

Staff Summary for December 10-11, 2025

15. Recreational Take of Rockfish, Cabezon, Greenling, Lingcod Emergency (Consent)**Today's Item****Information** ☐**Action** ☒

Consider adopting a 90-day extension of emergency regulations to keep open recreational rockfish, cabezon, greenling, and lingcod fisheries in state waters.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| • Adoption hearing for <i>emergency regulations</i> | August 13-14, 2025 |
| • Notice hearing for <i>regular rulemaking</i> | October 8-9, 2025 |
| • Today's readoption of <i>emergency regulations</i> | December 10-11, 2025 |
| • Discussion hearing for <i>regular rulemaking</i> | December 10-11, 2025 |
| • Adoption hearing for <i>regular rulemaking</i> | February 11-12, 2026 |
| • Potential effective date for <i>regular rulemaking</i> | May 26, 2026 (estimated) |

Background

At its August 2025 meeting, the Commission adopted emergency regulations related to recreational take of rockfish, cabezon, greenling (collectively "RCG"), and lingcod in state waters. The emergency regulations, which took effect on August 28, 2025, implemented several provisions:

- Modified the RCG and lingcod season structure to restore access to all depths in state waters through the end of 2025.
- Implemented a 2-fish sub-bag limit for canary rockfish.
- Added "sunset rockfish" to the list of federal groundfish species and clarified that the vermilion rockfish sub-bag limit applies to the combined vermilion/sunset rockfish species-unit.
- Retained the existing 0-fish sub-bag limit for quillback rockfish.

The emergency regulatory amendments were necessary to align state water regulations with, and complement, federal water regulations; help keep catches of canary rockfish and vermilion/sunset rockfish within federal harvest limits; and restore access to distribute recreational fishing effort more broadly across all depths; thereby supporting the immediate preservation of the general welfare. Additional background on the initial emergency action is provided in Exhibit 1.

A regular rulemaking to continue the emergency provisions after the emergency regulations expire is currently under Commission consideration, with a discussion hearing at today's meeting (Agenda Item 21) and potential adoption in February 2026. However, the existing emergency regulations will expire on February 24, 2026, unless extended. Because the conditions that prompted the Commission's emergency action still exist (see Exhibit 3), re-adoption of the emergency regulations for an additional 90 days is necessary to prevent the emergency provisions from lapsing before the regular rulemaking takes effect.

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

Commission staff: Find, pursuant to Section 399 of the California Fish and Game Code, that the proposed emergency regulation is necessary for the immediate conservation, preservation, or protection of birds, mammals, fish, amphibians, or reptiles, including, but not limited to, their nests or eggs.

Further determine, pursuant to Section 11346.1 of the California Government Code, that an emergency situation exists, and find the proposed regulation is necessary to address the emergency.

Readopt the emergency regulations that amended sections 1.91, 27.25, 27.30, 27.35, 27.40 and 28.55, for the recreational take of cabezon, greenling, and lingcod in state waters, as recommended by the Department.

Department: Readopt the emergency regulations for an additional 90 days as described in exhibits 2 through 4.

Exhibits

1. [Staff summary for Agenda Item 19, August 2025 Commission meeting](#) (*for background purposes only*)
2. [Department memo](#), received November 7, 2025
3. [Draft finding of emergency and statement of proposed emergency regulatory action for readoption of emergency regulations](#)
4. [Draft proposed regulatory language](#)
5. [Draft economic and fiscal impact statement](#) (STD. 399)

Motion

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that the Commission adopts the staff recommendations for items 14 through 17 on the consent calendar.

Staff Summary for August 13-14, 2025
(for background purposes only)

19. Recreational Take of Rockfish, Cabezon, Greenling, and Lingcod Emergency

Today's Item

Information ☐

Action ☒

Consider adopting emergency regulations to reopen recreational rockfish, cabezon, greenling, and lingcod fisheries in state waters.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| • Emergency regulations adopted to implement a one-fish daily sub-bag limit for quillback rockfish | December 2021 |
| • Emergency regulations readopted | June and August 2022 |
| • Adopted regulations for a significant reduction in nearshore fishing time and implementation of offshore-only fishery for shelf and slope rockfish and lingcod in some areas | November 2022 |
| • In-season and emergency actions to prohibit take of quillback rockfish statewide and limit fishing effort to waters shoreward of 20 fathoms (fm) | August and October 2023 |
| • Adopted regulations to continue prohibiting take of quillback rockfish statewide and revise season structures north of Point Lopez to prohibit fishing between 20 fm and 50 fm | March 26, 2024 |
| • Today's emergency regulations adoption hearing | August 13-14, 2025 |
| • Potential notice hearing for regular rulemaking | TBD |

Background

Regulatory authority for the rockfish, cabezon, greenling (RCG), and lingcod fisheries is shared by state and federal governments. Current regulations establish season dates, depth restrictions, and recreational bag limits for these “federal” groundfish species. The regulations, which vary by species/groups and groundfish management area, are designed to keep harvests within federally-established limits.

Recent Regulatory Amendments and Conservation Efforts

In 2021, a federal stock assessment for quillback rockfish in California indicated a severe decline. While the stock assessment was considered “data-moderate,” relying on limited data sources and proxy data incorporated from other states, the results prompted a conservation emergency. In line with federal actions taken in federal waters (3 to 200 miles from shore) between 2021 and 2024, several in season and/or emergency actions were taken by the State in state waters (0 to 3 miles from shore):

- Late 2021 and 2022: The Commission modified season structures for the 2023 and 2024 seasons to shift fishing effort away from nearshore waters — where quillback rockfish are primarily found — to deep water only.

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- August 2023: Under Department authority in Section 27.20(e), in-season action taken by the Department to prohibit the retention of quillback rockfish statewide after federally-established harvest limits were exceeded. Emergency action taken by the Department effective October 2023, fishing was restricted to waters shallower than 20 fm only (a newly-established depth management line to avoid total closure).
- March 2024: The Commission continued the prohibition of quillback rockfish retention. Season structures north of Point Lopez were revised to prohibit fishing between 20 fm and 50 fm, while allowing fishing either shallower than 20 fm or deeper than 50 fm during specified months.

Closing the 20 to 50 fm depth range to RCG and lingcod fishing was necessary to minimize quillback and yelloweye rockfish catch, while maximizing harvest of healthy stocks as much as possible; however, the closure significantly impacted fishing access to other healthy, highly-targeted rockfish species that co-occur with quillback, though the depth range remained open for other federal groundfish species like sablefish and sanddabs.

New Data and Upcoming Federal Amendments

This year, a new quillback stock assessment was completed and a provisional, pre-decisional version was released by the Pacific Fishery Management Council in June 2025 (Exhibit 4). This “full” or “benchmark” assessment used more extensive available data sources, including new California-specific life history information, and re-examined assumptions from the previous 2021 assessment. The new findings conclude that the California quillback stock is healthy and not overfished.

As a result, the depth-based fishery restrictions are no longer warranted. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is expected to take in-season action to restore boat-based RCG and lingcod fishing to all depths in federal waters from Point Conception to the Oregon border through the end of the year. This change reverses the severe depth constraints in place since October 2023 and renews access to other healthy, highly targeted rockfish species that co-occur with quillback rockfish.

Despite the improved stock health, quillback rockfish retention will remain prohibited due to the stock’s scale and expected associated harvest limits, which cannot accommodate retention.

NMFS is also expected to take action in September 2025 to implement a 2-fish sub-bag limit for canary rockfish within the 10-fish RCG daily limit to keep catches within the California recreational harvest guideline.

Additionally, vermilion rockfish and sunset rockfish are now known to be cryptic species — nearly identical in appearance and only reliably differentiated by DNA analysis. While they are assessed and managed as a single species unit in federal regulations, current state regulations do not include sunset rockfish.

Recommended State Regulations

The Department recommends that the Commission:

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- Modify the RCG and lingcod season structure regulations to restore access to all depths in state waters through the end of 2025
- Implement a 2-fish sub-bag limit for canary rockfish
- Add sunset rockfish to the list of federal groundfish species and specify that the vermilion rockfish sub-bag limits apply to the vermilion /sunset rockfish species-unit in aggregate, not to each species separately
- Retain the existing 0-fish sub-bag limit for quillback rockfish.

These emergency regulatory amendments are necessary to align state water regulations with and complement federal water regulations. The amendments are also necessary to keep catches of canary rockfish and vermilion/sunset rockfish within federally established harvest limits, restore access to distribute recreational fishing effort more broadly, and are necessary for the immediate preservation of the general welfare.

The Department will provide a presentation at today's meeting (Exhibit 6). The Department proposes to continue the emergency provisions through a standard rulemaking to commence in October with a request to authorize public notice.

Significant Public Comments (N/A)

Recommendation

Commission staff: Adopt the proposed emergency regulations as recommended by the Department. Also, consider approving a regular rulemaking, with notice in October, as proposed by the Department in Exhibit 6 under agenda items 24B (rulemaking timetable) and 24D (future meetings) at today's meeting.

