution and weather.</p> <p>7-e. Gratitude expressed for the work of the Department and looking forward to working together to find a solution.</p>	<p>7-e. Comment noted.</p>
8. Mike Harkins, CPFV Captain, 1/30/2025	<p>8-a. Has worked on local sportboats in Newport Beach for 15 years, currently main operator of the Western Pride (1/2 day boat), and grown up on the ocean; is a firsthand witness to annual changes in the fishery based on several factors; coastal fishing makes up 95% of our business.</p> <p>8-b. BSB are a key species for beginners and recreational anglers; BSB has been and continues to be one of our main staples.</p> <p>8-c. BSB are not in decline or in need of drastic action; natural population fluctuations are due to environmental factors affecting their migratory movements; current regulations are sustainable.</p>	<p>8-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>8-b. See response 2-k.</p> <p>8-c. The Department is concerned that the population has been depressed and is just starting to show signs of improvement. Abundance estimates suggest a severely depressed population in southern California. The presumed decline is</p>

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	<p>8-d. These new regulations would negatively affect sportfishing businesses, captains, and the next generation of anglers.</p> <p>8-e. Supports using regulations for conservation, but the proposed restrictions are damaging and unwarranted.</p>	<p>likely due to a combination of environmental conditions, poor recruitment, and fishing pressure on easily targeted spawning aggregations. In the mid-2010s, southern California had a large recruitment pulse of BSB larvae, and these fish have become old enough to enter the fishery around 2023/2024. This pulse of BSB have started to form spawning aggregations, which had been missing for nearly a decade. The Department's scuba surveys do not indicate another large recruitment pulse in the years following the mid-2010s recruitment pulse, as referenced in the ISOR and other presentations. These spawning fish represent the possibility of more locally sourced larvae, which will help rebuild the BSB fishery. Increased fishing of BSB spawning aggregations could undo the progress of this rebuilding fishery. The proposed regulations are in response to the Department's concern with the sustainability of this fishery.</p> <p>8-d. See response 5-b.</p> <p>8-e. Comment noted.</p>

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9. Donna Kalez, Dana Wharf Sportfishing and Whaler Watching, 1/30/2025	<p>9-a. Part owner and operator of Dana Wharf Sportfishing and Whale Watching, a family business that has been operating in Dana Point Harbor since 1971; emphasizes the importance of their business to the local fishing industry and the importance of BSB fishing to the diverse community of anglers.</p> <p>9-b. The 2013 regulation changes significantly impacted our business and customers; additional regulations on BSB fishing would negatively impact small businesses, captains, and crew members who rely on the industry.</p> <p>9-c. Many anglers, including families and those with limited budgets, depend on local fishing trips for affordable fishing opportunities and these proposed regulations represent a targeted attack on fishing access.</p> <p>9-d. Our customers do not pose a risk to the BSB population; The 2013 regulations, including the 14-inch size limit, have already contributed to sand bass conservation and will continue to do so.</p> <p>9-e. Post 2013 BSB catch declines are due to effort shifts to other species, not because fish are gone.</p> <p>9-f. There is no current stock assessment; a fisheries management plan is needed before imposing further restrictions.</p>	<p>9-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>9-b. See response 5-b.</p> <p>9-c. See response 2-j.</p> <p>9-d. See response 8-c.</p> <p>9-e. See response 2-e.</p> <p>9-f. See response 1-c and 2-g.</p>

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	<p>9-g. Scientists are only using catch reports for legal fish landed and do not capture stats regarding released fish, effort shifts, and the sheer volume of fish seen but not caught.</p> <p>9-h. BSB are migratory, and their movement patterns complicate population estimates and conservation measures.</p> <p>9-i. The 2023-2024 rise in BSB numbers suggests the species is not in decline.</p> <p>9-j. Instead of closures, a reduction in the bag limit to four fish is a more reasonable solution during a subset period of 3 years, while scientific research is prioritized to determine if a change in the bag limit is warranted, and economic impacts are weighed.</p> <p>9-k. Other environmental factors such as water pollution, sea lion predation, and climate conditions also impact BSB populations.</p> <p>9-l. The sportfishing fleet is willing to assist the Department with data collection to support conservation efforts.</p> <p>9-m. Thanks the Department and places trust in the Department to make decisions that balance environmental needs with recreational angler enjoyment and that listen to everyone's voices.</p>	<p>9-g. See response 2-i.</p> <p>9-h. See response 2-h.</p> <p>9-i. See response 8-c.</p> <p>9-j. The Commission and Department acknowledge and thank them for their support for the Department's recommendation.</p> <p>9-k. Comment noted.</p> <p>9-l. Comment noted.</p> <p>9-m. Comment noted.</p>

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10. Steve Knoblock, City of San Clemente Mayor, 1/30/2025	<p>10-a. The city of San Clemente strongly urges additional scientific studies be conducted, including assessing the current status of the population, before making significant regulatory changes to BSB management.</p> <p>10-b. Anglers report increased juvenile and adult BSB interactions, especially releases, indicating that previous regulations (reduced bag limits and increased size limits) have been effective.</p> <p>10-c. All the various fishing groups (piers, kayaks, small boats, commercial boats) that will be affected should be consulted, ensuring their input along with scientific data is considered.</p> <p>10-d. The city supports a temporary bag limit reduction while research is conducted to assess the health of the fish stock.</p>	<p>10-a. See comment 1-c.</p> <p>10-b. See responses 2-i and 8-c.</p> <p>10-c. See response 2-j. A BSB working group that included the various fishing groups, BSB researchers, and CDFW staff was formed for this purpose. A timetable of these and other outreach efforts to these groups was presented at the December 2024 Commission Discussion meeting.</p> <p>10-d. The Commission and Department acknowledge and thank them for their support for the Department's recommendation.</p>
11. Frank LoPreste, Landing/CPFV Owner/Captain, 1/30/2025	<p>11-a. Has many years of experience in the fishing industry: captain for over 60 years, owns three landings, and is part owner of many CPFVs.</p> <p>11-b. The BSB biomass moves between Baja Mexico and Southern California. BSB can be resident in some areas but also migrate based on food, water quality, and temperature.</p>	<p>11-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>11-b. See response 2-h.</p>

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	<p>11-c. The 2013 bass regulation changes have improved stock levels, which ensures sustainability without needing stricter restrictions; there is no crisis. The fleet and public report seeing many large and even more small BSB.</p> <p>11-d. Comprehensive program for measuring and tagging released fish is needed.</p> <p>11-e. Communication between CDFW and mariners should be improved for a more comprehensive data picture; make sure to consult anglers from all areas/access types, including public piers, breakwaters, docks, small boats, and shore.</p> <p>11-f. Restrictions would disproportionately impact disadvantaged shore anglers.</p> <p>11-g. Supports reducing the bag limit to four fish while working with the fishing community to gather more data.</p> <p>11-h. Conduct a full stock assessment and then revisit potentially implementing any further restrictions.</p>	<p>11-c. See response 8-c.</p> <p>11-d. The Department has an ongoing study the counts and measures released and retained bass aboard CPFVs. This information, along with similar data collected by CRFS, are used in BSB management. Please also see response 3-i.</p> <p>11-e. See response 10-c.</p> <p>11-f. See response 2-j.</p> <p>11-g. The Commission and Department acknowledge and thank them for their support for the Department's recommendation.</p> <p>11-h. Comment noted.</p>

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12. Sharif Mohamed, CPFV Captain, 1/30/2025	<p>12-a. Is a USCG Captain with 27 years of experience operating sportfishing boats in Newport Beach; operates CPFVs and also his own recreational boat.</p> <p>12-b. Has observed BSB populations firsthand and acknowledges a decline over time but also notes a resurgence in 2023.</p> <p>12-c. Highlights significant urban runoff pollution from the Los Angeles and Santa Ana Rivers and asks what is being done to reduce ocean pollution.</p> <p>12-d. Does not think local recreational anglers are having an impact on BSB; asks what data shows fishermen are suddenly impacting BSB populations; feels there is a larger oceanic cycle affecting BSB that we cannot measure through history and change.</p> <p>12-e. Restricting catch during peak season will harm recreational anglers, sportfishing operators, and summer passenger loads; will not be able to operate twilight runs.</p> <p>12-f. Calls for increased collaboration with Mexico on BSB management and asks if Mexico is implementing similar conservation measures.</p>	<p>12-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>12-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>12-c. While the Commission and Department acknowledge the significant impacts of pollution on the BSB resource and take them into consideration, reducing ocean pollution is not within the purview of the Commission or Department.</p> <p>12-d. See response 8-c.</p> <p>12-e. See response 5-b.</p> <p>12-f. Comment noted. The Department plans to increase the efforts to be in contact with researchers and management in Mexico regarding</p>

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	<p>12-g. Does not believe an aggressive change in regulations will help; advocates for delaying new regulations for 3-5 years to allow for further research and collaboration with Mexico.</p> <p>12-h. Expresses respect for the Department but calls for a compromise that will work for all stakeholders.</p>	<p>sampling efforts to fill data gaps. BSB are primarily taken in a commercial trap fishery in Baja California Sur. The Commission is not aware of Mexico implementing similar conservation measures. Fishing industry and a non-governmental organization in Mexico are working on a BSB fishery improvement program with the main objective of achieving a sustainable fishery to ultimately obtain a Marine Stewardship Council certification.</p> <p>12-g. See response 1-c.</p> <p>12-h. Comment noted.</p>
13. Rick Oefinger, Marina Del Rey Sportfishing, 1/30/2025	<p>13-a. Entire career has been in the CPFV business, starting in 1970 and primarily in Santa Monica Bay; has been the president of Marine del Rey Sportfishing, Inc. since 1995.</p> <p>13-b. Expresses skepticism over the urgency of proposed restrictions, arguing that BSB are not in immediate danger; suggests calls for emergency zero take are driven by few misguided individuals with an agenda.</p>	<p>13-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>13-b. See response 8-c.</p>

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	<p>13-c. Advocates for collecting thorough and objective data before making major management decisions. Believes BSB populations are stable and drastic action is unnecessary at this time.</p> <p>13-d. Supports the Department’s proposal for a 36-month sand bass study.</p> <p>13-e. Agrees with a 25% reduction in allowable take (reducing bag limit to 4 fish of 14 inches or longer per person, per day) as a temporary measure during the study period.</p>	<p>13-c. See response 1-c.</p> <p>13-d. The proposed regulation will sunset after three years, but there is no specific 36 month BSB study. During this time the Department will work with the BSB working group to address information gaps. See responses 3-i and 6-d.</p> <p>13-e. Support for the Department's recommendation is noted.</p>
14. Larry Phillips, American Sportfishing Association, 1/30/2025	<p>14-a. Expresses thanks for the opportunity to comment and is commenting on behalf of the American Sportfishing Association.</p> <p>14-b. Recreational fishing contributes \$6.2 billion annually to California’s economy and supports 43,000 jobs; over 50,000 BSB were harvested in 2023, suggesting significant economic benefits.</p> <p>14-c. Catch rates alone are not a reliable measure of decline; other factors such as effort shifts must be considered.</p> <p>14-d. A comprehensive stock assessment is needed before imposing further restrictions because management decisions should be based</p>	<p>14-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>14-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>14-c. See response 2-d.</p> <p>14-d. See responses 1-c and 2-g.</p>

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	<p>on accurate population data rather than indirect indicators, like catch rates.</p> <p>14-e. BSB moves between California and Mexico, so their movements and migrations patterns should be studied before making significant regulation changes.</p> <p>14-f. Restricting access may disproportionately affect disadvantaged and tribal communities.</p> <p>14-g. BSB are a key species for beginner anglers, and further restrictions could discourage the development of long-term engagement in fishing and reduce fishing license sales.</p> <p>14-h. The current size limit protects spawning fish sizes 10-14 inches and supports sustainability.</p> <p>14-i. ASA opposes emergency closures like zero-take regulations.</p>	<p>14-e. See response 2-h.</p> <p>14-f. See response 2-j. Tribal outreach was conducted and there was no concern with proposed regulation changes to limit take of BSB.</p> <p>14-g. See response 2-k.</p> <p>14-h. The Department agrees with this comment. See comment 8-c.</p> <p>14-i. This is not an emergency regulation package.</p>
15. Mark Pisano, 22nd Street Sportfishing Landing, 1/30/2025	<p>15-a. Writing to express concerns regarding increased regulations on BSB on behalf of 22nd St. Landing Sportfishing and the Los Angeles County Sportfishing fleet.</p> <p>15-b. BSB is vital to recreational fishing and supports vessel owners, crew, and local communities, as well as inspiring lifelong passions for sportfishing.</p>	<p>15-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>15-b. Comment noted.</p>

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	<p>15-c. Customer participation has declined since the 2013 bass regulation change.</p> <p>15-d. Entry-level anglers, especially low-income families, rely on BSB fishing for recreation and food; further restrictions would disproportionately impact over 60% of entry-level anglers.</p> <p>15-e. Current groundfish limits on depth, bag size, and season length are reducing angler participation, causing frustration, and exacerbating the fishing industry's financial challenges.</p> <p>15-f. Regulations must align with scientific data and fishermen's observations.</p> <p>15-g. BSB lacks a comprehensive stock assessment, which makes establishing a fisheries management plan necessary; advocates for a stock</p>	<p>15-c. The CPFV logbook data records BSB landings and number of fishers aboard each trip. These logs show a precipitous drop in number of fishers aboard CPFVs that retained at least BSB per trip starting in the mid-2000s, about a decade before the 2013 regulation was enacted. The Commission acknowledges that this regulation may not have helped participation in the BSB fishery; however, the absence of BSB spawning aggregations is the more likely culprit for dissuading fishers to choose CPFV trips targeting BSB.</p> <p>15-d. See response 2-j.</p> <p>15-e. Comment noted.</p> <p>15-f. Comment noted.</p> <p>15-g. See response 2-g.</p>

