

Staff Summary for December 10-11, 2025

21. Recreational Take of Rockfish, Cabezon, Greenling, and Lingcod Regular Rulemaking**Today's Item**Information ☒Action ☐

Discuss proposed amendments to regulations regarding recreational take of rockfish, cabezon, greenling, and lingcod.

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 |
| • Readoption of <i>emergency regulations</i> | December 10-11, 2025 |
| • Today's discussion hearing for <i>regular rulemaking</i> | December 10-11, 2025 |
| • Adoption hearing for <i>regular rulemaking</i> | February 12-13, 2025 |

Background

At its October 8-9, 2025 meeting, the Commission authorized publication of a notice of its intent to amend regulations regarding recreational take of rockfish, cabezon, greenling, and lingcod. The proposal is intended to continue the emergency regulations – adopted by the Commission at its August 2025 meeting – through a regular rulemaking in time to be effective before the emergency regulations expire. Further background on this proposal can be found in exhibits 1, 2, and 3.

The initial statement of reasons for regulatory action (Exhibit 3) was made publicly available through the Commission website and publication in the California Regulatory Notice Register on October 24, 2025 (OAL #Z2025-1014-03).

Today's meeting is an opportunity for public discussion of the proposal.

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

1. [Staff Summary for Agenda Item 19, August 2025 Commission meeting](#) (for background purposes only)
2. [Staff Summary for Agenda Item 18, October 2025 Commission meeting](#) (for background purposes only)
3. [Initial statement of reasons](#)
4. [Proposed regulatory language](#)

Motion (N/A)

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

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • 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.

**Staff Summary for October 8-9, 2025
For Background Purposes Only**

18. Recreational Take of Rockfish, Cabezon, Greenling, and Lingcod Regular Rulemaking (Consent)

Today's Item

Information ☐

Action ☒

Consider authorizing publication of a notice of intent to amend regulations regarding recreational take of rockfish, cabezon, greenling, and lingcod.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

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|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Adopted emergency regulations | August 13-14, 2025 |
| • Today's notice hearing for <i>regular rulemaking</i> | October 8-9, 2025 |
| • Discussion hearing | December 10-11, 2025 |
| • Adoption hearing | February 11-12, 2026 |

Background

Regulatory authority for the rockfish, cabezon, greenling (RCG), and lingcod fisheries is shared by state and federal governments. Current Commission 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.

At its August 2025 meeting, the Commission approved emergency regulations to:

- 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; and
- retain the existing 0-fish sub-bag limit for quillback rockfish.

The emergency regulations became effective on August 28, 2025 and will expire on February 25, 2026 in the absence of further action.

Today, the Commission may authorize a notice of its intent to adopt the emergency regulations through a regular rulemaking known as a "certificate of compliance," which will ensure the emergency regulations remain in effect once they expire. Further background on the draft proposed regulations can be found in exhibits 1 and 3; the draft proposed regulatory language in the regular rulemaking (Exhibit 4) does not differ from the regulatory language in the emergency rulemaking already approved by the Commission and Office of Administrative Law.

Significant Public Comments (N/A)

**Staff Summary for October 8-9, 2025
For Background Purposes Only**

Recommendation

Commission staff: Under a motion to adopt the consent calendar, authorize publication of a notice of intent to amend regulations regarding recreational take of rockfish, cabezon, greenling, and lingcod.

Department: Authorize publication of a notice of intent to amend regulations as outlined in the draft initial statement of reasons and draft proposed regulatory language.

Exhibits

1. Staff summary for Agenda Item 19, August 2025 Commission meeting (*for background purposes only*)
2. Department memo, received September 5, 2025
3. Draft initial statement of reasons
4. Draft proposed regulatory language
5. Department presentation from August 13-14, 2025 meeting
6. Draft economic and fiscal impact statement (STD. 399)

Motion

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that the Commission adopts the staff recommendation for items 18 through 22 on the consent calendar.