Department: Adopt the emergency regulations as proposed in Exhibit 3, and schedule a notice hearing in October for a regular rulemaking.

Exhibits

1. Department memo, received July 23, 2025
2. Draft emergency statement, dated July 28, 2025
3. Draft proposed emergency regulatory language
4. Provisional and pre-decisional NMFS draft document titled "Status of the Quillback Rockfish in U.S. Waters off California in 2025"
5. Draft economic and fiscal impact statement (STD 399)
6. Department presentation

Motion

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that the Commission finds, pursuant to Section 399 of the California Fish and Game Code, that adopting the proposed emergency regulations is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety, or general welfare.

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The Commission further determines, pursuant to Section 11346.1 of the California Government Code, that an emergency situation exists and finds the proposed regulation is necessary to address the emergency.

Therefore, the Commission adopts the emergency regulations to amend sections 1.91, 27.25, 27.30, 27.35, 27.40, and 28.55, as discussed today.

Memorandum

Received November 7, 2025
Original signed copy on file

Date: November 10, 2025

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

From: Charlton H. Bonham
Director

Subject: **Submission of Statement of Proposed Emergency Regulatory Action for the December 10-11, 2025 Fish and Game Commission Meeting to Readopt the Amendment of Sections 1.91, 27.25, 27.30, 27.35, 27.40, and 28.55, Title 14, California Code of Regulations, Re: Recreational Take of Rockfish, Cabezon, Greenling (RCG) and Lingcod**

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) requests the Fish and Game Commission to authorize the emergency regulations for an additional 90 days to be consistent and complementary with regulations in federal waters (3-200 miles from shore) that keep catches of canary rockfish and vermilion/sunset rockfish within federally established harvest limits, and restore recreational fishing opportunities to distribute recreational fishing efforts that are necessary for the immediate preservation of the general welfare. The request to readopt these emergency regulations will be heard at the December 10-11, 2025 meeting.

The original emergency regulations, effective August 28, 2025, replace the depths and season structure for boat-based RCG and lingcod fishing in state waters (0-3 miles from shore) with all-depth fishing from Point Conception (34°27' N. lat.) to the California/Oregon border (42° N. lat.) from April 1 through December 31 and remove a sub-area management line at 36°00' N lat. (near Point Lopez). In addition, the original emergency regulations implement a canary rockfish 2-fish sub-bag limit within the 10-fish RCG daily limit and keep catches of canary rockfish within the California recreational harvest guideline (HG). Unless readopted, the current emergency regulations will expire on February 25, 2026, reverting to the regulations in place at the beginning of 2025 which would unnecessarily constrain the fishery, causing harm to the fishing industry while not addressing any specific conservation benefit. Additionally, state regulations would be inconsistent with federal regulations, and this inconsistency in regulations would create confusion among the public and may result in laws that are difficult to enforce. The proposed readoption would extend the emergency regulations until mid-May 2026.

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

Melissa Miller-Henson, Executive Director
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State of California
Fish and Game Commission
Finding of Emergency and
Statement of Proposed Emergency Regulatory Action

Re-adoption of Emergency Action to
Amend Sections 1.91, 27.25, 27.30, 27.35, 27.40, and 28.55
Title 14, California Code of Regulations

Re: Recreational Take of Rockfish, Cabezon, Greenling and Lingcod

Date of Statement: November 10, 2025

Throughout this document, Department refers to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Commission refers to the California Fish and Game Commission. Unless otherwise specified, all section references in this document are to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR).

I. Emergency Regulations in Effect to Date

The Commission adopted an emergency rulemaking amending sections 1.91, 27.25, 27.30, 27.35, 27.40, and 28.55 (Office of Administrative Law OAL) rulemaking file 2025-0822-02E). The emergency regulations were adopted in response to the determination that the quillback rockfish conservation emergency identified in 2021 no longer exists, and the associated depth-based fishery constraints for other co-inhabiting groundfish species are unwarranted.

The emergency regulations, which became effective August 28, 2025, included:

- **Amend Section 1.91**

- Amend subsection 1.91(a)(3) to add sunset rockfish (*S. crocotulus*) to the list of shelf rockfish.

This change was necessary for consistency with federal regulations which manage “vermillion/sunset rockfish” as a single species-unit.

- **Amend sections 27.25, 27.30, 27.35, and 27.40**

- Amend subsection 27.25(b)(2) and repeal subsection 27.25(b)(3) to repeal the shoreward-of-20-fathoms (fm) and seaward-of-50-fm times of the year in the Northern Groundfish Management Area (GMA) and replace them with a season that is open April 1 through December 31 in all depths;
- Amend subsection 27.30(b)(2) and repeal subsection 27.30(b)(3) to repeal the shoreward-of-20-fm and seaward-of-50-fm times of the year in the Mendocino GMA and replace them with a season that is open April 1 through December 31 in all depths;
- Amend subsection 27.35(b)(2) and repeal subsection 27.35(b)(3) to repeal the shoreward- of-20-fm and seaward-of-50-fm times of the year in the San

Francisco GMA and replace them with a season that is open April 1 through December 31 in all depths; and

- Amend subsection 27.40(b)(2) and repeal subsection 27.40(b)(3) to repeal the shoreward-of-20-fm and seaward-of-50-fm times of the year in the Central GMA and replace them with a season that is open April 1 through December 31 in all depths.

“Times of the year” refers to different depth restrictions within certain months of the open season. These changes were necessary as new science indicates the significant conservation risk to quillback rockfish no longer exists and restricting the fishery to only shoreward of the 20-fm boundary line or only seaward of the 50-fm boundary line is not necessary in each of these GMAs.

- ***Amend Section 27.40***

- Amend subsections 27.40(a) and 27.40(b) to remove references to areas north and south of 36° N. lat. and repeal subsection 27.40(c).

These changes are necessary because the line at 36° N. lat. is no longer pertinent as it was implemented to provide additional fishery access to the Morro Bay port area where quillback rockfish are not found.

- ***Amend Section 28.55***

- Amend subsections 28.55(b)(2)(A) and 28.55(b)(2)(B) to add the cryptic-species sunset rockfish.

This change was necessary for consistency with federal regulations, to address enforcement concerns about anglers attempting to “double-up” on sub-bag limits and will help prevent excessive catches of vermilion/sunset rockfish which would pose an immediate conservation risk.

- Add new subsection 28.55(b)(4) to include a sub-bag limit for canary rockfish of two fish within the daily 10-fish rockfish, cabezon, and greenling (RCG) bag and possession limit.

This change was necessary to keep catches within the federally established California recreational harvest guideline (HG).

Background

Regulatory authority for the RCG complex and lingcod is shared jointly between state and federal governments. It is important to have complementary state and federal regulations establishing harvest limits, season dates, depth constraints, and other management measures. Consistent and complementary rules in adjacent waters allows for uniformity of enforcement, minimizes confusion which promotes compliance, and allows for a comprehensive approach to resource management.

Pursuant to authority under California law (California Fish and Game Code sections 200 and 205), the Commission routinely adopts and amends regulations in Title 14, CCR, for the

recreational groundfish fisheries in state waters zero to three miles from shore. Groundfish refers to bottom-dwelling fish that feed on or near the bottom of the ocean, and include roundfish, rockfish, flatfish, and other ground-dwelling fish.

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) reviews the status of west coast groundfish populations through the use of stock assessments and recommends regulations to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As part of the PFMC process, NMFS (acting under delegated authority from the U.S. Department of Commerce) manages the fishery in the Exclusive Economic Zone (3 to 200 miles offshore) off Washington, Oregon and California.

Quillback rockfish (*Sebastes maliger*) is a key recreational and commercial species among the RCG complex, and co-inhabit rocky reef habitats in deeper nearshore waters, typically between 20 fm (approximately 120 feet) and 50 fm (approximately 300 feet), but are often found deeper with other recreational and commercially caught groundfish species.

Results of a 2021 federal stock assessment for quillback rockfish in California indicated the stock was in severe decline, with only 14 percent of the unfished population estimated to remain. While the stock assessment was considered “data-moderate,” relying on limited data sources and proxy data incorporated from other states, the results prompted a conservation emergency. Initial emergency action was taken by the Commission in late 2021 which implemented a 1-fish sub-bag limit for quillback rockfish within the 10-fish RCG daily bag limit for the 2022 fishery to reduce catch. Further action was taken in 2022 to modify season structures for the 2023 and 2024 seasons to shift fishing effort away from the primary nearshore waters where quillback rockfish are found, and to continue reducing catch of quillback rockfish. Emergency action by the Department was necessary in August 2023 to prohibit retention of quillback rockfish statewide and to limit fishing effort to waters shoreward of 20 fm as the federally established harvest limits had been exceeded. Further action was taken by the Commission in 2024 to continue the prohibited status of quillback rockfish statewide, and revise season structures for the areas north of Point Lopez (36° N. lat.) to prohibit fishing for RCG species and lingcod between the 20-fm boundary line and 50-fm boundary line.