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	<p>assessment which is needed to set clear conservation goals for BSB.</p> <p>15-h. Advocates for a temporary reduction in BSB retention while addressing data gaps identified by the Department.</p>	<p>15-h. Support for the Department's recommendation is noted.</p>
<p>16. Esther Sanchez, City of Oceanside Mayor, 1/30/2025</p>	<p>16-a. BSB fishing is crucial for recreational anglers in Oceanside and a zero-bag limit would especially hurt low-income and subsistence fishers.</p> <p>16-b. Advocates for more data collection before implementing regulatory changes, emphasizing that accurate, up-to-date data be used to assess the current status of BSB populations.</p> <p>16-c. Recent observations from the angling community report increased juvenile and adult BSB interactions, especially releases, indicating that previous 2013 regulation changes have been effective.</p> <p>16-d. Requests that all impacted groups, including pier, breakwater, kayak, CPFV, and small boat anglers, be consulted.</p> <p>16-e. Supports a temporary reduction of the bag limit while further research is conducted to assess health of the BSB stock.</p>	<p>16-a. See response 2-j.</p> <p>16-b. See response 1-c.</p> <p>16-c. See response 8-c.</p> <p>16-d. Comment noted and see response 10-c. Outreach efforts have been ongoing with commercial and private fishing fleets.</p> <p>16-e. Support for the Department's recommendation is noted.</p>

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17. Chugey Sepulveda, Pfleger Institute of Environmental Research, 1/30/2025	<p>17-a. The BSB fishery lacks a formal stock assessment or Fishery Management Plan despite its significance.</p> <p>17-b. The 2013 bass regulatory changes protect the spawning stock, but the full benefits may not yet be realized; despite recent increases in the number and size of BSB landed, industry, researchers, and state managers all recognize the need to address existing data gaps and improve our capacity to manage the southern CA BSB fishery.</p> <p>17-c. In alignment with Section 5.1 of the BSB Enhanced Status Report and discussions during the 2024 BSB Working Group, key areas needing research include: better understanding of BSB stock structure, understanding effects of Mexico's BSB contributions, improving length-frequency data from retained and released catch (US and Mexico), improving mortality estimates (US and Mexico; natural, fishing, and post-release), and improving recruitment estimation methods.</p> <p>17-d. A better understanding of the above-mentioned research areas will improve our capacity to manage this valuable bi-national resource and help us understand the fluctuations in BSB</p>	<p>17-a. See response 2-g.</p> <p>17-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>17-c. See response 6-d.</p> <p>17-d. Comment noted.</p>

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	<p>abundance that have been characteristic of this fishery since the 1950's.</p> <p>17-e. Unclear stock boundaries due to transboundary movement with Mexico hinder effective management. Previous tagging studies on BSB were not designed to assess stock structure, so a comprehensive transboundary tagging study is needed for the following reasons: prior tagging studies were incomplete and lacking a tag recapture program in Mexico, conducted before the introduction of trapping and the widespread targeting of BSB in Mexico, and tagging efforts did not encompass the entire species range (south of US/Mexico border).</p> <p>17-f. With changing environmental conditions, tagging studies should be periodically revisited to understand if movements or distributions have changed over time; several studies are cited referencing ways in which water temperature and other environmentally driven factors affect recruitment dynamics and reproductive capacity which lead to fluctuations in BSB abundance.</p> <p>17-g. Considering recent information on the lack of a local spawner-recruit relationship, a full summer closure may not effectively rebuild local BSB stocks</p>	<p>17-e. See response 3-i.</p> <p>17-f. Comment noted.</p> <p>17-g. See comment 5-b.</p>

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	<p>and could severely harm the recreational fishing industry.</p> <p>17-h. Instead of a full summer closure, recommends a three year research period using industry participation to help collect and fill important data gaps as an effective way to move forward.</p> <p>17-i. Provides a Literature Cited List.</p>	<p>17-h. Comment noted.</p> <p>17-i. Comment noted.</p>
18. Wendy Tochiara, 1/30/2025	<p>18-a. The writer of this letter represents the 422 signers and opposes closing BSB fishing during the summer months.</p> <p>18-b. Closing BSB fishing during summer months is an extreme and unreasonable response that primarily supports the popular narrative of the scientific community that any fishing during spawning is bad, but we disagree.</p> <p>18-c. BSB are important to recreational anglers, children, veterans, and especially those with less disposable income; many pier and jetty anglers depend on BSB catch for sustenance; BSB are a highly prized catch.</p>	<p>18-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>18-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>18-c. See response 2-j.</p>
19. Joe Villareal, Mirage Sportfishing, 1/30/2025	19-a. Represents a CPFV that has over 30 years in this fishery and has a life of fishing in the Southern California Bight.	19-a. Comment noted.

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	<p>19-b. BSB is a critical species for the industry's economic survival; continued allowable catch of BSB is necessary to sustain business operations.</p> <p>19-c. Supports a 4-fish bag limit for three years to allow further study.</p> <p>19-d. Argues existing science/surveys are flawed and need improvement via collaboration between the Department and industry to develop a better stock assessment.</p> <p>19-e. Believes current regulations and MPAs have already ensured sustainability and we are creating a problem that is not there urges against a "kneejerk reaction" that could harm an already struggling industry.</p>	<p>19-b. See response 5-b.</p> <p>19-c. Support for the Department's recommendation is noted.</p> <p>19-d. See response 2-g.</p> <p>19-e. See response 8-c.</p>
20. William Wilkerson, B&M Sportfishing, 1/30/2025	<p>20-a. Requests postponing BSB regulatory decisions until proper research is conducted to address the critical uncertainties.</p> <p>20-b. BSB plays a critical role in the recreational fishing industry, especially for economically constrained anglers and small, family-owned party-boat operations, like his own (owns a ½ day and ¾ day fishing business in San Diego).</p> <p>20-c. Urges decision-makers to consider his recommendations to ensure a balanced approach</p>	<p>20-a. See response 1-c.</p> <p>20-b. See response 2-j.</p> <p>20-c. Comment noted.</p>

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	<p>that prioritizes both conservation and economic sustainability.</p> <p>20-d. Scientific research priorities should include: targeted research to address data gaps regarding BSB population dynamics, collaboration with Mexico to study seasonal migrations influenced by water temperature, research on juvenile populations (behavior, location, abundance) possibly through a tag and release program for short BSB, and the calculation of a maximum sustainable yield.</p> <p>20-e. Suggests the following management and conservation measures: temporary bag limit reduction to four fish, maintain existing size limit for spawning protection, and implement a total allowable catch system.</p> <p>20-f. Highlights the importance of BSB for shore and pier anglers and small family-owned businesses, warning of potential economic harm from overly restrictive measures.</p> <p>20-g. Lists key research questions to be answered including questions about: future abundance effects of reducing catch limits now, the role of fishing pressure vs environmental factors on fluctuation of BSB catches, high-abundance years possibly being a result of adult BSB migrations into</p>	<p>20-d. See comment 6-d.</p> <p>20-e. Support for the Department's recommendation is noted. Other conservation measures will be evaluated with the BSB Working Group in the coming years.</p> <p>20-f. See response 5-b.</p> <p>20-g. See response 6-d.</p>

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	<p>CA, how dependent local BSB populations are on immigration from Baja CA, and which environmental factors constrain CA BSB catches and by how much.</p> <p>20-h. Sportfishing industry supports U.S.-Mexico collaboration on BSB migration research; existing data sets on local BSB recruitment should be analyzed for additional insights.</p> <p>20-i. Notes how Southern CA is at the northern edge of the BSB range, with thriving populations in Baja CA.</p>	<p>20-h. See response 3-i.</p> <p>20-i. The Department disagrees with this statement. Southern California is part of the core range for BSB. Please see BSB Enhanced Status Report for more information and citations.</p>
21. John Yamate, Seaforth Sportfishing, 1/30/2025	<p>21-a. Is part owner and general manager of Seaforth Sportfishing on Mission Bay in San Diego; describes his long history and experience fishing in San Diego.</p> <p>21-b. BSB is a key species for local fishing trips (half-day, three-quarter-day, twilight), which provides an affordable and family-friendly alternative to longer multi-day fishing trips; the 2013 bass regulation changes already impacted the industry; further bag limit reductions or seasonal restrictions would be detrimental.</p>	<p>21-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>21-b. See response 5-b.</p>

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	<p>21-c. If changes must occur, prefers a four-fish limit with the current minimum size limit.</p> <p>21-d. Advocates for completion of a stock assessment and studies on both adult juvenile BSB before any regulatory changes are made.</p> <p>21-e. Encourages any studies to include BSB populations in northern Baja, as they are probably linked to Southern CA spawning aggregations.</p>	<p>21-c. Support for the Department's recommendation is noted.</p> <p>21-d. See response 1-c.</p> <p>21-e. See response 6-d.</p>
<p>22(a-h). David Choate, 1/31/2025</p> <p>Representative of 291 substantially similar emails* received between 1/24 and 2/26/2025.**</p> <p>*All comments are included in the rulemaking record under Exhibit 14.</p> <p>**The following individuals supplemented their comments:</p>	<p>22-a. Deeply concerned about the potential establishment of a no-take season for BSB from June 1 to August 31; believes decision to suggest a no-take season lacks sufficient scientific basis and fails to consider the ecological, social, and economic implications; respectfully urges the Commission to avoid a no-take season for BSB.</p> <p>22-b. Catch rates are not a reliable indicator of population decline; anglers and sportfishing operators have shifted focus to other species like bluefin tuna, which may create a false perception of declining BSB populations.</p> <p>22-c. There is no comprehensive, updated stock assessment to justify a no-take season.</p> <p>22-d. Migratory behavior is not considered; BSB move between different habitats and regions making localized data potentially misleading.</p>	<p>22-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>22-b. See response 2-d.</p> <p>22-c. See response 2-g.</p> <p>22-d. See response 2-h.</p>

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Comment #, Name, affiliation & date	Comment Summary	California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tami Dollar (i) • Brandon C (j) • Ricardo Briano(k) • Chris De La Torre (l) • Jeremy Soto (m) • Kyle Kredo (n) • Jack Maurer (o) • Scott Campbell (p) • Andrew Tosh (q) • Vito Tullo (r) • Alfredo Delamerced (s) 	<p>22-e. A no-take season would disproportionately negatively affect disadvantaged and underprivileged anglers, including tribal communities; these groups rely on nearshore BSB fishing for accessibility and subsistence.</p> <p>22-f. BSB is a ‘gateway fish’, helping to introduce new anglers to fishing and fostering long-term engagement; eliminating access could harm recruitment efforts and fishing license sales, impairing the success of the Department’s 3Rs program (Recruit, Retain, Reactivate).</p> <p>22-g. The industry contributes billions to California’s economy; a no-take season could have cascading negative effects, harming tackle shops, charter businesses, and tourism.</p> <p>22-h. Urges the Department to prioritize updated research and collaboration with stakeholders before establishing a no-take for BSB; a balanced approach is needed to ensure sustainable management without unnecessary restrictions.</p> <p>22-i. This is the only fish I have been able to catch. They are abundant in our area.</p> <p>22-j. I would support a limit of, instead of 5, a smaller amount but not less than 2 of any species.</p>	<p>22-e. See response 2-j.</p> <p>22-f. See response 2-k.</p> <p>22-g. See response 5-b.</p> <p>22-h. Comment noted.</p> <p>22-i. See response 1-a.</p> <p>22-j. Comment noted. The Commission adopted a limit of 4 barred sand bass.</p>

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	<p>22-k. Fluctuation in sand bass catch rates is due to fisherman skill level and the difficulty of catching sand bass.</p> <p>22-l. Start hiring per experience and not by boxes checked.</p> <p>22-m. Fishing is the last bastion of American freedom</p> <p>22-n. Scientists are too far removed from the fish species they study to make accurate recommendations. Fishing industry trends are changing and El Nino water conditions will affect sand bass.</p> <p>22-o. Fishing has done valuable things for my life and wellbeing.</p> <p>22-p. Support regulations such as requiring circle hooks to reduce post-release mortality in order to promote conservation without eliminating access to the species.</p> <p>22-q. Consider alternatives such as catch-and-release during spawning. Population has increased over the last 4-6 years.</p> <p>22-r. Catch rates alone are not indicative of population figures. Regulations are rarely revisited</p>	<p>22-k. See response 2-i.</p> <p>22-l. This comment is not relevant to the proposal and adopted regulations.</p> <p>22-m. Comment noted.</p> <p>22-n. See responses 1-a, 2-h, and 29-c.</p> <p>22-o. Comment noted.</p> <p>22-p. The regulations concern bag and possession limits for barred sand bass and do not contemplate a closure to all fishing for the species.</p> <p>22-q. See response 1-a. Closing catch-and-release fishing for barred sand bass was not considered.</p> <p>22-r. See response 1-a. Without further action, the sunset of the adopted provisions will return the</p>

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	<p>by sunset dates. Sustainable fishing practices are essential for future generations.</p> <p>22-s. Suggests a slot limit of 14-18 inches for take of barred sand bass to protect spawning stocks.</p>	<p>barred sand bass regulations to as they existed prior to the rulemaking. Comment noted.</p> <p>22-s. See response 8-c.</p>
23. Tonie Bangos, Coastal Conservation Association of California, 2/13/2025	<p>23-a. California species are subject to oceanographic conditions. There is a correlation between the availability of anchovies and barred sand bass (BSB) catch rates.</p> <p>23-b. Lack of funding is the response to lack of data or stock assessment. We want to protect stocks without doing unnecessary harm to anglers. Hear from CPFV captains and the anglers. The fishery community needs to be included in policy discussions.</p>	<p>23-a. While anchovies are a forage fish for BSB, there are no peer reviewed scientific journal articles that support this correlation. In the SA for northern anchovy, “Assessment of the northern anchovy (<i>Engraulis mordax</i>) central subpopulation in 2021 for US management”, Kuriyama et al. 2022, there has been a large annual biomass of young-of-year anchovy present in southern California since 2016; however, 2014-2022 BSB landings from CPFVs were the lowest ever recorded. If these two stocks were correlated, then the Department would have expected to see higher landings and abundance of BSB during these years.</p> <p>23-b. Comment noted and see response 10-c.</p>