State of California
Fish and Game Commission
Initial Statement of Reasons for Regulatory Action
(Certificate of Compliance)

Amend Sections 1.91, 27.25, 27.30, 27.35, 27.40, and 28.55
Title 14, California Code of Regulations
Regarding Recreational Take of Rockfish, Cabezon, Greenling and Lingcod

I. Date of Initial Statement of Reasons: October 14, 2025

II. Dates and Locations of Scheduled Hearings

(a) Notice Hearing:

Date: October 8-9, 2025

Location: Sacramento

(b) Discussion Hearing:

Date: December 10-11, 2025

Location: Sacramento

(c) Adoption Hearing:

Date: February 11-12, 2026

Location: Sacramento

III. Description of Regulatory Action

(a) Statement of Specific Purpose of Regulatory Change and Factual Basis for Determining that Regulation Change is Reasonably Necessary

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

Background

Regulatory authority for the rockfish, cabezon, and greenling (RCG) complex and lingcod are 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 California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) routinely adopts and amends regulations in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) for the recreational groundfish fisheries in state waters¹ zero to three miles from shore. Groundfish

¹ The offshore boundary of the state's sovereign lands was established in 2014 by an order entered by the United States Supreme Court in the case of United States of America, Plaintiff v. State of California, 135 S. Ct. 563; 190 L. Ed. 2d 514; 2014 U.S. LEXIS 8436 (2014). This action by the United States Supreme Court permanently fixes the offshore boundary between the United States and California, resolving a dispute that began in 1935 with the discovery of oil in Wilmington, California. There is now a fixed boundary approximately 3 nautical miles off the coast of California extending from Mexico to Oregon, providing certainty to state and federal lessors, regulators, lessees, and operators of federal and state mineral and renewable-energy leasing programs.

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*) are a key recreational and commercial species among the RCG complex, and co-inhabit rocky reef habitats in nearshore waters, typically between 20 fathoms (fm) (approximately 120 feet) and 50 fm (approximately 300 feet), but often are 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 California Department of Fish and Wildlife (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. latitude (lat.)) to prohibit fishing 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 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, and does not rely on proxy data from other states as the 2021 assessment had. Results of the 2025 indicate that the California quillback stock is healthy and not overfished², 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 inseason 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 groundfish management areas (GMA), 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 harvest guideline (HG). Further NMFS actions may be necessary in late 2025 and early 2026 to revise federal harvest limits and recreational management measures.

Current Regulations

Present regulations establish season dates and depth constraints, and recreational bag limits that vary by species or species groups and are designed to keep harvest within federally established allowable limits. Section 1.91 defines the list of federal groundfish species and provides species groupings as appropriate. Sections 27.25, 27.30, 27.35 and 27.40 set forth season dates, and depth constraints for the four GMAs 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.

² “Overfished” describes any stock or stock complex whose size is sufficiently diminished that a change in management practices is required to achieve an appropriate level and rate of rebuilding. The term generally describes any stock or stock complex determined to be below its overfished/rebuilding threshold. The default proxy is generally 25 percent of its estimated unfished biomass; however, other scientifically valid values are also authorized.

Under regulations that went into effect in 2024, the boat-based RCG and lingcod fishery in the Northern, Mendocino, San Francisco, and Central GMAs is open seaward of the 50-fm boundary line from April 1 through April 30, October 1 through October 31, and December 1 through December 31, and is open shoreward of the 20-fm boundary line from May 1 through September 30, and November 1 through November 30. During the seaward-of-50-fm fishery, additional limitations on species or species groups apply.

Pursuant to subsection 28.55(b), the RCG complex has a daily 10-fish bag and possession aggregate limit, meaning that each angler's catch can be composed of any combination of rockfish, cabezon, or greenling as long as total catch remains at or below 10 fish. Sub-bag limits are implemented when harvest guidelines cannot accommodate the 10-fish bag limit being composed of a single species. The sub-bag limit for copper rockfish is 1 fish statewide, and, under regulations that went into effect in 2024, the sub-bag limit for vermilion rockfish is 4 fish in the Northern GMA and 2 fish in all other GMAs. Bronzespotted rockfish, cowcod, quillback rockfish and yelloweye rockfish have bag limits of zero fish.