When recreational anglers fish for RCG species and lingcod in these depths, it is impossible to predict which species will be caught. Quillback rockfish have historically comprised a small proportion of the catch; however, developing depth limits to avoid them also impacts other rockfish species that are highly targeted and attained. In a mixed stock fishery such as groundfish, minimizing catch of one species often requires closing fishing in areas and depths where other RCG species or lingcod are found. In this case, closing state waters to fishing for RCG and lingcod between the 20-fm and 50-fm boundary lines was necessary to minimize catch of quillback rockfish and stay within the restrictive harvest limits. Although fishing for RCG and lingcod has been closed between 20 fm and 50 fm since late 2023, those areas have remained open to fishing for other federal groundfish species (e.g., sablefish and sanddabs) and non-groundfish targets.

On June 9, 2025, the PFMC posted online a draft stock assessment for quillback rockfish off California, an assessment that is more robust than the previous one conducted in 2021. The newest assessment considers all available data sources, including newly available California-

specific life history information, and did not rely on proxy data from other states as the 2021 assessment had. Results of the 2025 assessment indicate that the California quillback stock is healthy and not overfished, a major reversal from the 2021 stock assessment.

The 2025 assessment indicates a substantially higher allowable harvest limit than the current allowable harvest limit. For example, the new stock assessment estimates an Overfishing Limit, which is the estimate of the amount that can be caught without risking depletion of the stock, of 13.52 metric tons (mt), a significant increase from the 1.50 mt set in federal regulations based on the 2021 data-moderate assessment. Therefore, the conservation emergency identified in 2021 no longer exists, and the associated depth-based fishery constraints for other co-inhabiting groundfish species are unwarranted.

Despite the improved stock health and scale of the stock, the expected harvest limits are not large enough to allow for quillback rockfish to be retained in the fishery; therefore, retention of quillback rockfish is not warranted.

Following formal review and approval of the 2025 stock assessment for use in federal management, which occurred between July and September 2025, NMFS took an in-season regulatory action to remove the federal fishery depth restrictions in place since October 2023. The federal action, effective September 18, 2025, replaced the depths and season structure for boat-based RCG and lingcod fishing in federal waters (3 to 200 miles from shore) with all-depth fishing from the California/Oregon border (42° N. lat.) to Point Conception (34°27' N. lat.) during the open season in these GMAs, April 1 through December 31. A second NMFS action, expected in late 2025, would implement a 2-fish sub-bag limit for canary rockfish within the 10-fish RCG daily limit. The canary rockfish sub-bag limit measure aims to keep catches of canary rockfish within the California recreational HG. Further NMFS actions may be necessary in late 2025 and early 2026 to revise federal harvest limits and recreational management measures.

II. Request for Approval of Readoption of Emergency Regulations

At its August 2025 meeting, the Commission took emergency action to amend recreational fishing regulations for RCG and lingcod as follows:

- Modified the recreational RCG and lingcod season structure regulations to restore access to all depths in state waters from the California/Oregon border (42° N. lat.) to Point Conception (34°27' N lat.) from April 1 through December 31
- Implemented a 2-fish sub-bag limit for canary rockfish
- Added sunset rockfish to the list of federal groundfish species and specified that the vermilion rockfish sub-bag limits apply to the vermilion /sunset rockfish species-unit in aggregate, not to each species separately.

Unless readopted, the current emergency regulations will expire February 25, 2026, reverting to the regulations in place at the beginning of 2025. The reverted regulations would:

- Unnecessarily constrain the fishery, causing harm to the fishing industry while not addressing any specific conservation benefit, and,

- Be inconsistent with federal regulations. Inconsistency in regulations would create confusion among the public and may result in laws that are difficult to enforce.

At its October 2025 meeting, the Commission authorized publication of a notice of its intent to adopt the regulations pursuant to the regular rulemaking process (OAL notice Z2025-1014-03). It is expected that the Commission will adopt the regulations at its February 2026 meeting and that the regulations will become effective by early May 2026.

III. Statement of Facts Constituting the Need for Readoption of the Emergency Regulatory Action

In response to the emergency situation, the proposed regulatory action readopts the amendment of sections 1.91, 27.25, 27.30, 27.35, 27.40, and 28.55 to modify recreational RCG and lingcod season structure regulations to restore access to all depths in state waters from the California/Oregon border (42° N. lat.) to Point Conception (34°27' N lat.) during the open season in these GMAs, April 1 through December 31; implement a 2-fish sub-bag limit for canary rockfish; and add sunset rockfish to the list of federal groundfish species and specify that the vermilion rockfish sub-bag limits apply to the vermilion /sunset rockfish species-unit in aggregate, not to each species separately. The proposed regulations for readoption are the same as the original emergency regulations.

The readoption will continue the replacement of restrictive measures that were put in place based on a 2021 quillback rockfish stock assessment with regulations that are based on the results of the 2025 quillback rockfish stock assessment that indicate that the California quillback stock is healthy and not overfished and the associated depth-based fishery restrictions for other co-inhabiting groundfish species are unwarranted. Additionally, the readoption will continue a 2-fish sub-bag limit for canary rockfish, the addition of sunset rockfish to the list of federal groundfish species, and the specification that the vermilion rockfish sub-bag limits apply to the vermilion /sunset rockfish species-unit in aggregate for consistency with federal regulations.

IV. Existence of an Emergency and Need for Immediate Action

The Commission considered the following factors in determining that an emergency exists:

Magnitude of Potential Harm:

The recreational groundfish fisheries are important ecological, cultural, and recreational resources in the State of California. It is important to have consistent state and federal regulations establishing harvest limits, season dates, depth constraints, and other management measures. Inconsistency in state and federal rules hinders enforcement, increases angler confusion, and precludes a comprehensive approach to resource management.

Existence of a Crisis Situation and Immediacy of Need:

As a result of a new stock assessment released on June 9, 2025 indicating quillback rockfish is at a healthy status, the depth restrictions that were implemented to protect quillback rockfish are no longer needed. The proposed regulations would continue the current emergency regulations that removed unneeded constraints, and are consistent with recent federal

regulatory actions, thereby distributing effort and pressure on groundfish stocks, in both federal and state waters. The proposed action is based upon updated, more robust science and would prevent serious economic harm to the recreational fishery industry and coastal communities that rely upon it. The proposed actions would avoid serious harm to the general welfare of the state.

The Commission routinely adopts regulations for the recreational groundfish fishery for consistency with federal regulations. PFMC took action at its June 2025 meeting to approve the recommended fishing depth changes and federal regulations were modified by NMFS effective September 18, 2025; subsequent NMFS action following the PFMC September 2025 meeting to implement a 2-fish canary rockfish sub-bag limit is expected in late 2025.

Whether the anticipation of harm has a basis firmer than simple speculation:

The proposed regulations are based upon updated, more robust science and would prevent serious economic harm to the coastal communities that rely upon recreational fisheries. The metric used to quantify recreational fishing effort is estimated angler trips. Between 2022 and 2024, estimated angler trips for bottomfish (the group of fish that includes RCG and lingcod) dropped nine percent in the Northern GMA, 33 percent in the Mendocino GMA, 36 percent in the San Francisco GMA, and 10 percent in the Central GMA; the reduction in angler trips during this time is expected to have been a direct result of the restrictive fishing depths in place in 2024 that were not in place in 2022. Since the depth restrictions in 2025 are the same as those in place in 2024, it is expected the estimated angler trips in 2025 will be similar to the estimates from 2024 –significantly reduced compared to 2022. The reduction in angler trips likely results in reduced revenue for local communities (e.g., hotels, tackle shops, bait, ice, fuel, slippage, etc.) that rely on recreational fishing. Restoring access to currently prohibited depths is expected to result in increases to angler trips, and direct benefits the general welfare.

V. Readoption Criteria

Same as or Substantially Equivalent

Pursuant to Government Code subdivision 11346.1(h), a readoption may be approved only if the regulation is “the same as or substantially equivalent to an emergency regulation previously adopted by that agency.” The language proposed for this rulemaking is the same as the language of the original emergency regulation.

Substantial Progress

California Government Code subdivision 11346.1(h) specifies “Readoption shall be permitted only if the agency has made substantial progress and proceeded with diligence to comply with subdivision (e)” [California Government Code sections 11346.2 through 11347.3, inclusive]. A regular rulemaking (certificate of compliance) is currently underway and was authorized for public notice by the Commission at its October 8-9, 2025 meeting (OAL Notice ID Z2025-1014-03).

Proposed Action by the Commission

The Commission proposed readoption of the emergency amendments to sections 1.91, 27.25, 27.30, 27.35, 27.40, and 28.55 are the same as previously effective.

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) Costs or Savings to State Agencies or Costs/Savings in Federal Funding to the State:

The Commission anticipates that the extension of the emergency regulations will have no direct effect on the costs or savings in federal funding to the state in terms of implementation, monitoring and enforcement activities for the Department; however, they could potentially affect annual license revenue if anglers previously stopped purchasing licenses as a result of depth restrictions enacted in October 2023 and decide to purchase licenses after the proposed amendments become effective.

