

Staff Summary for June 17-18, 2026

4B. Department Director and Law Enforcement Division Reports

Today's Item

Information

Action

The Department will highlight items of note since the last Commission meeting.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)

Background (N/A)

Significant Public Comments (N/A)

Recommendation (N/A)

Exhibits

1. [Department news release: "CDFW Investigation Finds SoCal Restaurant in Violation of Fishing and Advertising Laws," dated June 1, 2026](#)

Motion (N/A)



CDFW NEWS

June 1, 2026

CDFW Investigation Finds SoCal Restaurant in Violation of Fishing and Advertising Laws



Restaurant Managers Ordered to Pay Tens of Thousands in Penalties; Fishing Vessel Owner and Operators Prohibited from Commercial Fishing in State.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) wildlife officers conducted an investigation into Dudley Market, a high-end restaurant and fish business in Venice, Calif., for unlawfully selling seafood while advertising its products as traceable, sustainable and lawfully sourced. The investigation found repeated violations of state and federal commercial fishing laws in 2020 and 2021.

Prosecutors from the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office and Santa Barbara and Los Angeles County district attorney's offices resolved the case through a civil enforcement action under California's Unfair Competition Law. The case resulted in more than \$100,000 in penalties for the restaurant and its managers, and fishing vessel owners and operators involved have been prohibited from owning or operating a commercial fishing vessel in California.

"Commercial fishing laws exist to protect our oceans and preserve marine ecosystems," said Los Angeles County District Attorney Nathan J. Hochman. "These businesses lured the public into thinking they were caring for our precious resources, when in reality, their fish was unlawfully sourced. Sustainability was the bait, but fraud was the hook. The message is clear; this kind of deception will not be tolerated."

Conner Mitchell, 37, of Venice, and Taylor Grant, 41, of Santa Monica, managed Dudley Market in 2020 through the business entities Dudley Street Oyster Bar and Shark Bite Fish Co. Grant later ended her association with the business, while Mitchell continued overseeing daily operations and seafood procurement. Mitchell operated the commercial fishing vessel Jamaica Day, which he and Grant used to catch fish for the restaurant. Cody Martin, 30, of El Segundo, operated the commercial fishing vessel Predator and supplied fish to Dudley Market.

CDFW wildlife officers served search warrants on cellular devices belonging to Mitchell and Martin, as well as the chart plotter aboard the commercial fishing vessel Predator. Evidence obtained during the investigation revealed repeated violations of laws governing California's commercial fishing and seafood industry.

Under California law, it is illegal to sell sport-caught fish commercially. Fish taken by a commercial vessel also must be lawfully brought to port and documented on an electronic fish ticket before being removed from the vessel. This documentation is critical for CDFW and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries to effectively manage California fisheries and ensure long-term sustainability.

The investigation revealed numerous violations of California commercial fishing laws, including the unlawful purchase, possession and sale of sport-caught fish such as rockfish, bluefin tuna and yellowtail; commercial fishing activity conducted without

required licenses; failure to lawfully document federally managed species brought to shore; illegal harvest of rockfish within restricted conservation areas and state marine protected areas; and the marketing of unlawfully sourced seafood as sustainable, traceable and lawfully procured.

As part of the settlement Mitchell, Dudley Street Oyster Bar and Shark Bite Fish Co. were ordered to pay \$58,226.25 in civil penalties, \$15,000 to the Fish and Game Preservation Fund and \$1,773.75 in court costs and fees in May 2026. Grant was ordered to pay \$40,000 in civil penalties and \$10,000 to the Fish and Game Preservation Fund in Jul. 2025. Martin was ordered to pay \$8,000 in civil penalties and \$2,000 to the Fish and Game Preservation Fund in Sep. 2025. Grant and Martin are prohibited from commercial fishing in California. Gilmer Grant, owner of fishing vessel Jamaica Day in 2020, was ordered to pay \$10,000 in civil penalties and \$5,000 to the Fish and Game Preservation Fund in Aug. 2025 and is prohibited from owning or operating a commercial fishing vessel in California. The settlement also requires compliance oversight measures, public disclosure notices and additional financial penalties should future violations occur.

“Angelenos deserve to know that the seafood they purchase is safely sourced from businesses that are following the law and not jeopardizing local marine life,” according to Los Angeles City Attorney Hydee Feldstein Soto. “My office will always hold accountable those who violate laws designed to protect consumers and our fragile ecosystems.”

Santa Barbara County District Attorney John Savrnoch added, “Violating fishing regulations that are intended to preserve Marine Protected Areas threatens the environment and the fishing industry that depends on sustainable fish stocks in the future.”

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