Emergency Regulations Adopted

The Commission adopted emergency regulations on August 14, 2025. The emergency regulations implemented the following changes:

- Amended subsection 1.91(a)(3) to add sunset rockfish (*S. crocotulus*) to the list of shelf rockfish;
- Amended subsection 27.25(b)(2) and repealed subsection 27.25(b)(3) to repeal the shoreward-of-20-fm and seaward-of-50-fm times of the year in the Northern GMA and replace them with a season that is open April 1 through December 31 in all depths;
- Amended subsection 27.30(b)(2) and repealed 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;
- Amended subsection 27.35(b)(2) and repealed 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;
- Amended subsection 27.40(b)(2) and repealed 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;
- Amended subsections 27.40(a) and 27.40(b) to remove references to areas north and south of 36° N. lat.;
- Repealed subsection 27.40(c) related to seasons and depth constraints in the Central GMA south of 36° N. lat.;

- Amended subsections 28.55(b)(2) and 28.55(b)(2)(B) to add the cryptic-species sunset rockfish; and,
- Added new subsection 28.55(b)(4) to include a sub-bag limit for canary rockfish of two fish within the daily 10-fish RCG bag and possession limit.

Proposed Regulations

The Department is recommending the Commission establish the emergency regulations for the long-term via the regular rulemaking process:

- ***Amend Section 1.91***

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

This change is 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-fm and seaward-of-50-fm times of the year in the Northern 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 constraints within certain months of the open season. These changes are 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.

- Repeal subsection 27.40(c) related to seasons and depth constraints in the Central GMA south of 36° N. lat.

The line at 36° N. lat. was implemented to provide additional fishery access to the Morro Bay port area where quillback rockfish are not found. New science indicates the significant conservation risk to quillback rockfish no longer exists and restricting the fishery is not necessary; therefore, separate regulations for the Central GMA north and south of 36° N. lat. are not necessary.

- ***Amend Section 28.55***

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

These changes are necessary for consistency with federal regulations, to address enforcement concerns about anglers attempting to “double-up” on sub-bag limits and to 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 RCG bag and possession limit.

This change is necessary to keep catches within the federally established California recreational HG.

Implementing these regulatory changes as a package will also provide administrative efficiencies.

(b) Goals and Benefits of the Regulation

The benefits of the proposed regulations are sustainable management of RCG and lingcod resources and promotion of businesses that rely on recreational groundfish fishing.

Fishing is an outdoor activity that can provide several health and welfare benefits to California residents. Anglers and their families benefit from fresh fish to eat and from the benefits of outdoor recreation, including exercise. People who fish have a special connection with the outdoors and an awareness of the relationships between wildlife, habitat, and humans, and fishing can be a family tradition and a bonding activity.

It is the policy of this state to encourage the conservation, maintenance, and utilization of the living resources of the ocean and other waters under the jurisdiction and influence of the state for the benefit of all the citizens of the state and to promote the development of local and distant water fisheries based in California. The objectives of this policy include, but are not limited to, the maintenance of sufficient populations of all species of aquatic organisms to ensure their continued existence and the maintenance of a sufficient resource to support a reasonable sport use, taking into consideration the necessity of regulating individual sport fishery bag limits to the quantity that is sufficient to provide a satisfying sport. Adoption of scientifically-based RCG and lingcod seasons, depth constraints, and bag and possession limits provides for the maintenance of sufficient populations of RCG and lingcod species to ensure their continued existence.

(c) Authority and Reference Sections from Fish and Game Code for Regulation

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.

(d) Specific Technology or Equipment Required by Regulatory Change: None

(e) Identification of Reports or Documents Supporting Regulation Change

- 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. https://pam.pcouncil.org/documents/quillback_rockfish_sar_2025-pdf/
- June 2025, Pacific Fishery Management Council, Decision Summary Document. <https://www.pcouncil.org/june-2025-decision-summary-document/>
- Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan for California, Oregon, and Washington Groundfish Fishery. June 2025. Pacific Fishery Management Council. <https://www.pcouncil.org/documents/2022/08/pacific-coast-groundfish-fishery-management-plan.pdf/>
- Amendment 33 to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan, 2025-26 Harvest Specifications, and Management Measures. October 2024. National Marine Fisheries Service West Coast Region and Pacific Fishery Management Council. <https://www.pcouncil.org/documents/2025/05/2025-26-groundfish-harvest-specifications-and-management-measure-environmental-assessment.pdf/>