Estimating effort is difficult, as there is no groundfish-specific report card. A general California fishing license covers multiple species and is valid for 365 days regardless of when the license is purchased. It's unclear whether anglers ceased fishing altogether or shifted to other available species as a result of the groundfish depth restrictions enacted in October 2023, since the groundfish depth restrictions coincided with closures in the recreational salmon fishery and new limitations in other fisheries, further complicating an impact analysis. Overall, any effect on license sales will likely be neutral or positive – if license sales go up by 0.1% as a result of these regulations, then the anticipated annual revenue increase would be approximately \$81,000. The expected increase in revenue to the Department for the 90-day period the emergency extension of the existing emergency regulations will be in effect is expected to be far less than the expected increase in annual revenue.

Additionally, no other state agencies or programs would be affected by this regulatory action.

(b) Nondiscretionary Costs/Savings to Local Agencies: None.

(c) Programs Mandated on Local Agencies or School Districts: None.

(d) 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.

(e) Effect on Housing Costs: None.

V. Technical, Theoretical, and/or Empirical Studies, Reports, or Documents Relied Upon

Langseth, B.J., M.H. Monk, J.H. Coates, 2025. Status of the Quillback rockfish stock in U.S. waters off the coast of California in 2025. Pacific Fishery Management Council, Portland, OR.

June 2025, Pacific Fishery Management Council, Decision Summary Document.
<https://www.pcouncil.org/june-2025-decision-summary-document/>

VIII. Authority and Reference

Authority: Sections 200, 205, 265, 702, 7071 and 8587.1, Fish and Game Code

Reference: Sections 200, 205, 265, 1802, 7071 and 8585.5, Fish and Game Code; 50 CFR Part 660, Subpart G, Sections 660.350, 660.351, 660.352 and 660.360.

IX. Fish and Game Code Section 399 Finding

In accordance with subdivision (b) of Section 399 of the California Fish and Game Code, the Commission finds that adopting this regulation is necessary for the immediate conservation of species, preservation of the public peace, health and safety, or general welfare.

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).

Current regulations establish season dates and depth constraints, and recreational bag limits for federal groundfish species that vary by species or species groups and are designed to keep harvest within federally established allowable limits. Section 1.91 defines the species considered federal groundfish. Sections 27.25, 27.30, 27.35 and 27.40 currently set forth season dates, and depth constraints for the four groundfish management areas (GMA) north of Point Conception (34°27' N. lat.). Section 28.55, Rockfish (Genus *Sebastes*), currently sets forth the bag limits, and methods of take for all rockfish species.

Existence of an Emergency and Need for Immediate Action

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) recommends that the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) readopt the emergency amendments to sections 1.91, 27.25, 27.30, 27.35, 27.40, and 28.55, Title 14, CCR, that went into effect on August 28, 2025 (OAL # #2025-0822-02E). The emergency amendments modified the recreational rockfish, cabezon, and greenling (RCG) and lingcod season structure regulations to restore access to all depths in state waters during the open season for these GMAs, April 1 to December 31, implemented a 2-fish sub-bag limit for canary rockfish, and added sunset rockfish to cryptic-species vermilion/sunset rockfish management unit. The proposed readoption is necessary for regulations in state waters (0 to 3 miles from shore) to be consistent and complementary with regulations in federal waters (3 to 200 miles from shore), to keep catches of canary rockfish and vermilion/sunset rockfish within federally established harvest limits, and for the benefit of the public's general welfare.

On June 9, 2025, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) posted online a draft quillback rockfish stock assessment in waters off California, an assessment that is more robust than the previous one conducted in 2021. The newest assessment considers all available data sources, including newly available California-specific life history information. Results of the assessment indicate the California stock is healthy and not overfished as was indicated by the 2021 quillback rockfish stock assessment that was data-moderate. Therefore, the previous conservation emergency identified in 2021 no longer exists and the associated depth-based fishery constraints are unwarranted.

Following formal review and approval of the 2025 stock assessment for use in federal management, which occurred between July and September 2025, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) took an in-season federal regulatory action to remove the federal fishery depth restrictions in place since October 2023. The federal action, effective September 18, 2025, replaced the depths and season structure for boat-based RCG and lingcod fishing in federal waters (3 to 200 miles from shore) with all-depth fishing from the California/Oregon border (42° N. lat.) to Point Conception (34°27' N. lat.) during the open season in these GMAs, April 1 to December 31. A second NMFS action, expected in late 2025, will implement a 2-fish sub-bag limit for canary rockfish within the 10-fish RCG daily limit. The canary rockfish sub-bag limit measure aims to keep catches of canary rockfish within the California recreational harvest

guideline. Further NMFS actions may be necessary in late 2025 and early 2026 to revise federal harvest limits and recreational management measures.

The emergency regulatory changes restore recreational fishing opportunities to distribute recreational fishing efforts and are necessary for the immediate preservation of the general welfare.

It is important to have consistent and complementary state and federal regulations establishing harvest limits, season dates, depth constraints, and other management measures. Inconsistency in state and federal rules hinders enforcement, increases angler confusion, and precludes a comprehensive approach to resource management.

The current emergency regulations that amended sections 1.91, 27.25, 27.30, 27.35, 27.40, and 28.55 will expire on February 25, 2026 unless readopted. Readoption of the emergency action is needed to continue implementation of the regulations and to allow time for approval of a regular rulemaking to restore recreational fishing opportunities, remove unneeded constraints, and ensure consistency with federal regulations.

Benefits of the Regulation to the State's Environment:

The benefits of the proposed regulations are consistency with federal law, sustainable management of groundfish resources and promotion of businesses that rely on recreational groundfish fishing.

Consistency and Compatibility with Existing Regulations:

The proposed regulations are neither inconsistent nor incompatible with existing state regulations. The California Legislature has delegated authority to the Commission to adopt recreational fishing regulations (California Fish and Game Code, sections 200 and 205). The proposed regulations are consistent with the Commission's regulations in Title 14, CCR. Commission staff has searched the California Code of Regulations and has found no other state regulations related to the recreational take of groundfish.

Emergency Regulatory Language for Re-adoption

Section 1.91, Title 14, CCR, is amended to read:

§ 1.91. Federal Groundfish and Rockfish, Cabezon and Greenling (RCG) Complex.

(a) The species or species groups listed in subsections 1.91(a)(1) through 1.91(a)(12) constitute “federal groundfish” and are managed under the Federal Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan:

(1) “Nearshore Rockfish,” which means the following species of rockfish: black rockfish (*Sebastes melanops*), black and yellow rockfish (*S. chrysomelas*), blue rockfish (*S. mystinus*), brown rockfish (*S. auriculatus*), calico rockfish (*S. dallii*), China rockfish (*S. nebulosus*), copper rockfish (*S. caurinus*), gopher rockfish (*S. carnatus*), grass rockfish (*S. rastrelliger*), kelp rockfish (*S. atrovirens*), olive rockfish (*S. serranoides*), quillback rockfish (*S. maliger*), treefish (*S. serriceps*)

(2) “California Scorpionfish” (*Scorpaena guttata*)

(3) “Shelf Rockfish” which means the following species of rockfish: bocaccio (*Sebastes paucispinis*), bronzespotted rockfish (*S. gilli*), canary rockfish (*S. pinniger*), chilipepper (*S. goodei*), cowcod (*S. levis*), dusky rockfish (*S. ciliatus*), flag rockfish (*S. rubrivinctus*), greenblotched rockfish (*S. rosenblatti*), greenspotted rockfish (*S. chlorostictus*), greenstriped rockfish (*S. elongatus*), harlequin rockfish (*S. variegatus*), honeycomb rockfish (*S. umbrosus*), Mexican rockfish (*S. macdonaldi*), pink rockfish (*S. eos*), redstripe rockfish (*S. proriger*), rosethorn rockfish (*S. helvomaculatus*), rosy rockfish (*S. rosaceus*), shortbelly rockfish (*S. jordani*), silvergray rockfish (*S. brevispinis*), speckled rockfish (*S. ovalis*), squarespot rockfish (*S. hopkinsi*), starry rockfish (*S. constellatus*), stripetail rockfish (*S. saxicola*), tiger rockfish (*S. nigrocinctus*), vermilion/sunset rockfish (*S. miniatus*/*S. crocotulus*), widow rockfish (*S. entomelas*), yelloweye rockfish (*S. ruberrimus*), yellowtail rockfish (*S. flavidus*)

(4) “Slope Rockfish” which means the following species of rockfish: aurora rockfish (*Sebastes aurora*), bank rockfish (*S. rufus*), blackgill rockfish (*S. melanostomus*), darkblotched rockfish (*S. crameri*), Pacific ocean perch (*S. alutus*), redbanded rockfish (*S. babcocki*), rougheyeye rockfish (*S. aleutianus*), sharpchin rockfish (*S. zacentrus*), shortraker rockfish (*S. borealis*), splitnose rockfish (*S. diploproa*), yellowmouth rockfish (*S. reedi*)

(5) “Sharks”, including only leopard shark (*Triakis semifasciata*), soupfin shark (*Galeorhinus galeus*), and spiny dogfish (*Squalus suckleyi*)

(6) “Skates”, which means big skate (*Raja binoculata*), California skate (*R. inornata*), longnose skate (*R. rhina*), Roughtail/black skate (*Bathyraja trachura*), Aleutian skate (*B. aleutica*), Bering/sandpaper skate (*R. interrupta*) and all other genera and species of skates in the families Arhynchobatidae and Rajidae that occur off California.

