



MARINE Management News



A newsletter for everyone interested in the management and conservation of California's living marine resources.

California Department of Fish and Game
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Groundfish Disaster Relief Program

... by **Ed Roberts**, Marine Biologist

Inside This Issue

- Groundfish Disaster Relief Program.....1
- State Budget Crisis Hits *Marine Management News*.....2
- New Feature on Marine Region Web Site Simplifies Sport Fishing Regulations.....2
- Abalone Recovery and Management Plan.....3
- Nearshore Restricted Access Adopted by the Fish and Game Commission.....3
- California's "Overfished" Rockfish - Recovering a Lost Treasure.....4
- A New Rockfish Book.....5
- Channel Islands Marine Protected Area Decision Made.....6
- Outdoor California Ad.....6
- Channel Islands Marine Protected Area Map.....7
- Herring Fishery Update.....8
- Calendar of Upcoming Meetings.....8
- *Marine Management News* Survey Announcement.....9

West Coast groundfish stocks and harvests have declined significantly since the early 1990s. There have been unusually low numbers of young fish for many groundfish species due to natural changes in ocean conditions. Fishing pressure has further depressed the adult population. In response to this situation, the U.S. Secretary of Commerce declared on January 26, 2000, that a commercial fishery failure exists due to this fishery resource disaster. The U.S. Congress responded to this declaration by appropriating funds to provide disaster

relief. In response to these circumstances, the Groundfish Disaster Relief Program was established. This program consists of three relief projects: 1) reimbursement for safety equipment, 2) enhancement of data collection, and 3) the groundfish disaster stipend. The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission contract provides \$300,000 to reimburse vessel owners for the purchase of U.S. Coast Guard-required safety equipment and \$800,000 to support an enhanced groundfish data collection program. The Employment Development Department (EDD) contract, which has been signed, authorizes the expenditure of \$1.2 million to provide monthly stipends (either \$1000 or \$1500) to individuals that meet certain eligibility criteria and that qualify for job retraining through a local Workforce Investment Act office.

Further details on the stipend program are available on the EDD Web site at www.edd.ca.gov/wiab02-33.pdf. All application forms can be picked up from the nine local One-Stop offices which are listed at http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/groundfish_drpf/localcontacts.pdf.

Data Collection - Cowcod ROV Project

Using federal monies made available through the Groundfish Disaster Relief Program, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), in cooperation with the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), is conducting underwater surveys using a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) deployed from a Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel (CPFV, or "party boat"). The purposes of this project are to utilize the knowledge of party boat skippers to locate, measure and video record cowcod rockfish and their habitat, and to assist the CPFV fleet by chartering the vessels for use as research platforms.

("Relief Program" continued on page 9)

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State Budget Crisis Hits Marine Management News

... by **Briana Brady**, Biologist

Folks here at the Marine Region are very aware of the State budget crisis and we are trying our best to reduce costs while maintaining public service. Printing and mailing costs figure substantially in the delivery of this newsletter and so we're asking for your help.

In the December 2001 issue we ran an announcement, "Marine Management News Now Online," and since that time we have had nearly 300 people sign up for an online newsletter subscription. Receiving the newsletter electronically allows DFG to send you information immediately without the delay of standard mail, while at the same time reducing costs.

We are urging everyone who has access to the Internet to sign-up for an online subscription to this newsletter (if you haven't already done so). We will continue to actively send you this publication via e-mail, with links that will connect you directly to the latest articles of *Marine Management News*. What could be easier?

To register for your online subscription, just log onto www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd and click on "Online Newsletter." And remember, while you are online check out all the new and helpful information on the latest regulations and issues concerning marine management. Thank you! 🐟

New Feature on Marine Region Web Site Simplifies Sport Fishing Regulations

... by **Susan Giles**, Scientific Aid

Whether you're new to sport fishing, or an old salty dog, it's hard to keep track when your favorite sport fisheries are open or closed. You asked us to simplify the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) regulations and make them easier to find – and we listened! Our Web team recently developed a new feature on the DFG Marine Region Web site that makes finding up-to-date regulations just "a click away."



The "California Ocean Fishing Regulation Map" is posted on the Marine Region Web site, go to www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd and click on the link.