(f) Public Discussions of Proposed Regulations Prior to Notice Publication

- June 2025 - The PFMC process includes the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel, which is an advisory fishing group and includes fishery representatives and non-governmental organizations. This group was notified during the June 2025 PFMC meeting in Rohnert Park, California, of upcoming proposed changes in conjunction with planned federal actions. At the PFMC meeting, support was heard amongst recreational fishery representatives and participants for restoring access to currently prohibited fishing depths.
- August 14, 2025 – Commission emergency regulation hearing with 8 public comments received, all in support of the emergency action.
- September 2025 – PFMC meeting in Spokane, WA, and remote participation. Standing agenda item “Inseason Adjustments.” PFMC will receive reports from the Department summarizing changes to regulations through Commission emergency regulatory action. In addition, PFMC is expected to consider a canary rockfish 2-fish sub-bag limit for consistency in state and federal regulations. Opportunities at this meeting exist for advisory fishing groups and interested members of public to participate and comment.

IV. Description of Reasonable Alternatives to Regulatory Action

(a) Alternatives to Regulation Change

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

(b) No Change Alternative

Without the proposed changes, the outstanding issues concerning the regulations currently governing RCG and lingcod would remain unaddressed.

Under the No Change Alternative, the emergency regulations adopted by the Commission in August 2025 would expire during the summer of 2026, reverting to the original regulations in place at the beginning of 2025 and would:

- Continue unwarranted constraining regulations on the fishery, causing continued 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.

V. Mitigation Measures Required by Regulatory Action

The proposed regulatory action will have no negative impact on the environment; therefore, no mitigation measures are needed.

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 initial 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 proposal to modify the recreational RCG and lingcod season structure regulations to restore access to all depths in state waters north of Point Conception will expand fishing opportunities for anglers and sport fishing businesses (e.g., commercial passenger fishing vessel businesses) targeting groundfish. No new fees are imposed as a result of the proposed regulations, nor are any indirect costs imposed on anglers or sport fishing businesses. No adverse economic impacts are anticipated as a result of implementing a 2-fish sub-bag limit for canary rockfish and adding sunset rockfish to cryptic-species vermilion/sunset rockfish management unit.

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

The Commission does not anticipate any impacts on the creation or elimination of jobs, the creation of new businesses, the elimination of existing businesses or the expansion of businesses in California. The proposal to modify the recreational RCG and lingcod season structure regulations to restore access to all depths in state waters north of Point Conception will expand fishing opportunities for anglers and sport fishing businesses (e.g., commercial passenger fishing vessel businesses) targeting groundfish similar to those in effect prior to October 2023, but it is expected that the time out on the water will remain largely the same, which would not create a significant increase in economic activity that would warrant the need for additional labor for commercial passenger fishing vessels. No new fees are imposed as a result of these regulations, nor are any indirect costs imposed on anglers or sport fishing businesses. No impacts to jobs or businesses are anticipated as a result of implementing a 2-fish sub-bag limit for canary rockfish and adding sunset rockfish to cryptic-species vermilion/sunset rockfish management unit. The proposed regulations do not bring any additional benefits to worker safety. Fishing is an outdoor activity that can provide several health and welfare benefits to California residents. Anglers and their families benefit from fresh fish to eat and from the benefits of outdoor recreation, including exercise. People who fish have a special connection with the outdoors and an awareness of the relationships between wildlife, habitat, and humans, and fishing can be a family tradition and a bonding activity. The Commission anticipates benefits to the state's environment by adopting scientifically-based RCG and lingcod seasons, depth constraints, and bag and possession limits to provide for the maintenance of sufficient populations of RCG and lingcod species to ensure their continued existence.

(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. The proposal to modify the recreational RCG and lingcod season structure regulations to restore access to all depths in state waters north of Point Conception will restore fishing opportunities for anglers targeting groundfish similar to those in effect prior October 2023. No new fees are imposed as a result of these regulations, nor are any indirect costs imposed on anglers. No cost impacts are anticipated as a result of implementing a 2-fish sub-bag limit for canary rockfish and adding sunset rockfish to cryptic-species vermilion/sunset rockfish management unit.

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

The Commission anticipates no direct effect on the cost or savings to state agencies or the cost 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 groundfish depth 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 – if license sales go up by 0.1% as a result of these regulations, then the anticipated revenue increase would be approximately \$81,000, see the addendum to the economic and fiscal impact statement (STD 399).