(7) “Roundfish”, including only cabezon (*Scorpaenichthys marmoratus*), kelp greenling (*Hexagrammos decagrammus*), lingcod (*Ophiodon elongatus*), Pacific cod (*Gadus macrocephalus*), Pacific whiting (*Merluccius productus*), and sablefish (*Anoplopoma fimbria*)

(8) “Thornyheads”, which means longspine thornyhead (*Sebastolobus altivelis*), and shortspine thornyhead (*Sebastolobus alascanus*)

(9) “Federally Managed Flatfish”, including only arrowtooth flounder (arrowtooth turbot) (*Atheresthes stomias*), Dover sole (*Microstomus pacificus*), English sole (*Parophrys vetulus*), petrale sole (*Eopsetta jordani*), and starry flounder (*Platichthys stellatus*).

(10) “Other Flatfish”, including only butter sole (*Isopsetta isolepis*), curlfin sole (*Pleuronichthys decurrens*), flathead sole (*Hippoglossoides elassodon*), Pacific sanddab (*Citharichthys sordidus*), rex sole (*Glyptocephalus zachirus*), rock sole (*Lepidopsetta bilineata*), and sand sole (*Psettichthys melanostictus*).

(11) “Other fish”, including only ratfish (*Hydrolagus collieri*), finescale codling (*Antimora microlepis*), Pacific grenadier (rattail) (*Coryphaenoides acrolepis*) and all other genera and species of grenadiers in the family Macrouridae that occur off California

(12) All genera and species of the family Scorpaenidae that occur off California and not specifically listed in (a)(1) through (a)(4) or (a)(8) above.

(b) “RCG Complex” means all species of rockfish (*Sebastes*), cabezon (*Scorpaenichthys marmoratus*), and kelp and rock greenlings (*genus Hexagrammos*).

Note: Authority cited: Sections 200, 265 and 8587.1, Fish and Game Code. Reference: Sections 205 and 7071, Fish and Game Code.

Section 27.25, Title 14, CCR, is amended to read:

§ 27.25. Northern Groundfish Management Area.

This Section applies to take or possession of federal groundfish species and all greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos*. For specific definitions, applicability, and procedures, see sections 1.91 and 27.20. For size limits, bag and possession limits, and other regulations that apply to individual species, see specific sections beginning with Section 27.60.

(a) The Northern Groundfish Management Area means ocean waters between 42° 00'N. lat. (the Oregon/California border) and 40° 10'N. lat. (near Cape Mendocino, Humboldt County).

(b) Seasons and depth restrictions effective for all species of rockfish (except as specified in subsection 28.55(b)(1)), lingcod, cabezon, and all greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos*:

(1) January 1 through March 31: Closed.

(2) April 1 through April 30, October 1 through October 31, and December 1 through December 31:

~~(A) Take or possession of species and species groups listed in subsections 1. through 3. is authorized seaward of a line approximating the 50 fathom boundary line as defined by federal waypoints along the mainland coast and along islands and offshore seamounts. Take or possession of these species is prohibited shoreward of this line, except as provided in subsection 27.20(b). The 50 fathom boundary line is defined by straight lines connecting the set of 50 fathom waypoints as adopted in Federal Regulations (50 CFR Part 660, Subpart G).~~

~~1. Shelf rockfish, as defined in subsection 1.91(a)(3), except bronzespotted rockfish, cowcod, and yelloweye rockfish which may not be taken or possessed~~

~~2. Slope rockfish, as defined in subsection 1.91(a)(4)~~

~~3. Lingcod~~

~~(B) Nearshore species closure: Notwithstanding subsection 27.20(b)(1)(A), take or possession of nearshore rockfish as defined in subsection 1.91(a)(1), cabezon, and all greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos* is prohibited in all waters of the Northern Groundfish Management Area.~~

~~(3) May 1 through September 30, and November 1 through November 30: Take or possession of all species of rockfish (except as specified in subsection 28.55(b)(1)), lingcod, cabezon, and all greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos* is authorized shoreward of the 20 fathom boundary line as defined in Section 35.00. Take or possession of all species of rockfish, lingcod, cabezon, and all greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos* is prohibited seaward of this line, except as provided in~~

subsection 27.20(b)-December 31: Open for all species (except as specified in subsection 28.55(b)(1)) with no depth constraints.

Note: Authority cited: Sections 200, 205, 265 and 702, Fish and Game Code.

Reference: Sections 200, 205, 265, 1802 and 7071, Fish and Game Code; and 50 CFR Part 660, Subpart G, Sections 660.350, 660.351, 660.352 and 660.360.

Section 27.30, Title 14, CCR, is amended to read:

§ 27.30. Mendocino Groundfish Management Area.

This Section applies to take or possession of federal groundfish species and all greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos*. For specific definitions, applicability, and procedures, see sections 1.91 and 27.20. For size limits, bag and possession limits, and other regulations that apply to individual species, see specific sections beginning with Section 27.60.

(a) The Mendocino Groundfish Management Area means ocean waters between 40° 10' N. lat. (near Cape Mendocino, Humboldt County) and 38° 57.50' N. lat. (at Point Arena, Mendocino County).

(b) Seasons and depth restrictions effective for all species of rockfish (except as specified in subsection 28.55(b)(1)), lingcod, cabezon, and all greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos*:

(1) January 1 through March 31: Closed.

(2) April 1 through April 30, October 1 through October 31, and December 1 through December 31:

~~(A) Take or possession of species and species groups listed in subsections 1. through 3. is authorized seaward of a line approximating the the 50-fathom boundary line as defined by federal waypoints along the mainland coast and along islands and offshore seamounts. Take or possession of these species is prohibited shoreward of this line, except as provided in subsection 27.20(b). The 50-fathom boundary line is defined by straight lines connecting the set of 50-fathom waypoints as adopted in Federal Regulations (50 CFR Part 660, Subpart G).~~

~~1. Shelf rockfish, as defined in subsection 1.91(a)(3), except bronzespotted rockfish, cowcod, and yelloweye rockfish which may not be taken or possessed~~

~~2. Slope rockfish, as defined in subsection 1.91(a)(4)~~

~~3. Lingcod~~

~~(B) Nearshore species closure: Notwithstanding subsection 27.20(b)(1)(A), take or possession of nearshore rockfish as defined in subsection 1.91(a)(1), cabezon, and all greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos* is prohibited in all waters of the Mendocino Groundfish Management Area.~~

~~(3) May 1 through September 30 and November 1 through November 30: Take or possession of all species of rockfish (except as specified in subsection 28.55(b)(1)), lingcod, cabezon, and all greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos* is authorized shoreward of the 20-fathom boundary line as defined in Section 35.00. Take or possession of all species of rockfish, lingcod, cabezon, and all greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos* is prohibited seaward of this line, except as provided in~~

~~subsection 27.20(b)-December 31: Open for all species (except as specified in subsection 28.55(b)(1)) with no depth constraints.~~

Note: Authority cited: Sections 200, 205, 265 and 702, Fish and Game Code.

Reference: Sections 200, 205, 265, 1802 and 7071, Fish and Game Code; and 50 CFR Part 660, Subpart G, Sections 660.350, 660.351, 660.352 and 660.360.

Section 27.35, Title 14, CCR, is amended to read:

§ 27.35. San Francisco Groundfish Management Area.

This Section applies to take or possession of federal groundfish species and all greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos*. For specific definitions, applicability, and procedures, see sections 1.91 and 27.20. For size limits, bag and possession limits, and other regulations that apply to individual species, see specific sections beginning with Section 27.60.

(a) The San Francisco Groundfish Management Area means ocean waters between 38° 57.50' N. lat. (at Point Arena, Mendocino County) and 37° 11' N. lat. (at Pigeon Point, San Mateo County).

(b) Seasons and depth restrictions effective for all species of rockfish (except as specified in subsection 28.55(b)(1)), lingcod, cabezon and all greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos*:

(1) January 1 through March 31: Closed.