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24. Donna Kalez, Dana Wharf Sportfishing owner, 2/13/2025	<p>24-a. The proposed BSB regulation changes should only be reduced by 1 fish or remain the same at 5 while more science is conducted.</p> <p>24-b. There are so many small fish that we're not reporting, and that we can't show you, unless you're on the water.</p> <p>24-c. Any reduction in the bag limit will impact her business.</p>	<p>24-a. Support for the Department's recommendation is noted.</p> <p>24-b. See response 2-i.</p> <p>24.c. See response 2-j.</p>
25. Brian Woolley, Dana Wharf Sportfishing captain, 2/13/2025	<p>25-a. Captain with 28 years of experience with 200 days on the water per year.</p> <p>25-b. Has seen a considerable rise in sub 14 inch sand bass caught from his vessel and more common to catch and release small BSB than legal sized BSB. This shows there is no shortage of juvenile BSB. Also, these fish do not have hook trauma showing they are not repetitively catching the same fish.</p>	<p>25-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>25-b. See response 8-c.</p>
26. Ken Franke, Sport Fishing Association of California, 2/13/2025	<p>26-a. Represents many commercial passenger fishing vessels (CPFVs) in the south coast.</p> <p>26-b. Past 10 years, the bag limits for BSB have been reduced from 10 to 5 fish, and the 10 inch to 14 inch spawning age adults have been released. Captains are seeing a recovery, not a crisis.</p>	<p>26-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>26-b. See response 8-c.</p> <p>26-c. See response 20-i.</p>

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	<p>26-c. It's important to state our border region is the fringe of a biomass extending hundreds of miles down into Mexico.</p> <p>26-d. SAC continues to recommend working on science data collection related to BSB while also permitting sport fishing access to the resource. We advocate that the information of all parties be integrated so a good decision is made based on the totality of the inputs.</p>	26-d. Comment noted.
27. Merit McCrea, Sport Fishing Association of California science coordinator, 2/13/2025	<p>27-a. Cites Love et al 1996 stating BSB are easier for novice anglers to catch, and mentions spawning aggregations based on anecdotal observations but does not provide scientific description of them. The science makes two primary assumptions that appear unverified. The first is that BSB are aggregated and highly localized at a few specific locations during the summer months.</p> <p>27-b. The second is that participating fish represent most of the local population. Our captains observed that there's a high probability of subsidy by northward migrants during those high catch years.</p> <p>27-c. Asks to look at note provided comparing catch rates of barracuda and BSB.</p>	<p>27-a. BSB spawning aggregations are well documented in the scientific literature. Here is a list of some citations that reference the BSB spawning aggregations: Turner et al. 1969, Feder et al. 1974, Love et al. 1996, Hovey et al. 2002, Erisman and Allen 2006, Jarvis et al. 2010, McKinzie et al. 2014, Teesdale et al. 2015.</p> <p>27-b. See response 2-h.</p> <p>27-c. Comment noted.</p>

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28. Fred Huber, CPFV Captain, 2/13/2025	<p>28-a. Over 40 years running CPFV.</p> <p>28-b. This past summer, we saw one of the best aggregations of BSB we've seen in 30 years. Barely scratched at what was there.</p> <p>28-c. BSB are a recreational classified fish, and it cannot be trapped or netted.</p> <p>28-d. A seasonal closure on a recreation fish only would be unprecedented. Closing it during the summertime has not been taken into consideration.</p>	<p>28-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>28-b. See response 8-c.</p> <p>28-c. Comment noted.</p> <p>28-d. There are seasonal closures for a variety of species managed by the Department, including: California grunion, rockfish and other groundfish, California sheephead, California spiny lobster, etc.</p>
29. Aaron Graham, Captain of the Native Sun, 2/13/2025	<p>29-a. A video produced by the Sport Fishing Association of California to explain the issues and recommendations and much of this video I did film myself on the water.</p> <p>29-b. The BSB is a recreational resource that has supported California anglers for over a century. As a voracious coastal predator, BSB continue to be a staple for the Southern California recreational fishery, typically ranking within the top five species caught in most years. From CPFVs to kayak and pier fishermen, BSB play an integral role in supporting outdoor recreation in providing food for local families.</p> <p>29-c. Like most of California's coastal resources, BSB abundance has been shown to fluctuate from year to year based on changing environmental</p>	<p>29-a. The Commission and Department appreciate the effort put forth to produce and share the video.</p> <p>29-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>29-c. The Commission and Department acknowledge and agree with these points with some additions. While the influence of various changing factors on BSB recruitment and stock productivity are complicated, progress has been</p>

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	<p>conditions. Unfortunately, BSB recruitment and the factors that influence stock productivity are not fully understood.</p> <p>29-d. In 2013, stringent management regulations were put in place to protect the BSB resource changing bag limit from 10 to 5 bass and increased minimum retention limit from 12 to 14 inches in length. BSB mature around 10 ½ inches so regulations ensure BSB have several spawning seasons prior to becoming legal for harvest.</p> <p>29-e. Industry releases far more mature BSB than before and the management changes are finally bearing fruit and seeing improved BSB fishing in southern California.</p> <p>29-f. Committed to improving BSB management and want to see year-round access to this resource. Believe path forward is through sound scientific research and continued collaboration</p>	<p>made regarding understanding those dynamics that we can incorporate into stock assessments and MSE. For instance, data indicate BSB pulse recruitment is linked to warm-water events, there is a negative relationship between year-to-year recruitment and catch, strong larval recruitment is sporadic, and larval recruitment data have been shown to predict future BSB catch (both CPFV harvest and total estimated catch).</p> <p>29-d. Comment noted.</p> <p>29-e. Comment noted.</p> <p>29-f. Comment noted.</p> <p>29-g. Comment noted.</p>

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	<p>between our management partners and the sport fishing community.</p> <p>29-g. The video then shows fishers catching and releasing sublegal BSB.</p>	
30. Jason Cutter, 2/13/2025	<p>30-a. BSB is already regulated, which allows the fish multiple opportunities for spawning before reaching the take size limit.</p> <p>30-b. The size distribution of the BSB caught from 2017 to 2023 in southern California has increased favorably for spawning.</p> <p>30-c. No formal stock assessment exists for the BSB, which is a dangerous precedent for regulations to be made without data in the future.</p> <p>30-d. BSB is listed as least concerned by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, which means it does not need to be the focus of wildlife conservation.</p> <p>30-e. Finally, according to the California Constitution, Article I, Declaration of Rights, Section 25, “the people should have the right to fish upon and from the public lands of the state and the</p>	<p>30-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>30-b. The Department agrees, see response 8-c for more information.</p> <p>30-c. See response 2-g.</p> <p>30-d. The International Union for Conservation of Nature does not monitor the current health of the BSB population, that is the role of the Department. The last assessment from the International Union for Conservation of Nature was done in May 1, 2008.</p> <p>30-e. Comment noted.</p>

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	waters thereof.” Does not support further closure of BSB.	
31. Matt Ryan, 2/13/2025	<p>31-a. Reconsider this decision to close the BSB resource in California.</p> <p>31-b. Been fishing for 40 years in southern California and the BSB was first fish they caught. Through fishing for BSB, learned the importance of conservation and how to maintain a proper bag limit, size limit and to keep a legal fish.</p> <p>31-c. The BSB are delicious. BSB are a sustainable local resource for us to eat and it is available to many diverse people in our community.</p> <p>31-d. Concerned that bag limit reduced to zero will affect license sales and local fishing landings.</p>	<p>31-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>31-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>31-c. See response 8-c.</p> <p>31-d. See response 5-b.</p>
32. Alex Estevez, 2/13/2025	32-a. I agree with all the statements of all the other captains and people that oppose this proposition.	32-a. Comment noted.
33. David Clinkscales, 2/13/2025	<p>33-a. Please listen to these sports fishers. They have over 30 to 50 years on the water fishing every day.</p> <p>33-b. This vote is not about BSB. To me, it looks to be another step towards shutting down fishing in California. Don't shut down the BSB fishery.</p>	<p>33-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>33-b. Comment noted.</p>

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34. Brian Siwecki, 2/13/2025	<p>34-a. Lifelong angler and has been fishing since a young age.</p> <p>34-b. Thinks commissioners discussing transparencies to be questionable and creates more distrust among fishers.</p> <p>34-c. The lack of quality and quantity of data for BSB has allowed commissioners to skip steps of implementing good policy tactics to push their agenda for personal career gain without sufficient evidence.</p> <p>34-d. Taking away our BSB species poses an economic threat directly and indirectly to local communities. It will greatly affect lower socioeconomic communities for magnitude of generations to come, which transparently will go against the board's vision of diversity, equity, and inclusion.</p> <p>34-e. In my statement with that people won't remember exactly what you said, but never forget how you made them feel.</p>	<p>34-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>34-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>34-c. Comment noted.</p> <p>34-d. See response 2-j.</p> <p>34-e. Comment noted.</p>
35. Jim Holden, Fish for Life, 2/13/2025	<p>35-a. Takes special needs kids ocean fishing.</p> <p>35-b. I support sustainable fishing practices; I believe that allowing anglers to retain a legally sized BSB is a reasonable and meaningful exception.</p>	<p>35-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>35-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>35-c. Comment noted.</p> <p>35-d. See response 8-c.</p>

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	<p>35-c. Ninety-five percent of the fish we caught on our trips are released and we catch plenty of small BSB.</p> <p>35-d. Their population certainly appears to be thriving.</p> <p>35-e. Allowing the kids to catch and keep a BSB is not just about fishing, it's about instilling a sense of pride, accomplishment, and building self-esteem. I urge the Commission to consider the positive impact that keeping a legal size BSB has on young anglers and ensure that any regulatory changes do not take away this meaningful experience.</p>	35-e. Comment noted.
36. Steve Duncan, 2/13/2025	36-a. 100% against barring the BSB fishery. Has taken children and grandchildren fishing. Don't take this away. Three F's of fishing: family, fun and fishing.	36-a. Comment noted.
37. Rene DeLeon, 2/13/2025	37-a. Please don't take away the BSB fishery. Has a lifetime of fishing with family and is important to them.	37-a. Comment noted.
38. Martin Jordan, 2/13/2025	<p>38-a. I've been a fisherman in Southern California for the last 60 some years of my life.</p> <p>38-b. The sports fishing industry will severely suffer consequences economically, and I really believe you should consider keeping the sand bass fishery open.</p>	<p>38-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>38-b. See response 5-b.</p> <p>38-c. See response 8-c.</p> <p>38-d. See response 2-h.</p>

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	<p>38-c. There has been no scientific evidence supporting the fact that there is a shortage of this fish in our local waters.</p> <p>38-d. They are a migratory fish and they're cyclatory.</p> <p>38-e. So please heed the answers that the scientific community can respond with and continue surveys to support the local fisheries.</p> <p>38-f. Please consider no closures of the bass fisheries we get to enjoy here in California.</p>	<p>38-e. Comment noted.</p> <p>38-f. Comment noted.</p>
<p>39. John Stanley, 2/13/2025</p>	<p>39-a. Concerned recreational fisherman, and I would like to express my deep concern regarding this proposed amendment on the BSB.</p> <p>39-b. This proposal lacks scientific research and data. There's no evidence, proper data and no stock assessment.</p> <p>39-c. I think it says this on the website, I believe that this proposal will have effects on both our environment and the community of anglers who rely on this species for sustenance and recreation. The long-term implications may inadvertently cause irreversible damage to our marine environment. It is imperative to consider the long-term implications of this proposed amendment. Sustainable fishing practices are essential. Any of our natural</p>	<p>39-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>39-b. See responses 2-d, 2-g, 3-e, and 8-c.</p> <p>39-c. More restrictive conservation measures that promote sustainable fisheries will not cause irreversible damage to the marine environment.</p>

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	resources by prioritizing immediate gains over the preservation of the BSB populations.	
40. Andrew S, 2/13/2025	<p>40-a. Against closing down the BSB fishery.</p> <p>40-b. It is a unique fishery where those who are low income are able to participate in this sport. A lot of people, they can't afford to go out on a full day, two day, three day trip to go out and hunt big game fish like tuna or yellowtail or marlin, but many can cash out \$30-40 in order to learn how to fish the same way I learned how to fish with my grandparents and my dad. BSB gives them that opportunity to do so. I would just say please reconsider closing this fishery.</p> <p>40-c. Use proper scientific data that show that BSB is abundant and migratory.</p> <p>40-d. And with the proper bait and techniques you can catch these fish all day long.</p>	<p>40-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>40-b. See response 2-j.</p> <p>40-c. See response 2-d and 2-h.</p> <p>40-d. Comment noted.</p>
41. Motorola edge plus, 2/13/2025	<p>41-a. I'm expressing my deep concern regarding the proposal amendment to alter the regulation on recreational take of BSB.</p> <p>41-b. This proposal lacks scientific research and data.</p> <p>41-c. As a dedicated advocate for preserving our natural ecosystem, I believe that this proposal will</p>	<p>41-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>41-b. See responses 2-d, 2-g, 3-e, and 8-c.</p> <p>41-c. See response 39-c.</p>

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	have serious effects on both our environment and our community of anglers who rely on the species for sustenance and recreation. The long-term implication may inadequately cause irreversible damage to our marine environment. It is imperative to consider the long-term implication of this proposed amendment. Sustainable fishing practices are essential to ensure that future generations continue to enjoy the bounty of our natural resources. By prioritizing immediate gain over preservations of BSB populations, we may inadvertently cause irreversible damage to our marine environment. I urge the commission to reconsider this proposal amendment and consider the potential positive impact of our ecosystem.	
42. Rusty Padia, 2/13/2025	42-a. On the proposed amendments, it was saying there would be minimal impacts on small businesses and I just like to go against that. If you take away the BSB fishery, especially for the local half day and three quarter boats, you're going to be forcing them into huge fuel bills running to Catalina. There's going to be a big impact with where you can and can't fish. I work on the Freelance out of Davies Locker, it's a three-quarter day fishing boat, but it would absolutely decimate our twilight run and the half day boats.	42-a. See response 5-b. 42-b. See responses 2-d, 2-g, 3-e, and 8-c.