Map created by Gina Wade

We call it our "California Ocean Fishing Regulation Map" and you'll find a link on the Marine Region homepage at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd. Our new regulations map is divided into three sections – northern, central, and southern California. Just click on the region you're interested in, and you'll be linked to a table on the Web site listing the major sport fisheries along with current information on the 2003 regulations for sport fishing.

A great feature of our new regulations map is a "printer-friendly" version of the table - so you can easily print out a copy of the current regulations. While you're at it, print out a few extra copies to pass onto your friends!

Log onto the Marine Region Web site at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd and check out our new "California Ocean Fishing Regulation Map" for the most up-to-date fishing information. Now, when you're not out on the ocean fishing, surf the Marine Region Web site for all the latest on sport fishing. 🐟

Abalone Recovery and Management Plan

... by **Jonathan Ramsay**, Marine Biologist

In December 2002, the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) submitted the draft Abalone Recovery and Management Plan (ARMP) to the Fish and Game Commission (Commission). Fish and Game Code §5522 mandated DFG to submit this plan to the Commission on or before Jan. 1, 2003. During the draft ARMP formal adoption period, the Commission is the lead agency. The Commission conducts the formal public comment process, gathering input from the public as to whether the draft ARMP should be adopted.



Abalone
Photo:
DFG Staff

The draft ARMP represents a multi-year effort by the DFG and the public to formulate and refine the contents of the plan. It was created with input from a variety of constituents having interest and expertise in California's abalone resources. These include former commercial abalone fishermen, sport abalone fishermen, scientists, conservation organizations, and the general public. In addition, the draft ARMP was peer-reviewed by a panel of marine scientists, ecologists, and an economist. A copy of the peer-review panel's report was submitted to the Commission.

The draft ARMP may be found on DFG's abalone resources Web site at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/abalone.html, at DFG offices, and at the Commission office. Written comments on the draft ARMP may be sent to: California Fish and Game Commission, Abalone Recovery and Management Plan, 1416 Ninth Street, Rm. 1320, Sacramento, CA 95814. For further information, check the Web site above, the Commission's Web site at www.dfg.ca.gov/fg_comm/index.html, or contact the abalone constituent involvement coordinator, Diana Watters, at (650) 631-2535 or dwatters@dfg.ca.gov.

Nearshore Restricted Access Adopted by the Fish and Game Commission

... by **Traci Bishop**, Associate Marine Biologist

At their Dec. 20, 2002 meeting in Monterey, the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) adopted a restricted access program for the commercial nearshore fishery. This program reduces the number of permittees by 65% and their potential catch by 35%. The qualifying criteria results in 35 permits (0 gear endorsements) in the North Coast Region, 22 permits (6 trap endorsements) in the North-Central Coast Region, 60 permits (13 trap endorsements) in the South-Central Coast Region, and 57 permits (39 trap endorsements) in the South Coast Region.

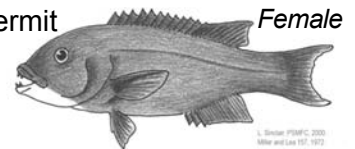
Permittees will be allowed only one permit to fish in a single region. The fishery will be limited to line gear, unless the permit holder has a trap gear endorsement. Criteria for initial permit issuance (transferable permits), for non-transferable permits for 20-year commercial fishermen and for gear endorsements were established. A 2-for-1 permit transfer system was adopted that requires new entrants to purchase two permits from the same region, permanently retire one permit and use the other to fish. Additionally, a Nearshore Bycatch Permit was adopted for trawl and gill net fishermen that have had a Nearshore Fishery Permit in previous years. Other provisions include annual renewal of permits, fees for permits and permit transfers, how to appeal denial of a permit or transfer, and conditions under which a permit can be revoked.

For more information, go to www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/restricted_access.html or the Commission's Web site at www.dfg.ca.gov/fg_comm/ [proposedregs02.html](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/fg_comm/proposedregs02.html)

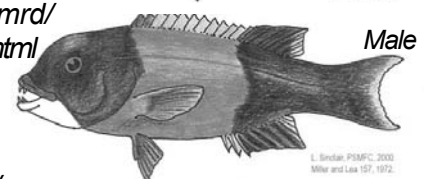
Juvenile



Female



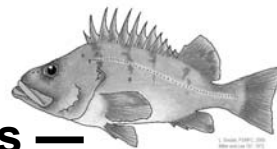
Male



California sheephead - a species affected by Nearshore proposedregs02.html Restricted Access.