(2) April 1 through April 30, October 1 through October 31, and December 1 through December 31:

~~(A) Take or possession of species and species groups listed in subsections 1. through 3. is authorized seaward of a line approximating the the 50-fathom boundary line as defined by federal waypoints along the mainland coast and along islands and offshore seamounts. Take or possession of these species is prohibited shoreward of this line, except as provided in subsection 27.20(b). The 50-fathom boundary line is defined by straight lines connecting the set of 50-fathom waypoints as adopted in Federal Regulations (50 CFR Part 660, Subpart G).~~

~~1. Shelf rockfish, as defined in subsection 1.91(a)(3), except bronzespotted rockfish, cowcod, and yelloweye rockfish which may not be taken or possessed~~

~~2. Slope rockfish, as defined in subsection 1.91(a)(4)~~

~~3. Lingcod~~

~~(B) Nearshore species closure: Notwithstanding subsection 27.20(b)(1)(A), take or possession of nearshore rockfish as defined in subsection 1.91(a)(1), cabezon, and greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos* is prohibited in all waters of the San Francisco Groundfish Management Area.~~

~~(3) May 1 through September 30 and November 1 through November 30: Take or possession of all species of rockfish (except as specified in subsection 28.55(b)(1)), lingcod, cabezon, and all greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos* is authorized shoreward of the 20-fathom boundary line as defined in Section 35.00. Take or possession of all species of rockfish, lingcod, cabezon, and all greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos* is prohibited seaward of this line, except as provided in~~

subsection 27.20(b)-December 31: Open for all species (except as specified in subsection 28.55(b)(1)) with no depth constraints.

Note: Authority cited: Sections 200, 205, 265 and 702, Fish and Game Code.

Reference: Sections 200, 205, 265, 1802 and 7071, Fish and Game Code; and 50 CFR Part 660, Subpart G, Sections 660.350, 660.351, 660.352 and 660.360.

Section 27.40, Title 14, CCR, is amended to read:

§ 27.40. Central Groundfish Management Area.

This Section applies to take or possession of federal groundfish species and all greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos*. For specific definitions, applicability, and procedures, see sections 1.91 and 27.20. For size limits, bag and possession limits, and other regulations that apply to individual species, see specific sections beginning with Section 27.60.

(a) The Central Groundfish Management Area means ocean waters between 37° 11' N. lat. (at Pigeon Point, San Mateo County) and 34° 27' N. lat. (at Point Conception, Santa Barbara County). ~~Within the Central Groundfish Management Area, seasons and depth restrictions may differ north and south of a line extending west of 36° N. lat. (near Point Lopez, Monterey County). The areas north and south of this line are referred to as the Central Groundfish Management Area — North of 36° N. lat. and the Central Groundfish Management Area — South of 36° N. lat.~~

(b) ~~Central Groundfish Management Area — North of 36° N. lat.~~ Seasons and depth restrictions effective for all species of rockfish (except as specified in subsection 28.55(b)(1)), lingcod, cabezon, and all greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos*:

(1) January 1 through March 31: Closed.

(2) April 1 through April 30, ~~October 1 through October 31 and December 1 through December 31:~~

~~(A) Take or possession of species and species groups listed in subsections 1. through 3. is authorized seaward of a line approximating the 50 fathom boundary line as defined by federal waypoints along the mainland coast and along islands and offshore seamounts. Take or possession of these species is prohibited shoreward of this line, except as provided in subsection 27.20(b). The 50 fathom boundary line is defined by straight lines connecting the set of 50 fathom waypoints as adopted in Federal Regulations (50 CFR Part 660, Subpart G).~~

~~1. Shelf rockfish, as defined in subsection 1.91(a)(3), except bronzespotted rockfish, cowcod, and yelloweye rockfish which may not be taken or possessed~~

~~2. Slope rockfish, as defined in subsection 1.91(a)(4)~~

~~3. Lingcod~~

~~(B) Nearshore species closure: Notwithstanding subsection 27.20(b)(1)(A), take or possession of nearshore rockfish as defined in subsection 1.91(a)(1), cabezon, and greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos* is prohibited in all waters of the Central Groundfish Management Area — North of 36° N. lat.~~

~~(3) May 1 through September 30 and November 1 through November 30: Take or possession of all species of rockfish (except as specified in subsection 28.55(b)(1)),~~

lingcod, cabezon, and all greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos* is authorized shoreward of the 20-fathom boundary line as defined in Section 35.00. Take or possession of all species of rockfish, lingcod, cabezon, and all greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos* is prohibited seaward of this line, except as provided in subsection 27.20(b).

(c) Central Groundfish Management Area—South of 36° N. lat. Seasons and depth restrictions effective for all species of rockfish, lingcod, cabezon, and all greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos*:

(1) January 1 through March 31: Closed.

(2) April 1 through June 30: Open for all species (except as specified in subsection 28.55(b)(1)) with no depth restrictions.

(3) July 1 through September 30: Take or possession of all species of rockfish (except as specified in subsection 28.55(b)(1)), lingcod, cabezon, and all greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos* is authorized shoreward of the 50-fathom boundary line as defined by federal waypoints along the mainland coast and along islands and offshore seamounts. The 50-fathom boundary line is defined by straight lines connecting the set of 50-fathom waypoints as adopted in Federal Regulations (50 CFR Part 660, Subpart G). Take or possession of all species of rockfish, lingcod, cabezon, and all greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos* is prohibited seaward of this line, except as provided in subsection 27.20(b).

(4) October 1 through December 31:

(A) Take or possession of species and species groups listed in subsections 1. through 3. is authorized seaward of a line approximating the 50-fathom boundary line as defined by federal waypoints along the mainland coast and along islands and offshore seamounts. Take or possession of these species is prohibited shoreward of this line, except as provided in subsection 27.20(b). The 50-fathom boundary line is defined by straight lines connecting the set of 50-fathom waypoints as adopted in Federal Regulations (50 CFR Part 660, Subpart G).

1. Shelf rockfish, as defined in subsection 1.91(a)(3), except bronzespotted rockfish, cowcod, and yelloweye rockfish which may not be taken or possessed

2. Slope rockfish, as defined in subsection 1.91(a)(4)

3. Lingcod

(B) Nearshore species closure: Notwithstanding subsection 27.20(b)(1)(A), take or possession of nearshore rockfish as defined in subsection 1.91(a)(1), cabezon, and all greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos* is prohibited in all waters of the Central Groundfish Management Area—South of 36° N. lat. December 31: Open for all species (except as specified in subsection 28.55(b)(1)) with no depth constraints.

Note: Authority cited: Sections 200, 205 and 265, Fish and Game Code. Reference: Sections 200, 205, 265, 1802 and 7071, Fish and Game Code; and 50 CFR Part 660, Subpart G, Sections 660.350, 660.351, 660.352 and 660.360.

Section 28.55, Title 14, CCR, is amended to read:

§ 28.55. Rockfish (Sebastes).

(a) Open areas, seasons, and depth restrictions: See Section 27.20 through Section 27.50 for definitions, special closure areas, and exceptions. Take and possession is authorized as follows:

- (1) Northern Groundfish Management Area: Open and closed dates and depth restrictions as defined by Section 27.25.
 - (2) Mendocino Groundfish Management Area: Open and closed dates and depth restrictions as defined by Section 27.30.
 - (3) San Francisco Groundfish Management Area: Open and closed dates and depth restrictions as defined by Section 27.35.
 - (4) Central Groundfish Management Area: Open and closed dates and depth restrictions as defined by Section 27.40.
 - (5) Southern Groundfish Management Area: Open and closed dates and depth restrictions as defined by Section 27.45.
 - (6) Groundfish Exclusion Areas: Take or possession of all rockfish is prohibited within the Groundfish Exclusion Areas as specified by Section 27.50.
- (b) Limit: Ten, within the Rockfish, Cabezon, and Greenling complex (RCG complex, as defined in Section 1.91) limit of 10 fish, in any combination of species, except as provided below.
- (1) The limit on bronzespotted rockfish, cowcod, quillback rockfish, and yelloweye rockfish is zero. These species shall not be taken or possessed as part of the RCG limit.
 - (2) The limit on vermilion/sunset rockfish:
 - (A) In waters of the Northern Groundfish Management Area is four fish within the RCG limit.
 - (B) In waters of the Mendocino Groundfish Management Area, San Francisco Groundfish Management Area, Central Groundfish Management Area, and Southern Groundfish Management Area is two fish within the RGC limit, regardless of which Groundfish Management Area the vermilion/sunset rockfish was taken in.
 - (3) The limit on copper rockfish is one fish, within the RCG limit.
 - (4) The limit on canary rockfish is two fish, within the RCG limit.
- (c) Size limit: None. See subsection 27.65(b) for fillet regulations.
- (d) Method of take: When angling, gear is restricted to not more than two hooks and one line. For purposes of this section, a hook is a single hook, or a double or treble hook

with multiple points connected to a common shank. See subsection 27.20(b)(2) for descending device regulations.

(e) Fishing rules for rockfish may be changed during the year or in-season by the department under the authority of subsection 27.20(e). See subsection 27.20(f) for additional information.