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	42-b. I don't think there's proper data. I could honestly say there hasn't been any data. Nobody comes on the boat to survey anything. And over the last three or four years, I've seen more and more sand bass over the course of the last three or four years than I have in previous years.	
43. iPhone2 Tim, 2/13/2025	43-a. The BSB is a recreational fishery that built the sport fishing industry. Without this fish there will be a huge economic impact up and down the coast, there will be a domino effect of businesses closing. 43-b. I disagree with this closure.	43-a. See response 5-b. 43-b. Comment noted.
44. Brandon, 2/13/2025	44-a. I'm in favor of reducing the bag limit by one, and I would also like to pose an increase in the size limit. 44-b. I do not agree with reducing it to zero because that will negatively impact charters. 44-c. It is a good recreational fish that a lot of people actually end up throwing back. 44-d. The data is not really too conclusive, but if you would like to increase their numbers and increase the ability for us to catch them in the long term, increase in the size limit and reduce bag limit by one.	44-a. Support for the Department's recommendation is noted. A size limit increase may potentially be considered when considering future conservation measures. 44-b. See response 5-b. 44-c. Comment noted. 44-d. See responses 2-d, 2-g, 3-e, and 8-c.

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45. Dave Hansen, 2/13/2025	<p>45-a. This is a highly migratory fish. It spends most of its time down in Mexico, and then it migrates up into the southern California area in the June, July, and August months where it's accessible to everybody.</p> <p>45-b. You don't need to have a lot of money to catch this fish. This fish fits into DEI since it is very accessible to the masses. It's a highly recreational fish and is how we started out our career fishing for this fish.</p> <p>45-c. I can't understand why we would regulate a highly migratory fish.</p>	<p>45-a. See response 2-h.</p> <p>45-b. See response 2-j.</p> <p>45-c. BSB are not recognized as a highly migratory species. Highly migratory species are heavily monitored and regulated by the Commission, Department, and other federal agencies.</p>
46. Robert Graber, 2/13/2025	<p>46-a. I've been fishing in California for over 60 years, so I've seen many cycles of fish go up and down.</p> <p>46-b. And I'm in agreement with all the other comments in opposition to this proposal.</p> <p>46-c. Recreational fishermen are the original conservationists, and we support sustainable fisheries.</p> <p>46-d. So please consider getting good science first before making any reductions in our limits. Collect good data, get information on the sustainability of the stock, and get information on the migratory and</p>	<p>46-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>46-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>46-c. Comment noted.</p> <p>46-d. See responses 2-d, 2-g, 3-e, and 8-c.</p>

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	spawning habits of these fish before considering any reductions in our limits.	
47. DBCustoms, 2/13/2025	<p>47-a. I strongly disagree with the zero take closure of BSB with no proper science.</p> <p>47-b. Also the huge economic impact that it's going to have on everything from donut shops to bait companies to landings to the pier fishermen. The economic impact is going to be huge.</p> <p>47-c. BSB are great beginner catch and to close that would be really bad.</p>	<p>47-a. See response 39-b.</p> <p>47-b. See response 5-b.</p> <p>47-c. See response 2-k.</p>
48. David's iPad 3, 2/13/2025	<p>48-a. I'm writing to express my deep concerns regarding the potential establishment of the no take for the BSB. I believe the decision lacks sufficient science basis and fails to consider the broader ecological, social, and economic implications. I respectfully urge the commission to avoid a no-take season for barred sand bass on the following points.</p> <p>48-b. Catch rates are not indicative of species decline. Catch rates alone should not be used as a definitive indicator of population health.</p> <p>48-c. Failure to acknowledge migratory behaviors. Reports from the California Department of Fish and</p>	<p>48-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>48-b. See response 2-d.</p> <p>48-c. See response 2-h.</p> <p>48-d. See response 2-k.</p> <p>48-e. See response 5-b.</p>

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	<p>Wildlife do not adequately reflect the migratory nature of BSB.</p> <p>48-d. BSB plays a critical role as a gateway species for young and novice anglers in the saltwater recreational fishing community and a no-take would prevent them from introductory into fishing.</p> <p>48-e. The recreational fishing industry is a significant contributor to California's economy and this closure would negatively affect businesses.</p>	
49. Charles Stephens, 2/13/2025	<p>49-a. I beg you not to close this fishery.</p> <p>49-b. I take underprivileged kids and handicapped people to learn to fish. If there's no more party boats, then they're not going to be able to fish. Don't reduce this bag limit. All the sport boats will go out of business, bait barges will go out of business.</p>	<p>49-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>49-b. See response 5-b.</p>
50. Frank Ursitti, H&M Landing Owner, 2/13/2025	<p>50-a. BSB are a vital species for recreational anglers in Southern California.</p> <p>50-b. Excessive restrictions will put fishing operations at risk of closure.</p> <p>50-c. BSB is the gateway species of recreational fishing, fostering a lifelong passion for the sport.</p> <p>50-d. Our fleet observes a high number of juvenile fish daily and short bass are released, continuing to</p>	<p>50-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>50-b. See response 5-b.</p> <p>50-c. See response 2-k.</p> <p>50-d. See responses 2-i and 3-i.</p> <p>50-e. See response 2-h.</p>

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	<p>spawn. However, this demographic of BSB goes undocumented. I recommend a study into the movement and behavior of released fish. I also recommend a study into the origin of the large volume of fish appearing seasonally in the summer.</p> <p>50-e. These are not comprised solely of local resident fish. This species is spread over many hundreds of miles of coastline and the California bight is the upper fringe of this range.</p> <p>50-f. Those I represent support implementing a bag reduction to four fish.</p> <p>50-g. Additional science is needed to determine the population dynamics of this cross-border species. We urge the Commission to prioritize research through collaboration with stakeholders.</p>	<p>50-f. Support for the Department's recommendation is noted.</p> <p>50-g. See response 3-i.</p>
51. Aaron Orsini, 2/13/2025	<p>51-a. I would like to reiterate that I support Jason Cutter, Frank Ursitti, Captain Dave Hanson, and others talking here.</p> <p>51-b. I wanted to emphasize the economic impact that this closure would mean for a lot of fishermen. I've seen what happens when charter boats can't make a large enough season to continue their business. And it affects a lot more than just the fishermen and the boats. It affects local businesses, taco shops and many other facets of the economy. So please keep in mind the</p>	<p>51-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>51-b. See response 5b.</p>

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	economic impacts these decisions are having all over California and the entire west coast.	
52. Chugey Sepulveda, Pfleger Institute of Environmental Research, 2/13/2025	52-a. We have really unique opportunity right now to bring together managers, fishery scientists and our industry to address some of the important data gaps that we know that have existed and still exist for better managing the BSB resource. This collaboration would actually build a lot of trust between managers and the fishing community. If we were to go towards a closure, it would really detract and it would preclude any data collection. It would set back this collaboration that we need to have between our managers and our fishing industry.	52-a. Comment noted. See response 6-d.
53. Anupa Asokan, Fish On, 2/13/2025	<p>53-a. Most state level management is done without stock assessments. Fishery management is inherently data limited and decisions are regularly made with the best information available.</p> <p>53-b. There's very compelling data here to support a precautionary approach and consideration of a seasonal closure for the future of the species. A seasonal closure can be undone and a fishery collapse cannot.</p> <p>53-c. And I also want to emphasize the opportunity here to support shore-based and true subsistence</p>	<p>53-a. Comment noted. See response 2-g for more background information.</p> <p>53-b. The Commission agrees that there is sufficient data to support more precautionary management measures; however, the Commission and Department want to maintain trust with the fishing community by working together towards filling some information gaps about BSB. The Commission believes BSB are not in danger of a fishery collapse in the next few years. The Department will be working with fishing industry</p>

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	<p>fishing communities who are concentrated on piers and jetties. Catch quality has severely declined for these communities over the decades.</p> <p>53-d. BSB are actually under public health advisories here in the Los Angeles area.</p> <p>53-e. And this is an opportunity to directly support the long-term health of a species and begin to restore resources for near shore fishing communities.</p>	<p>representatives, BSB researchers, and non-governmental organizations representatives over the long term to identify high priority research projects to fill information gaps and discuss sustainable conservation measures, based on the best available science, to protect BSB spawning aggregations in the future.</p> <p>53-c. Comment noted.</p> <p>53-d. Comment noted.</p> <p>53-e. Comment noted.</p>
54. Rick Maurer, 2/13/2025	<p>54-a. I've been scuba diving the Santa Monica Bay area for approximately 50 years and I have never seen this area lacking in BSB. There are large schools of them in the hundreds in 30 to 50 foot of water between Sunset Boulevard and Topanga Canyon and they vary in size from 12 to 18 inches. At the numerous artificial reefs that the Fish and Game Commission has built, they are the most prevalent fish on the reef. Here, they vary in size from 14 to 24 inches and some even larger.</p> <p>54-b. I don't believe this fish should be on the endangered list.</p> <p>54-c. There needs to be more underwater science by scuba divers to determine the actual stock assessment.</p>	<p>54-a. See response 1-a.</p> <p>54-b. See response 1-b.</p> <p>54-c. The Department performs scuba surveys to count and size BSB during the fall months at 10 sites from San Diego to Santa Monica Bay. These surveys have been ongoing since 2017 and the data are being used to inform a SA for BSB. Additionally, the Vantuna Research Group has been performing fish surveys on scuba that sample BSB habitat since the 1970s. These data were presented at the July and November 2024 Marine Resources Committee meetings and the December 2024 Fish and Game Commission meeting.</p>

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55. Bob Lohrman, 2/13/2025	<p>55-a. I grew up in the sport fishing industry running boats for 10 years and then I went over and I started my own business as an offshore environmental company. We work for many different public agencies from the EPA collecting BSB. We've done thousands of scientific otter trawls all along the California bight. We caught a lot of BSB and that data is available.</p> <p>55-b. I fished the spawning aggregates in my earlier years and it was amazing fishery, all of a sudden they would be gone. They're highly migratory. Every year I do a long range trip and we catch plenty of fish. Coming up the coast there was numerous spots of BSB.</p> <p>55-c. They are not endangered at all.</p>	<p>55-a. Comments noted. The Department will be inquiring more about the studies the commentor has participated in.</p> <p>55-b. See response 2-h.</p> <p>55-c. See response 1-b.</p>
56. Mr. Wolf, 2/13/2025	56-a. How come we don't get the studies of a migratory fish?	56-a. See response 2-h.
57. Larry Phillips, American Sport Fishing Association, 2/13/2025	57-a. The challenge we're hearing is a lot of folks are questioning the science. Many of us are involved in the stock assessment process through the council which defines abundance in terms of unfished biomass and clearly we don't have that. We would strongly encourage CDFW to invest in stock assessments that will allow us to allow the	<p>57-a. See responses 2-d, 2-g, 3-e, and 8-c.</p> <p>57-b. Please note a BSB working group that includes representatives of the fishing industry, BSB researchers, and Department staff has been established. See response 10-c.</p>

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	<p>agency to accurately estimate biomass. What we can't have is we're fine, we're fine, we're in trouble.</p> <p>57-b. What we need is to collectively partner with the industry. We're willing to help if we have confidence in the need for conservation closure, conservation challenges, reductions in fisheries.</p>	
58. Chris Renk, 2/13/2025	<p>58-a. I am here to emphasize the importance of making an informed decision for our fishing community.</p> <p>58-b. The BSB initiative will be a significant impact on our local economy, businesses, and the next generation of anglers.</p> <p>58-c. Fishing sand bass is more than just a pastime, it's a gateway for the youth, lower income and individuals that are less fortunate to engage and appreciate the marine environment.</p> <p>58-d. Fishing community contributes significantly to our state, 1.2 to 2.5 million fishing licenses are issued annually.</p>	<p>58-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>58-b. See response 5-b.</p> <p>58-c. See response 2-k.</p> <p>58-d. Comment noted.</p>
59. Duane James, 2/13/2025	<p>59-a. This last season we had some of the best bass fishing ever, catching multiple at a time. Every quarter mile you can stop and get bass, it's a wonderful fishery.</p> <p>59-b. We need to save it and keep it for our kids in the future.</p>	<p>59-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>59-b. Comment noted.</p>

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60. Tom Troop, 2/13/2025	60-a. Fishing BSB given the caller and family a way to bond, be conservation minded, stay motivated in school and keep from doing drugs.	60-a. Comment noted.
61. Tom Stephens, 2/13/2025	<p>61-a. I don't think there's any scientific studies that are backing this.</p> <p>61-b. These are migratory fish and they should tag some bass from Mexico all the way up the coast. They should start a tagging system like we do with salmon and trout.</p> <p>61-c. Why shut down family businesses that have operated for over 50 years? This will have big impacts on them.</p> <p>61-d. They follow the anchovies, like people they follow the food. You don't catch BSB on an eight inch sardine.</p>	<p>61-a. See responses 2-d, 2-g, 3-e, and 8-c.</p> <p>61-b. See responses 2-h and 3-i.</p> <p>61-c. The Commission wants to manage the BSB resource in a way that it will be available for future generations and does not want to intentionally shut down family businesses. Please see response 5-b.</p> <p>61-d. See response 23-a</p>
62. Owner, 2/13/2025	<p>62-a. You can't catch sand bass on eight inch sardines.</p> <p>62-b. We've been in a warm water year for quite some time now. Now that we're going to anchovies catch is increasing.</p> <p>62-c. It's a migrating fish, it follows the sardines.</p>	<p>62-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>62-b. See response 23-a.</p> <p>62-c. See response 2-h.</p>