Feature Article

California's "Overfished"¹ Rockfishes —



Recovering a Lost Treasure

... by **Tom Barnes**, Senior Marine Biologist

Red snapper. Chuckleheads. Salmon grouper. Gopher cod. You've heard them called by many different names but they all belong to a large family of fishes called rockfishes. This large family displays general characteristics of being relatively long-lived, slow growing, and very tasty. Because of these attributes and others, several of them have become the focus for fisheries and fisheries managers.

In recent years, several rockfish species have been determined to be at very low population levels. The levels are so low that federal law places them in a category designated as "overfished," requiring special management considerations. Federal laws passed in 1996 require that "overfished" stocks be rebuilt to a predetermined healthy condition within a specified period of time. This requirement presents significant challenges to fisheries managers and typically results in more fishing restrictions.

Science

Population or stock assessments are the cornerstone of fisheries management and provide a description of how the abundance of a particular fish population has changed over time. Stock assessment scientists are instructed to "leave no stone unturned" in gathering the best available information, including historical catch histories from both the commercial and recreational fisheries; data from ongoing research such as trawl surveys and larval fish surveys; life history information such as age, growth, and reproduction; the size and age of fish in the catches; and fisheries logbook records. Each assessment also includes an estimate of stock size prior to fishing. This provides a way of defining when a population has declined to a level that requires rebuilding measures.

The status of many rockfish species off the West Coast is unknown. Although there are more than 60 different rockfish species in California, only 15 have been assessed. Six

rockfish species important to California anglers and commercial fishermen are at such low levels they have been given a special status by federal law to ensure the populations recover as quickly as possible. These are bocaccio, canary, yelloweye, cowcod, widow, and darkblotched rockfishes.

Management and Regulations

Recent analyses have shown that rockfish stocks are not as productive as previously thought. This new understanding is due in part to improved information about rockfish life history (such as age, growth, and reproduction), better stock assessments, and the discovery that



Canary rockfish

Photo: Dan Gotshall

environmental conditions generally have not been favorable to rockfish reproduction or survival for many years. The productivity of some species has been significantly reduced by relatively warm waters over the past 20 years. The last truly productive decade for rockfish was the 1970s. As a result, some rockfish species cannot sustain the levels of fishing that previously seemed reasonable, so regulations have to change to reflect the new scientific knowledge.

Because of their slow growth and limited reproduction, rebuilding rockfish populations will take many decades. In order to return "overfished" stocks to a healthy condition, fisheries managers have asked both sport and commer-

("Rockfishes" continued on next page)

(“Rockfishes” continued from previous page)



Widow rockfish

Photo: Diana Watters

cial fisheries to share in the conservation measures needed for recovery.

For the recreational rockfish fishery, there were historically few regulatory restrictions. That has changed during the past few years, as bag limits were reduced, gear restrictions imposed, seasons closed, and minimum size limits established. Commercial fisheries have also been affected by drastically reduced catch limits, shortened seasons, and restrictions on fishing gear. For 2003, most bottom-fishing activities have been restricted or prohibited over the continental shelf (water depths between 20 fm and 150/250 fms) in order to allow “overfished” rockfish populations to begin the long process of recovery.

Rockfish future

Sport anglers fear new restrictions will significantly reduce the opportunity for a rewarding fishing experience and commercial fishermen have voiced concerns about being able to maintain a livelihood. Fishery managers understand these concerns and fears, and they strive to find ways to provide for long term sustainable fisheries. Federal law (the Magnuson-Stevens Act) requires social, economic and cultural issues be considered when making fisheries management decisions. However, where fish stocks have been formally designated as “overfished,” and are being managed with rebuilding plans, conservation needs have a higher priority.

The rockfish issue did not develop overnight, nor will it be alleviated with a simple and quick approach. Restoring healthy rockfish stocks is a long-term task that will require sacrifice, innovation, and dedication by everyone with a stake in this precious natural resource.