Note: Authority cited: Sections 200, 205, 265, 702, 7071 and 8587.1, Fish and Game Code. Reference: Sections 200, 205, 265, 1802, 7071 and 8585.5, Fish and Game Code; and 50 CFR Part 660, Subpart G, Sections 660.350, 660.351, 660.352 and 660.360.

**ECONOMIC AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT
(REGULATIONS AND ORDERS)**

STD. 399 (Rev. 10/2019)

ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

DEPARTMENT NAME California Fish and Game Commission	CONTACT PERSON David Thesell	EMAIL ADDRESS fgc@fgc.ca.gov	TELEPHONE NUMBER 916-201-6201
DESCRIPTIVE TITLE FROM NOTICE REGISTER OR FORM 400 Readopt Emerg. Act. to Amd. Sec. 1.91, 27.25, 27.30, 27.35, 27.40, 28.55, CCR T.14 re: Rec. Groundfish			NOTICE FILE NUMBER Z

A. ESTIMATED PRIVATE SECTOR COST IMPACTS *Include calculations and assumptions in the rulemaking record.*

1. Check the appropriate box(es) below to indicate whether this regulation:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a. Impacts business and/or employees | <input type="checkbox"/> e. Imposes reporting requirements |
| <input type="checkbox"/> b. Impacts small businesses | <input type="checkbox"/> f. Imposes prescriptive instead of performance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> c. Impacts jobs or occupations | <input type="checkbox"/> g. Impacts individuals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> d. Impacts California competitiveness | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> h. None of the above (Explain below): |

Emergency action: no economic assessment; only fiscal impact assessment.***If any box in Items 1 a through g is checked, complete this Economic Impact Statement.******If box in Item 1.h. is checked, complete the Fiscal Impact Statement as appropriate.***2. The _____ estimates that the economic impact of this regulation (which includes the fiscal impact) is:
(Agency/Department)

- ☐ Below \$10 million
- ☐ Between \$10 and \$25 million
- ☐ Between \$25 and \$50 million
- ☐ Over \$50 million *[If the economic impact is over \$50 million, agencies are required to submit a [Standardized Regulatory Impact Assessment](#) as specified in Government Code Section 11346.3(c)]*

3. Enter the total number of businesses impacted: _____

Describe the types of businesses (Include nonprofits): _____

Enter the number or percentage of total
businesses impacted that are small businesses: _____

4. Enter the number of businesses that will be created: _____ eliminated: _____

Explain: _____

5. Indicate the geographic extent of impacts: ☐ Statewide
☐ Local or regional (List areas): _____

6. Enter the number of jobs created: _____ and eliminated: _____

Describe the types of jobs or occupations impacted: _____

7. Will the regulation affect the ability of California businesses to compete with
other states by making it more costly to produce goods or services here? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If YES, explain briefly: _____

**ECONOMIC AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT
(REGULATIONS AND ORDERS)**

STD. 399 (Rev. 10/2019)

ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT (CONTINUED)**B. ESTIMATED COSTS** *Include calculations and assumptions in the rulemaking record.*

1. What are the total statewide dollar costs that businesses and individuals may incur to comply with this regulation over its lifetime? \$ _____

a. Initial costs for a small business: \$ _____ Annual ongoing costs: \$ _____ Years: _____

b. Initial costs for a typical business: \$ _____ Annual ongoing costs: \$ _____ Years: _____

c. Initial costs for an individual: \$ _____ Annual ongoing costs: \$ _____ Years: _____

d. Describe other economic costs that may occur: _____

2. If multiple industries are impacted, enter the share of total costs for each industry: _____

3. If the regulation imposes reporting requirements, enter the annual costs a typical business may incur to comply with these requirements.
Include the dollar costs to do programming, record keeping, reporting, and other paperwork, whether or not the paperwork must be submitted. \$ _____4. Will this regulation directly impact housing costs? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If YES, enter the annual dollar cost per housing unit: \$ _____

Number of units: _____

5. Are there comparable Federal regulations? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Explain the need for State regulation given the existence or absence of Federal regulations: _____

Enter any additional costs to businesses and/or individuals that may be due to State - Federal differences: \$ _____

C. ESTIMATED BENEFITS *Estimation of the dollar value of benefits is not specifically required by rulemaking law, but encouraged.*

1. Briefly summarize the benefits of the regulation, which may include among others, the health and welfare of California residents, worker safety and the State's environment: _____

2. Are the benefits the result of: ☐ specific statutory requirements, or ☐ goals developed by the agency based on broad statutory authority?

Explain: _____

3. What are the total statewide benefits from this regulation over its lifetime? \$ _____

4. Briefly describe any expansion of businesses currently doing business within the State of California that would result from this regulation: _____

D. ALTERNATIVES TO THE REGULATION *Include calculations and assumptions in the rulemaking record. Estimation of the dollar value of benefits is not specifically required by rulemaking law, but encouraged.*

1. List alternatives considered and describe them below. If no alternatives were considered, explain why not: _____

**ECONOMIC AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT
(REGULATIONS AND ORDERS)**

STD. 399 (Rev. 10/2019)

ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

2. Summarize the total statewide costs and benefits from this regulation and each alternative considered:

Regulation: Benefit: \$ _____ Cost: \$ _____

Alternative 1: Benefit: \$ _____ Cost: \$ _____

Alternative 2: Benefit: \$ _____ Cost: \$ _____

3. Briefly discuss any quantification issues that are relevant to a comparison of estimated costs and benefits for this regulation or alternatives: _____
_____4. Rulemaking law requires agencies to consider performance standards as an alternative, if a regulation mandates the use of specific technologies or equipment, or prescribes specific actions or procedures. Were performance standards considered to lower compliance costs? ☐ YES ☐ NOExplain: _____
_____**E. MAJOR REGULATIONS** *Include calculations and assumptions in the rulemaking record.****California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) boards, offices and departments are required to submit the following (per Health and Safety Code section 57005). Otherwise, skip to E4.***1. Will the estimated costs of this regulation to California business enterprises **exceed \$10 million**? ☐ YES ☐ NO***If YES, complete E2. and E3******If NO, skip to E4***

2. Briefly describe each alternative, or combination of alternatives, for which a cost-effectiveness analysis was performed:

Alternative 1: _____

Alternative 2: _____

(Attach additional pages for other alternatives)

3. For the regulation, and each alternative just described, enter the estimated total cost and overall cost-effectiveness ratio:

Regulation: Total Cost \$ _____ Cost-effectiveness ratio: \$ _____

Alternative 1: Total Cost \$ _____ Cost-effectiveness ratio: \$ _____

Alternative 2: Total Cost \$ _____ Cost-effectiveness ratio: \$ _____

4. Will the regulation subject to OAL review have an estimated economic impact to business enterprises and individuals located in or doing business in California exceeding \$50 million in any 12-month period between the date the major regulation is estimated to be filed with the Secretary of State through 12 months after the major regulation is estimated to be fully implemented?

☐ YES ☐ NO*If YES, agencies are required to submit a [Standardized Regulatory Impact Assessment \(SRIA\)](#) as specified in Government Code Section 11346.3(c) and to include the SRIA in the Initial Statement of Reasons.*

5. Briefly describe the following:

The increase or decrease of investment in the State: _____
_____The incentive for innovation in products, materials or processes: _____
_____The benefits of the regulations, including, but not limited to, benefits to the health, safety, and welfare of California residents, worker safety, and the state's environment and quality of life, among any other benefits identified by the agency: _____

**ECONOMIC AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT
(REGULATIONS AND ORDERS)**

STD. 399 (Rev. 10/2019)

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**A. FISCAL EFFECT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT** *Indicate appropriate boxes 1 through 6 and attach calculations and assumptions of fiscal impact for the current year and two subsequent Fiscal Years.*

- ☐ 1. Additional expenditures in the current State Fiscal Year which are reimbursable by the State. (Approximate)
(Pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution and Sections 17500 et seq. of the Government Code).

\$ _____

- ☐ a. Funding provided in _____
Budget Act of _____ or Chapter _____, Statutes of _____

- ☐ b. Funding will be requested in the Governor's Budget Act of _____
Fiscal Year: _____

- ☐ 2. Additional expenditures in the current State Fiscal Year which are NOT reimbursable by the State. (Approximate)
(Pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution and Sections 17500 et seq. of the Government Code).

\$ _____

Check reason(s) this regulation is not reimbursable and provide the appropriate information:

- ☐ a. Implements the Federal mandate contained in _____
- ☐ b. Implements the court mandate set forth by the _____ Court.

Case of: _____ vs. _____

- ☐ c. Implements a mandate of the people of this State expressed in their approval of Proposition No. _____

Date of Election: _____

- ☐ d. Issued only in response to a specific request from affected local entity(s).

Local entity(s) affected: _____

- ☐ e. Will be fully financed from the fees, revenue, etc. from: _____

Authorized by Section: _____ of the _____ Code;

- ☐ f. Provides for savings to each affected unit of local government which will, at a minimum, offset any additional costs to each;

- ☐ g. Creates, eliminates, or changes the penalty for a new crime or infraction contained in _____

- ☐ 3. Annual Savings. (approximate)

\$ _____

- ☐ 4. No additional costs or savings. This regulation makes only technical, non-substantive or clarifying changes to current law regulations.