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63. Tony Mayfield, 2/13/2025	<p>63-a. I totally disagree with everything you're saying.</p> <p>63.b There's no science behind this. I disagree with everything.</p>	<p>63-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>63-b. See responses 2-d, 2-g, 3-e, and 8-c.</p>
64. the Slider, 2/13/2025	<p>64-a. About 60 years of fishing experience in southern California.</p> <p>64-b. There's BSB out there every single time I go out and the ratio of sand bass to calico is about two to one.</p> <p>64-c. These fish are migratory and they're out there all year long.</p> <p>64-d. Please don't limit the catch of BSB because it's introductory fish for all the kids.</p>	<p>64-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>64-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>64-c. See response 2-h.</p> <p>64-d. See response 2-k.</p>
65. Lisa Nishko, 2/13/2025	<p>65-a. I have well over 30 plus years fishing and scuba diving in Southern California.</p> <p>65-b. I have personally caught and seen many sand bass and can assure you there is no such shortage.</p> <p>65-c. I am against your unnecessary and redundant restrictions on any and all of our coveted fish. I implore you to not take any more fish away from us. This is not a sports fishing problem. As you can see and hear from all of us, your science is not adding up.</p>	<p>65-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>65-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>65-c. Comment noted.</p>

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66. Frank Moreno, 2/13/2025	<p>66-a. I agree with everything that's been said.</p> <p>66-b. There is a problem that we're not talking about, the water, and that's the there's so much pollution in our area. That's where we need to focus on.</p> <p>66-c. The fish are plentiful. I don't believe that we should restrict them.</p> <p>66-d. Our kids need to be able to fish as an introductory fish that needs to be available to our fishery.</p>	<p>66-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>66-b. See response 14-c.</p> <p>66-c. Comment noted.</p> <p>66-d. See response 2-k.</p>
67. Patrick, 2/13/2025	<p>67-a. You guys are taking the fish counts from the last 10 years for BSB on the sport boats. In the last 10 years, we've had a big run of pelagics fish come in. So sport boats, even the half day boats, are spending a lot of their time looking for the pelagic fish and they're not fishing for the BSB. Once the pelagic fish disappear more, you're going to see a lot higher fish counts on the BSB.</p>	<p>67-a. See response 2-e.</p>
68. Joaquin, 2/13/2025	<p>68-a. I'm a local deaf fisherman from Southern California.</p> <p>68-b. Commissioners reducing BSB fishing in Southern California is unnecessarily harmful to the economy. BSB fishing supports thousands of jobs and generates millions for local businesses, including tackle shops, charter boats, and tourism.</p>	<p>68-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>68-b. See response 5-b.</p> <p>68-c. See response 8-c.</p> <p>68-d. See response 12-c.</p> <p>68-e. Comment noted.</p>

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	<p>Restrictions would hurt these industries and coastal communities.</p> <p>68-c. Second, conservation success. Existing size and bag limits are working. Studies show BSB are one of the top sport fish in Southern California, and current management strategies are keeping populations stable.</p> <p>68-d. Third, the real environmental impact. The biggest threats to BSB are habitat loss and environmental changes, not responsible fishing. Addressing pollution and habitat degradation would do more for conservation than limiting anglers.</p> <p>68-e. Fourth, public trust. Anglers support conservation and have historically funded fishery programs. More unnecessary restrictions will damage trust and reduce participation in the sport.</p>	
<p>69. Alan Clowers, Fishing Guide, 2/13/2025</p>	<p>69-a. I agree with everyone's comments.</p> <p>69-b. There's many kids that can't afford to go offshore and I've taken hundreds of kids on my little skiff to fish for BSB.</p> <p>69-c. I plead with you guys to keep it at five fish and I do not agree with the people that said to reduce it to four, I believe it should stay at five.</p> <p>69-d. I see flocks and flocks of flocks BSB out there and please don't take this away from the kids.</p>	<p>69-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>69-b. See response 2-j.</p> <p>69-c. Comment noted.</p> <p>69-d. Comment noted.</p>

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70. Caller 767, 2/13/2025	<p>70-a. I agree with all the prior callers.</p> <p>70-b. I'm just asking you to not ban us from more civil liberties that we should have. You're not using science. You're not going and actually finding where the fish are. You're going out and fishing wherever they're not.</p>	<p>70-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>70-b. See responses 2-d, 2-g, 3-e, and 8-c.</p>
71. Lyall Bellquist, 2/14/25	<p>71-a. Many public commentators have been saying the conservation concerns regarding BSB populations are only based on catch rates, which is untrue; the concern is based on numerous scientific data sources (both fishery-dependent and fishery-independent).</p> <p>71-b. All the information/data combined illustrates two major points of concern: 1) intense fishing pressure at documented aggregation sites was followed by the collapse in BSB catch metrics, and a decade-long absence of spawning aggregations, and 2) recruitment events are highly inconsistent and depend on specific oceanographic conditions.</p> <p>71-c. Some public comments suggested that spawning aggregations are "unverified" or "anecdotal" or based on a single study, which is untrue; all of us have personal experiences, there are multiple studies, multiple spatial data analyses, and video evidence that all confirms the existence</p>	<p>71-a. Comment noted. See response 2-c and 2-d.</p> <p>71-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>71-c. See comment 27-a.</p> <p>71-d. Comment noted.</p> <p>71-e. Comment noted. See response 2-h.</p> <p>71-f. Comment noted. See response 2-g.</p> <p>71-g. Comment noted.</p> <p>71-h. Comment noted.</p> <p>71-i. Comment noted.</p>

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	<p>of these summer aggregations and the targeting of these sites by fishing fleets.</p> <p>71-d. Photos of sub-legal fish were used as evidence of strong recruitment, but they actually support scientific findings of "pulse recruitment"; recruitment occurs in cycles, with a current pulse into the fishery expected to last from 2022-2028, after which another decade-long period of low recruitment could occur; without regulation, overfishing during this pulse could lead to another population crash.</p> <p>71-e. Some claim there is insufficient tagging data, but BSB have been studied extensively, including three large-scale tag-recapture programs (1960s, 1990, 2010s) and several acoustic tagging studies (at least eight published BSB tagging studies since 2010); best available science from all studies combined shows BSB are not highly migratory beyond seasonal spawning movements.</p> <p>71-f. Agrees a formal stock assessment is lacking and multiple publications have called for one, but we do not need a stock assessment to tell us the aggregations have disappeared, the catch and size structure were both hyperstable, the landings declined by over 90% relative to the 2005-2007</p>	

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	<p>peak, and the spawning stock biomass has been significantly reduced.</p> <p>71-g. Meaningful management decisions are needed now, not later.</p> <p>71-h. If a stock assessment is conducted it needs to explicitly account for "hyperstability" in both catch and age/length data.</p> <p>71-i. Pictures, figures, and citations were included throughout the letter.</p>	

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Written comments (72-76) which appeared in adoption hearing materials are responded to here (received up to March 17, 2025), responses to written comments (77-83) received up to April 17, 2025 and to oral comments (84-126) received at the April 17, 2025, Fish and Game Commission meeting.

List of acronyms: BSB = barred sand bass; CPFV = Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel; CRFS = California Recreational Fisheries Survey; Commission = California Fish and Game Commission; Department = California Department of Fish and Wildlife; ESR = Enhanced Status Report; ISOR = Initial Statement of Reasons; MLMA = Marine Life Management Act; MSE = Management Strategy Evaluation; NFMP = Nearshore Fishery Management Plan; PSOR = Pre-Adopt Statement of Reasons; RecFIN = Recreational Fisheries Information Network; SA = stock assessment; summertime – months of June, July, August.

Comment #, Name, affiliation & date	Comment Summary	Response
72. Wendy Tochiara, 2/10/25	<p>72-a. The writer of this letter represents the 715 signers and opposes closing BSB fishing during the summer months.</p> <p>72-b. Closing BSB fishing during summer months is an extreme and unreasonable response that primarily supports the popular narrative of the scientific community that any fishing during spawning is bad, but we disagree.</p> <p>72-c. BSB are important to recreational anglers, children, veterans, and especially those with less disposable income; many pier and jetty anglers depend on BSB catch for sustenance; BSB are a highly prized catch.</p>	<p>72-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>72-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>72-c. BSB are not the only nearshore species available to CPFVs, private boats, and shore-based fishers to target. Since 2013, BSB have constituted less than 10% of the summertime landings for short range CPFVs, with most years in this range less than 5% of landings. There are a variety of easy to catch nearshore species for everyone to target besides BSB like kelp bass, California scorpionfish (aka sculpin), ocean whitefish, rockfishes, California sheephead, surfperches, croakers, etc.</p>
73. David Alatorre, 2/11/2025	<p>73-a. Saltwater fisherman and actively deployed in the military.</p> <p>73-b. BSB are an introductory species</p>	<p>73-a. Comment noted; thank you for your service.</p> <p>73-b. The Department acknowledges that BSB is an easier saltwater fish to target for novice anglers. Especially</p>

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	<p>73-c. Should not be a no take species.</p> <p>73-d. Half day charters could not survive without BSB, and shift focus to sculpin and calico bass.</p> <p>73-e. Does not currently keep BSB, but BSB get the passengers aboard CPFVs excited. Wants to keep that enthusiasm for local CPFV fishing.</p>	<p>during spawning aggregations, BSB are voracious and will eat a variety of bait and artificial lure presentations.</p> <p>73-c. The Commission adopted a sub-bag limit of 4 BSB; however, the Department has used and presented a multitude of information to evaluate the BSB fishery and there is sufficient information that would have supported a seasonal closure if the Commission deemed it necessary. The information sources used to evaluate this fishery are from fishery-dependent data, fishery-independent data, and analyses published in peer reviewed scientific literature. Some of these include: CPFV landings, landing estimates from RecFIN, effort, habitat preferences, movements and migrations, age and growth, larvae abundance, juvenile and adult BSB abundance and size distribution, and catch-and-release versus retention rates.</p> <p>73-d. The Commission and Department acknowledge the importance of the sportfishing industry to the southern California economy. The BSB fishery is no longer the primary target of the southern Californian short range nearshore CPFV fleet, and conservation measures used to restrict the amount of BSB take should have minimal financial impacts to the CPFVs and sportfishing landings. In the 1990s and early 2000s, BSB made up 50% or more of the summertime landings of short range nearshore CPFVs in southern California; however, the summertime landings of BSB in the past decade have been a fraction of the historic landings. From 2014-2022 BSB made up less than 5% of the total summertime landings for the short range nearshore CPFV trips in southern California. This is</p>

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		<p>a result of the disappearance of the BSB spawning aggregations in southern California. To stay in business and offer fishers productive fishing trips for the past decade, CPFVs and their sportfishing landings have had to target other species like: California scorpionfish (aka sculpin), rockfish, kelp bass, ocean whitefish, and other nearshore species. Furthermore, a switch from BSB to other species is unlikely to have spillover indirect economic impacts on the bait suppliers in the area, as the primary bait for BSB are anchovies, while many suppliers primarily carry sardines for its use as a multispecies baitfish; therefore, bait suppliers are unlikely to see any costs for transitioning to an alternative bait species as they are already doing that.</p> <p>73-e. Comment noted.</p>
74. Austin Carter, 2/11/25	<p>74-a. Concerned about potential closure of BSB as an angler, business owner, and advocate for sustainable fishing.</p> <p>74-b. Restricting or closing this fishery would have significant economic consequences for these industries while also diminishing a beloved pastime for many.</p> <p>74-c. Encourages the use of science-based management practices, such as seasonal regulations, size limits, and catch quotas, to balance conservation efforts with continued access to this resource.</p>	<p>74-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>74-b. See response 73-d.</p> <p>74-c. Comment noted.</p>

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75. Lyall Bellquist, 4/2/25	<p>75-a. Extensive background including fisherman, PhD in marine biology, and career working in marine science.</p> <p>75-b. I fished for BSB here in the 1990s and early 2000s, when over 1M fish were caught annually by the CPFVs and private vessels combined; I was here during the BSB fishery decline from 2007-2012; I watched the BSB spawning aggregations disappear from 2012-2014, remaining absent from 2014-2023; and I saw the nascent emergence of the first new cohort in the last decade during this year's summer spawning season, which was heavily fished under status quo regulations.</p> <p>75-c. The BSB recreational fishery in southern California is not data-limited. There are approximately 30 peer-reviewed publications focusing directly or indirectly on this species since 2000. All agree about the decline of the fishery from 2007-2012 and the sustained collapse from 2012-2023.</p> <p>75-d. The regulations enacted in 2013 did not do enough to rebuild the BSB fishery. Kelp bass showed a strong recovery which was supported in the scientific literature and by the recreational fishing community. BSB failed to recover as illustrated by the disappearance of all known spawning aggregations, and effective fishery collapse from 2013-2023.</p>	<p>75-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>75-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>75-c. Comment noted.</p> <p>75-d. Comment noted.</p> <p>75-e. Comment noted.</p> <p>75-f. Comment noted.</p> <p>75-g. Comment noted.</p> <p>75-h. Comment noted.</p> <p>75-i. Comment noted.</p>

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	<p>75-e. BSB is trying to rebuild itself under the recent favorable environmental conditions, but the fishery continues to target the spawning aggregations under status quo regulations with highly predictable consequences. This is especially problematic given that the best available science shows that this recruitment pulse has no additional cohorts coming behind it, so our opportunity to conserve the nascent spawning stock biomass is now.</p> <p>75-f. A June-August spawning season closure would allow the fishery to rebuild.</p> <p>75-g. Spawning season closures are common, both globally and in California, for conserving spawning stocks. Implementing a spawning season closure would not represent a new type of regulation among California state-managed fisheries.</p> <p>75-h. A seasonal closure will not cause significant hardship to the recreational fishing industry. CPFVs already operated successfully from 2013-2023 when BSB aggregations were absent after the fishery closed itself under status quo regulations. A seasonal closure would thus not add any hardship that hasn't already been successfully navigated by the fleet for the last decade.</p> <p>75-i. Development of a stock assessment for BSB while interim conservation measures are implemented over a three-year period would be extremely helpful for clarification of stock status, streamlining decision-</p>	