(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

VII. Economic Impact Assessment

(a) Effects of the Regulation on the Creation or Elimination of Jobs Within the State

The Commission is not aware of any adverse economic impacts on the creation or elimination of jobs as a result of the proposed regulations. The proposal to modify the recreational RCG and lingcod season structure regulations to restore access to all depths in state waters north of Point Conception will expand fishing opportunities for anglers and sport fishing businesses (e.g., commercial passenger fishing vessel businesses) targeting groundfish, though time out on the water is expected to remain at a similar level and should not necessitate the need for additional positions, such as deckhands on private chartered vessels. No new fees are imposed as a result of these regulations, nor are any indirect costs (such as the transportation costs that would arise from forcing anglers to target groundfish in specific zones or costs associated with new reporting requirements) imposed on sport fishing businesses.

(b) Effects of the Regulation on the Creation of New Businesses or the Elimination of Existing Businesses Within the State

The Commission is not aware of any adverse economic impacts on the creation or elimination of businesses as a result of the proposed regulations. The proposal to modify the recreational RCG and lingcod season structure regulations to restore access to all depths in state waters north of Point Conception will expand fishing opportunities for anglers and sport fishing businesses targeting groundfish; however, the expanded opportunities are not expected to be sufficient to create new businesses because time spent by anglers out on the water is expected to remain largely the same. No new fees are imposed as a result of these regulations, nor are any indirect costs (such as the transportation costs that would arise from forcing anglers to target groundfish in specific

zones or costs associated with new reporting requirements) imposed on sport fishing businesses.

(c) Effects of the Regulation on the Expansion of Businesses Currently Doing Business Within the State

The Commission is not aware of any adverse economic impacts on the expansion of businesses as a result of the proposed regulations. The proposal to modify the recreational RCG and lingcod season structure regulations to restore access to all depths in state waters north of Point Conception will expand fishing opportunities for anglers and sport fishing businesses targeting groundfish, but the expanded opportunities are not expected to result in the expansion of businesses because it is expected that angler time on the water will remain largely the same. No new fees are imposed as a result of these regulations, nor are any indirect costs (such as the transportation costs that would arise from forcing anglers to target groundfish in specific zones or costs associated with new reporting requirements) imposed on sport fishing businesses.

(d) Benefits of the Regulation to the Health and Welfare of California Residents

Fishing is an outdoor activity that can provide several health and welfare benefits to California residents. Anglers and their families benefit from fresh fish to eat and from the benefits of outdoor recreation, including exercise. People who fish have a special connection with the outdoors and an awareness of the relationships between wildlife, habitat, and humans, and fishing can be a family tradition and a bonding activity.

(e) Benefits of the Regulation to Worker Safety

The Commission does not anticipate impacts to worker safety as the regulations do not affect working conditions.

(f) Benefits of the Regulation to the State's Environment

The Commission anticipates benefits to the state's environment by adopting scientifically-based RCG and lingcod seasons, depth constraints, and bag and possession limits to provide for the maintenance of sufficient populations of RCG and lingcod species to ensure their continued existence.

(g) Other Benefits of the Regulation

None.

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.

Proposed Changes

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) recommends that the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) use regular rulemaking authority to incorporate emergency regulations it adopted in August 2025 to amend the recreational rockfish, cabezon, and greenling (RCG) and lingcod season structure regulations. The amendments restored fishing access to all depths in state waters north of Point Conception from 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 regulations would amend sections 1.91, 27.25, 27.30, 27.35, 27.40, and 28.55, through a “certificate of compliance” action. The proposal 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 took an inseason 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. Adopting through a regular rulemaking the regulatory amendments in the August 2025 emergency rulemaking will continue to restore recreational fishing opportunities to distribute recreational fishing efforts, consistent with the September 18, 2025 federal regulations.

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.

Benefits of the Proposed Regulations

The benefits of the proposed regulations are sustainable management of RCG and lingcod resources and promotion of businesses that rely on recreational groundfish fishing.

Fishing is an outdoor activity that can provide several health and welfare benefits to California residents. Anglers and their families benefit from fresh fish to eat and from the benefits of outdoor recreation, including exercise. People who fish have a special connection with the outdoors and an awareness of the relationships between wildlife, habitat, and humans, and fishing can be a family tradition and a bonding activity.

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.

Proposed Regulatory Language

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.