- ☒ 5. No fiscal impact exists. This regulation does not affect any local entity or program.

- ☐ 6. Other. Explain _____

**ECONOMIC AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT
(REGULATIONS AND ORDERS)**

STD. 399 (Rev. 10/2019)

Draft Document**FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT (CONTINUED)****B. FISCAL EFFECT ON STATE GOVERNMENT** *Indicate appropriate boxes 1 through 4 and attach calculations and assumptions of fiscal impact for the current year and two subsequent Fiscal Years.*☐ 1. Additional expenditures in the current State Fiscal Year. (Approximate)

\$ _____

It is anticipated that State agencies will:☐ a. Absorb these additional costs within their existing budgets and resources.☐ b. Increase the currently authorized budget level for the _____ Fiscal Year☐ 2. Savings in the current State Fiscal Year. (Approximate)

\$ _____

☐ 3. No fiscal impact exists. This regulation does not affect any State agency or program.☒ 4. Other. Explain While there is no direct impact to the Department or other state agencies in the form of personnel changes or increased expenditures, there may be an increase in license sales from the proposed regulations, which could result in additional revenue. See addendum.**C. FISCAL EFFECT ON FEDERAL FUNDING OF STATE PROGRAMS** *Indicate appropriate boxes 1 through 4 and attach calculations and assumptions of fiscal impact for the current year and two subsequent Fiscal Years.*☐ 1. Additional expenditures in the current State Fiscal Year. (Approximate)

\$ _____

☐ 2. Savings in the current State Fiscal Year. (Approximate)

\$ _____

☒ 3. No fiscal impact exists. This regulation does not affect any federally funded State agency or program.☐ 4. Other. Explain _____

FISCAL OFFICER SIGNATURE

DATE

*The signature attests that the agency has completed the STD. 399 according to the instructions in SAM sections 6601-6616, and understands the impacts of the proposed rulemaking. State boards, offices, or departments not under an Agency Secretary must have the form signed by the highest ranking official in the organization.*

AGENCY SECRETARY

DATE

*Finance approval and signature is required when SAM sections 6601-6616 require completion of Fiscal Impact Statement in the STD. 399.*

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE PROGRAM BUDGET MANAGER

DATE



STD 399 Addendum**Re-adoption of Emergency Action to Amend Sections 1.91,
27.25, 27.30, 27.35, 27.40, and 28.55 of
Title 14, California Code of Regulations (CCR)
Regarding Recreational Take of Rockfish, Cabezon, Greenling
and Lingcod****Background**

Current regulations establish season dates and depth constraints, and recreational bag limits for federal groundfish species that vary by species or species groups, and are designed to keep harvest within federally established allowable limits. Section 1.91 defines the species considered federal groundfish. Sections 27.25, 27.30, 27.35 and 27.40 currently set forth season dates, and depth constraints for the four groundfish management areas (GMA) north of Point Conception (34°27' N. lat.). Section 28.55, Rockfish (Genus *Sebastes*), currently sets forth the bag limits, and methods of take for all rockfish species.

At its December 2025 meeting, the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) took emergency action to extend the emergency regulations effective August 28, 2025 that amended the recreational rockfish, cabezon, and greenling (RCG) and lingcod season structure regulations. The amendments restored fishing access to all depths, implemented a 2-fish sub-bag limit for canary rockfish, and added sunset rockfish to the cryptic-species vermilion/sunset rockfish management unit. The August 2025 emergency action amended sections 1.91, 27.25, 27.30, 27.35, 27.40, and 28.55, Title 14, California Code of Regulations (CCR).

The extension of the emergency regulations is necessary for regulations in state waters (0 to 3 miles from shore) to continue to be consistent with and complementary to regulations in federal waters (3 to 200 miles from shore), to keep catches of canary rockfish and sunset rockfish within federally established harvest limits, and for the benefit of the public's general welfare.

On June 9, 2025, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) posted online a draft quillback rockfish stock assessment in waters off California, an assessment that is more robust than the previous one conducted in 2021. The newest assessment considers all available data sources, including newly available California-specific life history information. Results of the assessment indicate the California stock is healthy and not overfished, as was indicated by the 2021 quillback rockfish stock assessment that was data-moderate. Therefore, the previous conservation emergency identified in 2021 no longer exists, and the associated depth-based fishery constraints are unwarranted.

Following formal review and approval of the 2025 stock assessment for use in federal management which occurred between July and September 2025, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) took an inseason regulatory action to remove the federal fishery depth restrictions in place since October 2023. This action, effective September 18, 2025, replaced the depths and season structure for boat-based RCG and lingcod fishing in federal waters (3 to 200 miles from shore) with all-depth fishing from Point Conception (34°27' N. lat.) to the California/Oregon border (42° N. lat.) during the open season in these GMAs, April 1 through December 31. Extending the emergency regulations will continue to restore recreational fishing opportunities to distribute recreational fishing efforts, consistent with the September 18, 2025 federal regulations. NMFS is expected to take further action in late 2025,

to implement a 2-fish sub-bag limit for canary rockfish within the 10-fish RCG daily limit. The canary rockfish sub-bag limit measure aims to keep catches of canary rockfish within the California recreational harvest guideline (HG). Further NMFS actions may be necessary in late 2025 and early 2026 to revise federal harvest limits and recreational management measures.

Economic Impact Statement

Section A. Estimated Private Sector Cost Impacts

1. Answer: h. None of the above. (Explain below):

Emergency regulations do not require an economic impact statement; only fiscal impacts must be evaluated (California Government Code Section 11346.1).

Fiscal Impact Statement

Section A. Fiscal Effect on Local Government

Answer: 5. No fiscal impact.

The Commission anticipates that the emergency action will have no fiscal effect on any local government entity or program.

Section B. Fiscal Effect on State Government

Answer: 4. Other. Explain:

The Commission anticipates that the extension of the emergency regulations will have no direct fiscal effect on state government in terms of implementation, monitoring, and enforcement activities for the Department; however, they could potentially affect annual license revenue if anglers previously stopped purchasing licenses as a result of depth restrictions enacted in October 2023 and decide to purchase licenses after the emergency regulations become effective.

Estimating effort is difficult, as there is no groundfish-specific report card. A general California fishing license covers multiple species and is valid for 365 days regardless of when the license is purchased. It's unclear whether anglers ceased fishing altogether or shifted to other available species as a result of groundfish restrictions enacted in October 2023 since the groundfish depth restrictions coincided with closures to the recreational salmon fishery and new limitations in other fisheries, further complicating an impact analysis. Overall, any effect on license sales will likely be neutral or positive.

Prices for the 2026 sport fishing licenses are given in Table 1, while Table 2 shows the number of licenses sold each year in 2020 through 2024, the average number of licenses sold from 2020 through 2024, and the projected revenue for a 0.1% increase in items sold using the pricing information from Table 1. Sport fishing licenses may be purchased year-round so the available data for 2025 is incomplete; only completed seasons are used for this estimation. Assuming that the total items sold would be close to the average from 2020 through 2024, and assuming that angler participation would increase by 0.1% through these regulations, the expected annual revenue to the Department would be approximately \$81,000. The expected revenue to the Department for the 90-day period the emergency extension of the existing

emergency regulations will be in effect is expected to be far less than the expected annual revenue.

Table 1: 2026 Sport Fishing License Prices

License Type	Fee Total	Surcharge	CDFW Handling Fee	CDFW Price
Resident 365-Day	\$59.75	\$1.79	\$0.00	\$61.54
Non-resident 365-Day	\$161.25	\$4.84	\$0.00	\$166.09
Non-resident 10-Day	\$59.75	\$1.79	\$0.00	\$61.54
1-Day*	\$19.50	\$0.59	\$0.00	\$20.09
2-Day*	\$30.00	\$0.90	\$0.00	\$30.90

**1-day and 2-day licenses are sold to residents and non-residents at the same price*

Table 2: Sport Fishing Licenses Sold from 2020-2024 with Projections

Licenses	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2020-24 AVG	0.1% Increase	Revenue
Resident	1,191,929	1,136,664	994,136	1,048,357	998,706	1,073,958	1073.96	\$66,091.40
Non-Resident	16,123	15,935	14,788	15,904	15,235	15,597	15.60	\$2,590.51
Non-Resident (10 Day)	13,218	16,182	16,064	15,605	16,513	15,516	15.52	\$954.88
1-Day	540,998	494,879	453,898	389,827	388,617	453,644	453.64	\$9,113.70
2-Day	92,241	80,792	75,428	62,328	64,768	75,111	75.11	\$2,320.94
							Total	\$81,071.43

Additionally, no other state agencies or programs would be affected by this regulatory action.

Section C. Fiscal Effect on Federal Funding of State Programs

Answer: 3. No fiscal impact.

The emergency action will not have a fiscal effect on federal funding of state programs.