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	making, minimizing debates and mistrust between fishery stakeholders, and reducing current management decision lags in this highly important fishery.	
76. Matthew Pagano, City of Dana Point Mayor, 2/18/25	<p>76-a. Understands the necessity of taking precautionary measures to ensure sustainability but wants consideration for the broader implications of the regulatory changes on the local fishing community.</p> <p>76-b. A reduction in bag limits and potential restrictions could have economic consequences for local businesses and may discourage recreational fishing participation.</p> <p>76-c. Encourages continued communication between the Department and stakeholders.</p> <p>76-d. Concerned there is more need for enhanced scientific data to monitor and understand the BSB population dynamics. Requests that the Department consider flexible approaches that may consider gear regulations, monitoring initiatives, and targeted outreach programs.</p> <p>76-e. Supports sustainable practices while ensuring the fishing community continues to thrive.</p>	<p>76-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>76-b. See response 73-d.</p> <p>76-c. Comment noted.</p> <p>76-d. Catch rates are just one of the metrics that are used to evaluate the BSB fishery. Fishery-dependent data, fishery-independent data, and analyses published in peer reviewed scientific literature are used to evaluate this fishery. Some examples of these include: CPFV landings, landing estimates from RecFIN, effort, habitat preferences, movements and migrations, age and growth, larvae abundance, juvenile and adult BSB abundance and size distribution, and catch-and-release versus retention rates.</p> <p>The Department acknowledges that no formal SA has been done for BSB. The Master Plan for Fisheries describes a scaled management approach that is applied to all fisheries and the overall management framework can range from an ESR to an ESR along with a complex fisheries management plan. BSB are managed with an ESR along with rulemaking on an as-needed basis. Abundance estimates suggest a severely depressed population in southern California. The presumed decline is likely due to a combination of environmental conditions, poor recruitment, and fishing pressure on easily targeted</p>

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		<p>spawning aggregations. The Department is pursuing the idea of a formal SA conducted by Department staff, as well as using a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for testing prospective management options.</p> <p>The Commission adopted the proposed sub-bag limit of 4 BSB; however, the Department has used and presented a multitude of information to evaluate the BSB fishery, including those listed above, and there is sufficient information that would have supported a seasonal closure if the Commission deemed it necessary.</p> <p>The BSB fishery data and scientific research used in this regulatory package can be found in the meeting materials from the Marine Resources Committee meetings in July and November 2024 and the Notice hearing in December 2024. More information about BSB can be found in the ESR for BSB on the Department's website.</p> <p>The Department will be working with fishing industry representatives, BSB researchers, and non-governmental organizations representatives over the long term to identify high priority research projects to fill information gaps and discuss sustainable conservation measures, based on the best available science, to protect BSB spawning aggregations in the future.</p> <p>76-e. Comment noted.</p>

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77. Justin Patino, 3/25/25	<p>77-a. Seasoned angler that fishes a lot on the sport fishing boats.</p> <p>77-b. Most of the boats don't even bother going for sand bass right now so confused why restrict them completely. But understands if all boats are targeting them.</p>	<p>77-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>77-b. The Commission and Department acknowledge that the offshore fishing for pelagic species like bluefin tuna, yellowfin tuna, dorado, and yellowtail has been exceptional for the past decade; however, the southern California short range nearshore CPFVs and private boats are still fishing for BSB and other nearshore species. The nearshore fleet has had to change what nearshore fishes they target because the BSB spawning aggregations have been absent for nearly a decade, so they have had to fish for other species. In 2023 and 2024, when BSB aggregations were present, the nearshore CPFV fleet focused their effort to target BSB. This leads the Department to believe that when spawning aggregations of BSB are present, the short range nearshore CPFV fleet and private boats will focus their effort on targeting spawning BSB and will switch to target other species if these BSB spawning aggregations are not present.</p>
78. Lyall Bellquist, 2/11/25	<p>78-a. The California Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) places the burden of proof onto the state management process to demonstrate that the recreational barred sand bass fishery is sustainable, which has not been accomplished.</p> <p>78-b. The California MLMA also “strongly emphasizes science-based management (CDFW, 2025),” but the full Commission as only been given a single, brief BSB science presentation (only 15 slides) from CDFW during the December 2024 meeting, prior CDFW science</p>	<p>78-a. Comment noted. Although the MLMA iterates shifting the burden of proof toward demonstrating that fisheries and other activities are sustainable, it also emphasizes science-based management developed with the help of all those interested in California’s marine resources. To this, the MLMA also has several underlying goals including fisheries management recognizing the long-term interests of people dependent on fishing, and minimizing adverse impacts of management measures on fishing communities. One of the tools MLMA uses is constituent</p>

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	<p>presentations were reserved to the MRC meetings and working group meetings only. The several available data sources and publications indicate that the barred sand bass fishery is not sustainable, and meaningful management action is needed for this fishery, yet the best available science has not been presented to the Commission.</p> <p>78-c. The full Commission and the fishing public have not been provided a comprehensive scientific understanding of the dual problem faced by the BSB fishery, and it was not communicated to the full Commission or to the public that the anecdotal information and the available science are actually very well aligned, and they point to the same need for meaningful management action.</p> <p>78-d. The Department initiated working group discussions by proposing a 3-month spawning season bag limit of 0 fish, and a 2-fish limit during the remainder of the year, a 76.1% annual catching savings for BSB. However, walked it back to a 1-fish year round reduction in the daily bag limit, only a 3.5% annual catch savings. A 3.5% reduction in catch will not provide meaningful conservation impact, and if sustainability in this fishery cannot be demonstrated, then greater catch savings than 3.5% are needed until a stock assessment can provide clearer guidance for management of this fishery.</p>	<p>involvement that places a strong emphasis on decision-making that is open and that involves people who are interested in or affected by management measures. Barred sand bass are also managed through the NFMP, with regulations designed to balance recreational fishing with the need for conservation and sustainability.</p> <p>78-b. The Commission has been privy to all necessary materials through a mixture of Commission presentations, meeting supplemental materials, the ISOR, the PSOR, public comment summaries, ESR content, and Commission staff representation on stakeholder calls and workshops.</p> <p>78-c. Comment noted.</p> <p>78-d. Comment noted.</p> <p>78-e. Comment noted.</p>

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	<p>78-e. From 2012-2014, I led a tagging project in collaboration with SAC, with the objective of understanding kelp bass and barred sand bass demographics and movement patterns. Only able to tag 1,079 BSB, despite searching repeatedly at their known spawning sites during peak spawning season. During this time, 45 of 50 CPFV captains were interviewed to provide a comprehensive synthesis of captains' perspectives on the kelp bass and BSB fishery. Only 60% of CPFV captains believed the BSB stock was healthy compared to 84% for kelp bass, a clear recognition by the CPFV captains that the BSB fishery was less healthy than the kelp bass fishery.</p>	
<p>79. Anupa Asokan, Fish On, 4/2/25</p>	<p>79-a. Fish On would like to express our concerns about the health and status of the BSB fishery in Southern California. We want to rebuild this fishery so it is viable and sustainable for generations to come; a seasonal closure and bag limit reduction is critically necessary and supported by data, science and our recreational fishing community.</p> <p>79-b. BSB has a considerable amount of sound credible data, study and science, and lessons learned from the last regulatory change that point to the critical necessity of a seasonal closure to ensure a future for barred sand bass. Failure to do so will not only ignore an opportunity to support everyday anglers but would also set a dangerous precedent of ignoring the California</p>	<p>79-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>79-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>79-c. Comment noted.</p> <p>79-d. Comment noted. Additionally, many different management procedures, including slot limits and various bag limits, will be tested and considered during the upcoming MSE process.</p> <p>79-e. Comment noted. Also, see response 78-a.</p>

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	<p>Department of Fish and Wildlife’s own science in favor of commercial interests.</p> <p>79-c. No fishery can be sustainably fished when spawning aggregations are easily targeted and aren't protected. We must take action to protect the current spawning stock or we will likely face another fishing-induced collapse. Fish On supports the original recommendation for a June - August seasonal closure to protect spawning aggregations of BSB, and a two fish bag limit the remaining months of the year.</p> <p>79-d. Many members of our community have expressed support for slot limits in addition to appropriate bag limits to enhance BSB fishing and conservation.</p> <p>79-e. We must take a more precautionary approach to fishery management or the environment will set limits for us. Waiting for science to conclusively prove the need for conservation is not only inconsistent with the Marine Life Management Act but may put us on a path from which we cannot ever recover a fishery. As fishers and stewards of the ocean, we are committed to reducing our impact and allowing species to recover when needed.</p>	
80. Katie O'Donnell, WILDCOAST, 4/3/25	80-a. Our organizations are deeply concerned about the devaluation of science in guiding management decisions. Such a way of governing a public trust resource is inconsistent with the Commission Mission Statement and the MLMA. Not applying and utilizing	80-a. See response 78-a. 80-b. Comment noted. Additionally, Commissioners based their decision on input from all stakeholder groups and Department staff input.

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	<p>CDFW’s own research data and that of the scientific experts on the BSB working group will set a dangerous precedent. BSB management should not reject the CDFW’s data and the best available science.</p> <p>80-b. Decision making that is based on maintaining social capital with a portion of the fishing fleet, overrides conservation benefits to a depleted fishery, and prioritizes the interests of one extractive stakeholder group is unjust.</p>	
81. Rick Maurer, 4/10/25	<p>81-a. Avid scuba diver for over 50 years and a fisherman.</p> <p>81-b. Concerned that the science used to base your decisions on for the BSB is either too old, not accurate, or peer reviewed.</p> <p>81-c. Please post or provide all the documentation you used to base your decisions on so the stakeholders can do a thorough peer review.</p>	<p>81-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>81-b. See response 76-d.</p> <p>81-c. All information presented at the Commission meeting or the Marine Resources Meeting can be found at https://fgc.ca.gov/ or in the BSB Enhanced Status Report (https://marinespecies.wildlife.ca.gov/barred-sand-bass/true/).</p>
82. Donna Kalez, Dana Wharf Sportfishing and Whale Watching, 4/10/25	<p>82-a. Sportfishing landing owner. The landing provides a variety of lengths of trips for people to go sportfishing.</p> <p>82-b. Taking away BSB would be devastating to the sportfishing industry.</p> <p>82-c. CPFVs play a crucial role allowing access to fishing for those who do not own a boat.</p>	<p>82-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>82-b. See response 73-c.</p> <p>82-c. Comment noted.</p> <p>82-d. The Department acknowledges and thanks them for their support for the Department’s recommendation.</p> <p>82-e. Comment noted. Additionally, the Department appreciates the offer of continued engagement moving</p>

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	<p>82-d. Supports the proposed limit of 4 BSB and expresses gratitude to FGC and the Department.</p> <p>82-e. Members of the sportfishing community are eager to participate in tagging programs to demonstrate that sand bass are an abundant species and are not at risk. We also hope to demonstrate the transboundary behavior of the stock as it travels from Mexico to our US waters.</p> <p>82-f. It's important to keep access open while we are regulated on other species, imposing regulations without adequate scientific evidence would be regrettable and devastating. We are grateful that you have favored the path of collecting more data while not closing a fishery that has huge value to our customers and families.</p>	<p>forward. The Department has been in discussions with the charter and private fleets regarding different options for collaborative sampling efforts which include customized catch card technology used in other states.</p> <p>82-f. The Department acknowledges and thanks them for their support for the Department's recommendation.</p>
83. Ken Franke, Sportfishing Association of California, 4/11/25	<p>83-a. Acknowledges the outstanding work of the Department and members of the BSB working group.</p> <p>83-b. The CPFV fleet has dropped by a third from 1998 to 2025 and passenger capacities have dropped due to COVID, making it more difficult to operate these businesses.</p> <p>83-c. BSB are a coastal fish and a primary quarry commonly available near shore and from shore.</p> <p>83-d. There are hundreds of miles of coastline in Baja California and California in which BSB thrive.</p>	<p>83-a. The Department acknowledges and thanks Sportfishing Association of California for past and continued engagement.</p> <p>83-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>83-c. Comment noted.</p> <p>83-d. Comment noted.</p> <p>83-e. Comment noted.</p> <p>83-f. As BSB at 10 to just under 14-inches grow and recruit into the fishery, there is no evidence that a substantial biomass is following to fill that void. In addition,</p>

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	<p>83-e. Recruitment is sporadic and largely influenced by environmental conditions.</p> <p>83-f. There is no crisis. The 10-inch to 14-inch adult spawning sand bass, which are already protected and released, ensures the species sustainability.</p> <p>83-g. There is little information on the maximum sustainable yield of the BSB population. This needs to be quantified as part of an assessment.</p> <p>83-h. BSB should be managed to a total allowable catch.</p> <p>83-i. BSB are an especially important quarry to those with the least economic resources, including shore and pier anglers, many of whom rely on the food benefits of their recreational fishing efforts. Has outreach been done to this community regarding the nearshore catches and observations as they could have much different information than offshore vessels? Is there a socioeconomic impact on them and their obtaining food security?</p> <p>83-j. Among the economically constrained are the anglers who opt for the least expensive party-boat trips fishing coastal waters. These small family-owned party boat businesses operate on the thinnest of margins. They are reliant on BSB as one of the most desirable fish they provide fishing opportunities for. If the goal is to ultimately provide greater fishing opportunities it would be counterproductive if conservation measures</p>	<p>the BSB spawning biomass too short to be retained can still be caught and released, potentially many times over, and is susceptible to negative effects from the catch-and-release process, leading to either short-term or longer-term post release mortality.</p> <p>83-g. The Department is pursuing the idea of a stock assessment conducted by Department staff, as well as using a MSE for testing prospective management options.</p> <p>83-h. Comment noted.</p> <p>83-i. See response 72 c. Additionally, while CRFS collects fishery-dependent data for all fishing modes, including catch and effort for shore and pier based anglers, these collections are not technically outreach campaigns. BSB should be avoided as a way to obtain food security given the health risks associated with consumption; the State of California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment posts consumption advisories (https://oehha.ca.gov/fish/species/barred-sand-bass) based on coastal area and consumer demographics (age, sex).</p> <p>83-j. See response 73-d.</p> <p>83-k. The Commission adopted a four-fish sub-bag limit for BSB. The Department and Commission acknowledge recommendations from the fishing community and the need to close necessary data gaps and looks forward to collaboration in advance of the adopted regulation's 2028 sunset.</p>

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	<p>were so extreme/draconian it compelled these business operators to close.</p> <p>83-k. The organization makes several recommendations for future BSB management measures and supports a four-fish bag limit for BSB in the interim.</p>	
84. Chris Arechaederra, Coastal Conservation Association of California, 4/17/25	<p>84-a. Positive experience working together. Appreciate working group last year and happy to keep working together moving forward.</p> <p>84-b. Can help collect data and eager to help. Recognize science done by scientists and CDFW staff and see them as partners. Can't do it alone, want to work together for data collection.</p>	<p>84-a. The Department acknowledges and thanks them for their support for the Department's recommendation.</p> <p>84-b. Comment noted.</p>
85. Merit McCrea, Sportfishing Association of California science coordinator, 4/17/25	<p>85-a. Thoughtful consideration of those closest to the BSB resource. Supports 4 fish bag limit for BSB with 3 year sunset.</p> <p>85-b. Support the scientific work from the Department. Supports starting a trans-boundary traditional tagging effort to see if potential northward migration could be captured. 4 fish bag limit will cap at current catch levels.</p>	<p>85-a. The Department acknowledges and thanks them for their support for the Department's recommendation.</p> <p>85-b. Comment noted.</p>
86. Ken Franke, Sportfishing Association of California president, 4/17/25	<p>86-a. In support of 4 fish bag limit to cap the impact.</p> <p>86-b. Want to work collaboratively for data collection and analysis. Believe this will lead to a well-informed, sustainable and constructive outcome.</p>	<p>86-a. The Department acknowledges and thanks them for their support for the Department's recommendation.</p> <p>86-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>86-c. Comment noted.</p>

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	86-c. Want to ask people to be professional, thoughtful. Thanks to the DFW and FGC staff.	
87. Laura Dehan, Environment California director, 4/17/25	<p>87-a. Deep concern about today's proposal and opposition to such little action to be taken. The public trusts the Department and FGC to use science to make decisions.</p> <p>87-b. Science shows clear need for conservation action and the Department proposed action to reduce by 76% until side conversation were had. The species is at risk. Precedent that could harm all marine life management.</p>	<p>87-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>87-b. The Department agrees the species is at risk and action must be taken. The Department came to the current recommendation based on input from Department scientists in addition to input from all stakeholder groups.</p>
88. Jamie Diamond, Sportfishing Association of California vice president, 4/17/25	<p>88-a. Reading letter submitted by Katrina Foley, Orange County supervisor.</p> <p>88-b. Support 4 bag limit with sunset. Proposed framework allows data collection, protecting BSB populations without impacting sportfishing. The research driven approach strengthens conservation efforts and supports sustainable management practices that benefit both the fishery and the people who rely on it. Thousands of people rely on fishing hub and it's an important pass-time.</p>	<p>88-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>88-b. The Department acknowledges and thanks them for their support for the Department's recommendation.</p>
89. Tomas Valdez Azul, 4/17/25	89-a. Supports closing of fishery June through August to protect BSB spawning aggregations, and reduce bag limit for the remainder of the year. The population has	<p>89-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>89-b. Comment noted.</p>

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	<p>long-term decline but closures would benefit everyone in the long-term.</p> <p>89-b. Subsistence fishery helps ensure health of fishery to the future with seasonal closures. Subsistence and shore-based fishers are often overlooked.</p>	
90. Sandy Aylesworth, NRDC, 4/17/25	<p>90-a. Supportive to consider seasonal closure.</p> <p>90-b. Speaking up today that only a symbolic change today won't arrest decline of BSB populations. Anecdotal evidence of shorts this year is supported by scientists predicting juveniles to recruit into the fishery from 2022 to 2028. Anecdotes aren't evidence fishery is rebounding.</p> <p>90-c. Build trust with ALL stakeholders. Ad-hoc working group not representative of all stakeholders.</p> <p>90-d. Additional research can happen with anglers even with a closure.</p>	<p>90-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>90-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>90-c. Other stakeholder groups will be added to the BSB Working Group.</p> <p>90-d. Comment noted.</p>
91. Larry Phillips, American Sport Fishing Association, 4/17/25	<p>91-a. Last stock assessment in 2012.</p> <p>91-b. Recent data shows BSB catch increases contradict claims of extreme conservation need. Upward trend in landings could suggest recovery but the fact is we just don't know.</p> <p>91-c. Fish are caught in relation to relative availability.</p>	<p>91-a. BSB have never had a published peer review SA.</p> <p>91-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>91-c. Comment noted.</p> <p>91-d. See response 83-g.</p> <p>91-e. Comment noted.</p> <p>91-f. Comment noted.</p>

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	<p>91-d. A desire for stock assessments and comprehensive studies on migration and environmental influences.</p> <p>91-e. Request: Adopt regulation from CDFW, provide funding to do stock assessments address gaps, and work with stakeholders transparently.</p> <p>91-f. Not okay for commenters to be threatening, hope everyone will be inclusive.</p>	
92. Donna Kalez, Dana Wharf Sportfishing and Whale Watching, 4/17/25	<p>92-a. Finish reading Foley's letter: Small, locally owned recreational businesses contribute significantly to our thriving coastal economy. Overly restrictive management of BSB would undermine fishing communities and small businesses that depend on fishing.</p> <p>92-b. BSB is managed without stock assessment or fisheries management plan.</p> <p>92-c. More letters from Assembly-members and senators, mayors, etc. all support 4 fish sub-bag limit.</p>	<p>92-a. See responses 73-d and 72-c.</p> <p>92-b. The Department acknowledges that no formal SA has been done for BSB. The Master Plan for Fisheries describes a scaled management approach that is applied to all fisheries and the overall management framework can range from an ESR to an ESR along with a complex fisheries management plan. BSB are managed with an ESR along with rulemaking on an as-needed basis and the NFMP. Abundance estimates suggest a severely depressed population in southern California. The presumed decline is likely due to a combination of environmental conditions, poor recruitment, and fishing pressure on easily targeted spawning aggregations. The Department is pursuing the idea of a formal SA conducted by Department staff, as well as using an MSE for testing prospective management options.</p> <p>92-c. The Department acknowledges and thanks them for their support for the Department's recommendation.</p>

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93. Brian Woolley, Dana Wharf Sportfishing and Whale Watching captain, 4/17/25	93-a. Also want to support Ken Franke's comments. Wants to help provide additional data for the Department. Looking forward to collaborative process.	93-a. Comments noted.
94. Fishin Matt, 4/17/25	<p>94-a. Does not support the new bag limit.</p> <p>94-b. Can't negatively effect populations with rod and reel.</p> <p>94-c. Only using catch numbers from sport boats and not taking into consideration private boaters and other fishermen makes it seem like your using science that fits your narrative.</p> <p>94-d. Real problem are sea lions and ocean runoff.</p> <p>94-e. If pier and jetty fishermen aren't catching sand bass, it's because their range is limited. BSB are everywhere and plentiful, I can't get away from them.</p>	<p>94-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>94-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>94-c. Catch rates are just one of the metrics that are used to evaluate the BSB fishery. Fishery-dependent data, fishery-independent data, and analyses published in peer reviewed scientific literature are used to evaluate this fishery. Some examples of these include: CPFV landings, landing estimates from RecFIN, effort, habitat preferences, movements and migrations, age and growth, larvae abundance, juvenile and adult BSB abundance and size distribution, and catch-and-release versus retention rates.</p> <p>94-d. Comment noted.</p> <p>94-e. Comment noted.</p>
95. Lisa Onyshiko, 4/17/25	95-a. Thirty years of experience, responsible boat owner and member of CCA and Your Saltwater Guide. Want 100% transparency with 0 bias. Strongly oppose taking away any fish. Agree with Matt.	95-a. Comment noted.

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96. Mike Lewis, 4/17/25	<p>96-a. Your saltwater Guide, boat owner, and fishes the Channel Islands.</p> <p>96-b. At last meeting, there would be no economic impact. I keep my boat in marina \$400 a month, pay guy to clean boat, buy tackle. There will be economic backlash.</p> <p>96-c. Fishing rights are god-given and George Washington wrote the Constitution on fishing.</p>	<p>96-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>96-b. See response 73-d.</p> <p>96-c. Comment noted.</p>
97. Kathy Welch, 4/17/25	<p>97-a. Support closure June-Aug to protect spawning aggregations and a reduced bag limit for remainder of the year.</p> <p>97-b. Data on BSB comes from catch-rates and studies independent of the fishery. Can manage fishery without SA.</p> <p>97-c. No evidence BSB are migratory.</p> <p>97-d. Disadvantaged communities have most to gain from proper BSB management.</p> <p>97-e. Catch and release still available with closed season and there are other species in the summer to target. Want more BSB in the future.</p>	<p>97-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>97-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>97-c. Comment noted.</p> <p>97-d. Comment noted.</p> <p>97-e. Comment noted.</p>
98. Anupa Asokan, Fish On, 4/17/25	<p>98-a. Fishing interest association that supports equitable common-sense management of marine resources.</p>	<p>98-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>98-b. Comment noted.</p>

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	<p>98-b. Summer closure and 2 fish sub-bag limit rest of year would benefit unrepresented fishing communities.</p> <p>98-c. Working group is a critical component but wants it to be more inclusive. Tribes and general public interest groups should be included.</p>	<p>98-c. See response 90-c. Additionally, the Department sent letters to 385 Tribes and tribal representatives and have not received any responses for inclusion in these discussions.</p>
99. Charles Stevens, 4/17/25	<p>99-a. BSB are migratory. Everywhere from Mexico to SoCal. Find fish everywhere, more in the summer and for the most part, migratory fish.</p> <p>99-b. DEI fish for people who can't afford long-range trips.</p> <p>99-c. Financial impact on long-standing fishing companies would be adversely impacted.</p> <p>99-d. Important to tag these fish and figure out their migrations.</p> <p>99-e. There were way more fish when we had a 10 fish bag limit.</p>	<p>99-a. Acoustic tagging studies completed in the 2010s, have shown BSB have a small home range where they spend most of the year. During the summer months, tagged fish were detected at local spawning aggregations, between 10-30 miles from their home reefs. Tagged BSB were detected back at their home reefs after the spawning season.</p> <p>The main contribution of Mexican BSB to southern California is thought to be through large sporadic larvae pulses. During warm water years, upwelling in northern Baja California is interrupted, which can allow for BSB larval transport into southern Californian waters.</p> <p>99-b. See response 72-c.</p> <p>99-c. See response 73-d.</p> <p>99-d. The Department is going to be working with the BSB Working Group to determine which scientific studies can be accomplished both before and after this regulation sunsets in 2028. One of the studies being considered is a natural tagging study that uses the microchemistry of the BSB otoliths to determine where they have lived and traveled.</p>

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		99-e. Comment noted.
100. Brett Endter, 4/17/25	<p>100-a. There is a lot of confusion here and the data is not all set yet. Want more targeted, relative science and data.</p> <p>100-b. Don't support reg changes at this point.</p>	<p>100-a. The Department is going to be working with the BSB Working Group to determine which scientific studies can be accomplished before and after this regulation sunsets in 2028.</p> <p>100-b. Comment noted.</p>
101. Fred Huber, Point Loma Sportfishing captain, 4/17/25	<p>101 a. Owner of CPFV Daily Double in Point Loma.</p> <p>101-b. BSB were found in 20 fathoms of rocky bottom not soft-bottom off Imperial Beach. Fish were aggregated on rockfish fry, never seen that before.</p> <p>101-c. Been contributing data with logbooks for over 40 years and it is not easy.</p> <p>101-d. Financial impact is hard to predict as there are too many variables.</p>	<p>101-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>101-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>101-c. Comment noted.</p> <p>101-d. Comment noted.</p>
102. Jeffrey Zepeda, 4/17/25	<p>102-a. Father and grandfathers took us BSB fishing. Take my kids fishing. Want to take my grandkids fishing. I catch them all year round.</p> <p>102-b. Come in mass with barracuda because they are migratory.</p> <p>102-c. I'm first-nation and we don't all live on reservations. We go out fishing with families to bring</p>	<p>102-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>102-b. See response 99-a.</p> <p>102-c. The Department sent letters to 385 Tribes and tribal representatives and have not received any responses for inclusion in these discussions. Please reach out to your</p>

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Comment #, Name, affiliation & date	Comment Summary	Response
	home fish to eat. Can't afford Disneyland. We fish, hunt, enjoy CA resources. Don't take BSB fishery from us please.	tribal representatives so the Department can have them join the discussion.
103. Andrew Shuttleworth, 4/17/25	<p>103-a. Opposed to any reduction of bag limit. Not based on sound science.</p> <p>103-b. Take away a resource from the communities that rely on it the most. BSB is a source of food, way to connect with nature, and affordable opportunity for recreation.</p> <p>103-c. Current regs are already working.</p> <p>103-d. Department report say BSB are showing signs of recovery and recreational catch limits are within sustainable limits.</p> <p>103-e. No scientific justification for further restrictions as they are harmful and unnecessary, and have a very real human impact.</p>	<p>103-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>103-b. See response 72-c.</p> <p>103-c. The Department is concerned that the population has been depressed and is just starting to show signs of improvement. Abundance estimates suggest a severely depressed population in southern California. The presumed decline is likely due to a combination of environmental conditions, poor recruitment, and fishing pressure on easily targeted spawning aggregations. In the mid-2010s, southern California had a large recruitment pulse of BSB larvae, and these fish have become old enough to enter the fishery around 2023/2024. This pulse of BSB have started to form spawning aggregations, which had been missing for nearly a decade. The Department's scuba surveys do not indicate another large recruitment pulse in the years following the mid-2010s recruitment pulse, as referenced in the ISOR and other presentations. These spawning fish represent the possibility of more locally sourced larvae, which will help rebuild the BSB fishery. Increased fishing of BSB spawning aggregations could undo the progress of this rebuilding fishery. The proposed regulations are in response to the Department's concern with the sustainability of this fishery.</p>

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		<p>103-d. There is no report from the Department that states BSB recreation catch limits are within sustainable limits.</p> <p>103-e. See response 103-c.</p>
104. Brent's iPhone, 4/17/25	<p>104-a. Raw sewage going in from Tijuana. Makes fish go deeper to go around it.</p> <p>104-b. They are a migratory fish.</p> <p>104-c. Scientists say that is where they did research, only dead bodies get in that water. Your research and studies are flawed and a lie, and I'm exposing it. Just look at sewage from TJ.</p> <p>104-d. Get rid of sea lions, that is what is killing our fish.</p>	<p>104-a. The Commission and Department acknowledge the significant impacts of pollution on the BSB resource and takes them into consideration.</p> <p>104-b. See response 99-a.</p> <p>104-c. Department scientists have been conducting BSB abundance scuba surveys since 2017, which originally included a site located along a pipeline just north of the MX/US border but eventually discontinued the site because of consistently unsafe water quality conditions.</p> <p>104-d. California sea lions are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and are managed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. While CA sea lions are a source of mortality for BSB, they have not been identified as the main contributor to the BSB population's depleted state.</p>
105. Pablo Fernandez, charter operator, 4/17/25	<p>105-a. Run fishing charters in San Diego.</p> <p>105-b. Does not support closure or reduced bag limit. In sunset clause, terminate without question. No closure or reduced bag limit at all.</p> <p>105-c. Want to help with tagging and any endeavor to assist in finding true bag limits for the species.</p>	<p>105-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>105-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>105-c. Comment noted.</p> <p>105-d. See responses 99-a and 99-d.</p>

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	105-d. I do believe they are highly migratory. We have a history of fishing for decades and we know they migrate.	
106. Brent Rodriguez, 4/17/25	<p>106-a. 100% disabled veteran, born and raised in CA fishing.</p> <p>106-b. Disagrees with closing BSB fishery.</p> <p>106-c. Information for closure is not true picture of BSB out there. Heard the scientists look at sites changes over 7 years, sounds like same amount of time that we've had cold and hot weather cycles. Have the scientists looked at water temp? I think they are sampling in wrong places.</p> <p>106-d. Please don't close BSB fishery.</p>	<p>106-a. Comment noted; thank you for your service.</p> <p>106-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>106-c. Fishery-dependent data, fishery-independent data, and analyses published in peer reviewed scientific literature are used to evaluate this fishery. Some examples of these include: CPFV landings, landing estimates from RecFIN, effort, habitat preferences, movements and migrations, age and growth, larvae abundance, juvenile and adult BSB abundance and size distribution, and catch-and-release versus retention rates.</p> <p>106-d. Comment noted.</p>
107. Alvaro D, 4/17/25	107-a. Oppose this because it will take food out of our kids mouth and it's unfair.	107-a. See response 72-c.
108. Jason Cutter, 4/17/25	<p>108-a. Don't support BSB closure.</p> <p>108-b. BSB already regulated and allows multiple spawning opportunities before reaching the take size limit.</p>	<p>108-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>108-b. See response 103-c.</p> <p>108-c. Comment noted, though it is not understood where the state population estimate is from.</p> <p>108-d. Abundance estimates suggest a severely depressed population in southern California. The</p>

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	<p>108-c. Size distribution of catch has increased favorably for spawning. Only 23% of population BSB is in SoCal waters.</p> <p>108-d. CA sea lions are the biggest threat to all fish species.</p> <p>108-e. Pollution from Mexico also a threat.</p>	<p>presumed decline is likely due to a combination of environmental conditions, poor recruitment, and fishing pressure on easily targeted spawning aggregations.</p> <p>108-e. See response 104-a.</p>
109. Louie Zimm, Groundfish Advisory sub-panel co-vice chair, 4/17/25	<p>109-a. Support 4 sub-limit with 3-year sunset.</p> <p>109-b. Wants further science and trans-boundary issue investigations. Will be following the progress of this work. Interested in the methods of determining stock status and population trends in benthic oriented fish. Appreciate the Department's work and looking forward to further progress.</p>	<p>109-a. The Department acknowledges and thanks them for their support for the Department's recommendation.</p> <p>109-b. See response 99-d.</p>
110. Joaquin McCollum, 4/17/25	<p>110-a. Oppose regulations on BSB.</p> <p>110-b. There's no clear science showing population collapse.</p> <p>110-c. I don't like catching them most of the time, but I just keep them if I can't catch others and they are everywhere. They are part of the experience. We don't target spawning aggregations, we fish piers, jetties, and reefs and catch abundantly.</p> <p>110-d. Invest in tagging and movement studies.</p>	<p>110-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>110-b. See response 103-c.</p> <p>110-c. Comment noted.</p> <p>110-d. See response 99-d.</p> <p>110-e. Comment noted.</p>

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	110-e. Propose 4 fish bag limit is reasonable middle-ground.	
111. Keith, 4/17/25	<p>111-a. Excited about science and wants to find out where the science is located to share with followers.</p> <p>111-b. BSB are highly migratory.</p> <p>111-c. Dive studies are leftover fish from giant aggregations that came up in 80s and 90s. They haven't migrated due to pollution, water temp, water quality.</p> <p>111-d. CA sea lions are stopping the aggregations.</p> <p>111-e. Glad to see transparency, just let us know where we can find it.</p>	<p>111-a. See response 81-c.</p> <p>111-b. See response 99-d.</p> <p>111-c. Comment noted.</p> <p>111-d. See response 104-d.</p> <p>111-e. Comment noted.</p>
112. Darren's iPhone, 4/17/25	<p>112-a. SoCal private fishermen and work on private charter boat. Believe in conservation. Keep fishing open to kids and future grandkids. Take should remain at 5 for BSB.</p> <p>112-b. They spawn several times before reaching size. Caught and released 100s of BSB on his boat.</p> <p>112-c. Migratory fish.</p> <p>112-d. No science shown that there is a decline in their numbers.</p>	<p>112-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>112-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>112-c. See response 99-a.</p> <p>112-d. See response 103-c.</p>

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113. Bill Morris, 4/17/25	<p>113-a. Private boater in SoCal.</p> <p>113-b. Oppose the reduced bag limits.</p> <p>113-c. Believe there needs to be more science. More science needed to find how many fish are in Mexico.</p> <p>113-d. Would like to participate in the tagging/conservation of the fish.</p>	<p>113-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>113-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>113-c. See responses 76-d and 99-d.</p> <p>113-d. Comment noted.</p>
114. Isabelle Dawson, Environmental Action Committee of West Marin, 4/17/25	<p>114-a. Science should guide management decisions.</p> <p>114-b. There is overwhelming evidence the BSB fishery is declining. Severely depressed due to environmental conditions, poor recruitment, and ease of targeting aggregations. Fishers cannot continue fishing if no fish left.</p> <p>114-c. Urge the Department to conserve the fish now. Support summer seasonal closure and reduced bag limit the rest of the year.</p>	<p>114-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>114-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>114-c. Comment noted.</p>
115. Brian Siwecki, 4/17/25	<p>115-a. Angler opposing taking away BSB.</p> <p>115-b. Lacks qualitative and quantitative data, lacks acknowledging migratory patterns, and refuses to understand the socioeconomic impacts.</p> <p>115-c. FGC jeopardizing communities and telling people what they can and cannot do.</p>	<p>115-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>115-b. See responses 72-c, 73-d, 99-a, and 103-c.</p> <p>115-c. Comment noted.</p>

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Comment #, Name, affiliation & date	Comment Summary	Response
116. Rick Maurer, 4/17/25	<p>116-a. Avid scuba diver and fisherman for 50 years. Use seafood to supplement food for family and friends.</p> <p>116-b. Underwater research and science used for BSB is too old or not accurate. Don't believe there was proper peer-review of literature used for decisions.</p> <p>116-c. No stock assessment, should be a mandatory requirement before making decisions on this fish.</p>	<p>116-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>116-b. Underwater surveys are used from current ongoing studies from multiple research institutions and the Department. These surveys use peer reviewed methods. Any published literature cited has been peer reviewed. Also, see response 81-c.</p> <p>116-c. See response 92-b.</p>
117. Dave Hanson, YSWG, 4/17/25	<p>117-a. This fish has a huge financial impact.</p> <p>117-b. Highly migratory fish.</p> <p>117-c. Hits every part of DEI. Agree with Ken Franke, Donna Kalez and others that more science is needed and want to participate in the science.</p> <p>117-d. This fish is important to fishery. Massive economic impact to everyone.</p>	<p>117-a. See response 73-d.</p> <p>117-b. See response 99-a.</p> <p>117-c. Comments noted.</p> <p>117-d. See response 73-d.</p>
118. Wendy Tochihara, 4/17/25	<p>118-a. Turned in a petition with 807 signatures opposing closing BSB in summer months.</p> <p>118-b. Closure is an extreme measure, not a responsible response.</p> <p>118-c. It is an academic perspective that any fishing during spawning is a bad idea but a dead fish is a dead fish. Most fish don't provide parental care. Sportfishing does not disrupt spawning.</p>	<p>118-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>118-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>118-c. Comment noted.</p> <p>118-d. See response 72-c.</p>

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	118-d. Difficult for kids not to fish for BSB because all of our fishing programs happen in the summer.	
119. Frank Ursitti, H&M Landing Owner, 4/17/25	<p>119-a. Management should be based on sound science robust in data, not reactionary response.</p> <p>119-b. Supports additional research through collaboration with stakeholders to enhance data collection efforts and adopting a balanced approach.</p>	<p>119-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>119-b. See response 100-a.</p>
120. Jusin B, 4/17/25	120-a. Refer to BSB ESR Section 3.1.1.1. CDFW. Use data-limited methods that assess sustainability, these methods while helpful are not substitute for formal SA. Without SA, don't make sweeping reg change. Let us manage fishery with integrity, transparency, and true scientific backing.	120-a. See response 92-b.
121. Katie O'Donnell, WILDCOAST, 4/17/25	<p>121-a. Appreciate the work from staff and willingness to discuss these topics.</p> <p>121-b. Requests: Ask who is represented in working groups and who is missing? How much scientific information is needed for decisions and what safeguards will be in place? Can we clarify a re-evaluation and what level is cause for further action? If population declines, what additional steps will be taken to intervene?</p>	<p>121-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>121-b. Comments noted. All of the questions requested for consideration can be discussed during future BSB Working Group meetings.</p> <p>121-c. Comment noted.</p>

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	121-c. Committed to building trust and support BSB to support healthy and stable population.	
122. Chugey Sepulveda, Pfleger Institute of Environmental Research, 4/17/25	<p>122-a. BSB is important to our community. I am a fishermen and fisheries researcher. Support and explore research options that keep resource accessible to community. Will strengthen relationship with fishing community.</p> <p>122-b. Don't think the population is at risk of disappearing in the next few years.</p> <p>122-c. Want to collect more data to fill data gaps while allowing fishers to continue to use the resource.</p>	<p>122-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>122-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>122-c. See response 100-a.</p>
123. Dwayne James, 4/17/25	123-a. Thank you to Newport Beach for putting environmental part of harbor debris to catch pollutants coming in and out of harbor. If catching sand bass in harbor, the environment can affect them. Need DFW to keep pollutants out of the water, fish numbers would come up drastically.	123-a. While the Commission and Department acknowledge the significant impacts of pollution on the BSB resource and takes them into consideration, reducing ocean pollution is not within the purview of the Commission or Department.
124. Tony Mayfield, 4/17/25	124-a. Don't agree with the BSB closure.	124-a. Comment noted.

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125. iPhone 3, 4/17/25	<p>125-a. Longtime fishermen in So Cal. Disagree with any closure for the BSB.</p> <p>125-b. Want it open to future generations and kids today who are going out on charter boats since BSB is easier to catch most of the time and good for kids to bring home.</p>	<p>125-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>125-b. Comment noted.</p>
126. Ben Florentino, captain, 4/17/25	<p>126-a. Disagree with summertime closure.</p> <p>126-b. Summer months are important to myself and other landings. Creates a lot of financial aid for the state through licenses and landings as their source of income.</p> <p>126-c. Most important fish to target in summer months. 97% of business is catch and release. Catch year-round, haven't seen a decline in past 35 years.</p> <p>126-d. Okay with bag limit. Let's help find solutions, anglers. Would love to be a part of finding a solution.</p>	<p>126-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>126-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>126-c. See response 73-d.</p> <p>126-d. Comment noted.</p>
<p>127. Anupa Asokan, Fish On, 1/28/2025*</p> <p>*Representative of several comments received between 1/24 and 1/30/2025 (included in</p>	<p>127-a. Fishing community has noticed a shift in the abundance and availability of kelp bass, spotted sand bass, and barred sand bass.</p> <p>127-b. Shore-based fishing catch quality and availability has deteriorated.</p> <p>127-c. Supports an annual seasonal closure during spawning season.</p>	<p>127-a. Comment noted.</p> <p>127-b. Comment noted.</p> <p>127-c. The Commission adopted a year-round bag limit reduction to four fish for barred sand bass. The Commission did not adopt special regulations for the spawning season.</p> <p>127-d. The Commission did not adopt a seasonal closure. However, all the regulatory options under</p>

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<p>rulemaking record Exhibit 14) from the following individuals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jeff Wood• Jeff Sun• Tom Tran• Kevin Foley• Ron Stender• Larry Schiel	<p>127-d. Just a year-round bag limit reduction would not be a significant enough conservation measure if spawning aggregations are not adequately protected.</p> <p>127-e. A precautionary approach is necessary or the fishery may not recover.</p>	<p>consideration were sufficiently informed as appropriate for the fishery. See response 73-c.</p> <p>127-e. Management of the barred sand bass fishery is an ongoing responsibility and regulations will be evaluated and potentially refined prior to the sunset of the adopted regulations. See response 100-a.</p>