Additional information

The California Department of Fish and Game’s Marine Region Web site provides useful information on important issues and regulations for ocean fisheries in California waters, including rockfishes, at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/index.html. Federal management decisions and regulations for west coast fisheries can be found at the Pacific Fishery Management Council Web site at <http://www.pcouncil.org>, and also at the National Marine Fisheries Service Web site of the Northwest Regional Office at <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov>.

¹ The category is called “overfished,” although factors other than fishing play a role in the designation. 🐟

A New Rockfish Book...

... by **Carrie Wilson**, Associate Marine Biologist

Rockfish Rockfish and More Rockfish ... Want to learn more than you probably ever realized about the rockfishes of the West Coast? A new book entitled “Rockfish of the Northeast Pacific,” published by the University of California Press, may be just the ticket.

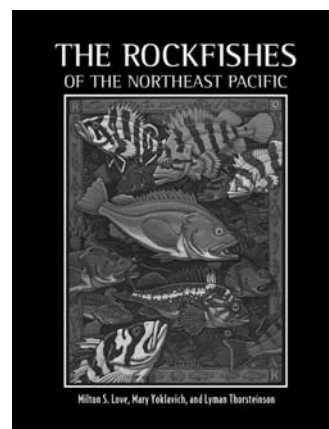
Dr. Milton Love, U.C. Santa Barbara researcher, and fellow scientists Mary Yoklavich and Lyman Thorsteinson have written probably the most comprehensive book ever published

on this tremendously diverse and interesting group of fishes.

Written with humor, the authors’ goal is to provide as much information as possible to anyone interested in rockfishes, and do it in an entertaining way.

It’s loaded with information ranging from the history of

rockfish and rockfish research, to identification keys for each species with details on appearance, life history, and fishery status. In typical Milton Love style, readers will also find lots of astonishing anecdotal rockfish information and



Front cover of the new rockfish book

(“Rockfish book” continued on page 6)

Channel Islands Marine Protected Area* Decision Made

... by **John Ugoretz**, Senior Marine Biologist

The California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) voted on Oct. 23, 2002 to adopt the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) preferred alternative for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) within the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (Sanctuary). The DFG's plan represents 19 percent of State waters within the Sanctuary and includes 132 square nautical miles in 10 no-take State Marine Reserves and 10 square nautical miles in 2 limited-take State Marine Conservation Areas. Pending approval by the Office of Administrative Law, the new MPAs go into effect January.

This decision follows a long and detailed public process. In April, 1998 the Fish and Game Commission received a proposal to close 20 percent of the Channel Islands to all fishing from a group of concerned recreational anglers. Following nearly a year of Commission meetings on the topic, DFG and the Sanctuary offered to establish a local stakeholder panel to provide input on the concept of MPAs. This led to the creation of the Marine Reserves Working Group (MRWG), a panel of representatives from fishing, environmental, government, public, and other constituencies. The MRWG met monthly between July 1999 and June 2001 before forwarding their work to the Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC). The SAC asked DFG and the Sanctuary to use the information to create a preferred alternative, which was presented to the Commission in August 2001.

MPAs provide for whole ecosystem protection, rather than focusing on single species or species groups. This ecosystem approach takes into consideration the interaction between different species and the importance of habitat. By using an ecosystem approach, biological



California coast
Photo: DFG file photo

diversity, reproductive potential, and resource sustainability are all increased. MPAs are one of several management tools that will be used at the Channel Islands and throughout California to contribute to the long-term sustainability of fisheries. For more information and detailed maps of the areas see the Marine Region Web site at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/channel_islands/index.html. *Map on page 7. 🐟

("Rockfish book" continued from page 5)

trivia scattered throughout. The book also explores all sides of the marine protected area controversy, the commercial versus recreational fishing disputes, and a few other heated fishery battles.

This beautiful 417-page book contains tons of pictures too - 550 color illustrations, 100 black and white photographs, 120 line illustrations, and 75 maps. The authors are taking no royalties on this book in order to keep the price down and available to more people. According to Love, "We begged enough money to produce the book ourselves, then gave it to U.C. Press." You can pick this book up at most bookstores or through U.C. Press (800-777-4726) for \$25, or through www.amazon.com for under \$18. 🐟

Don't miss the November-December 2002 issue of *Outdoor* **California**

It's packed with marine stories!

Pick up a complimentary copy

E-mail: plopez@dfg.ca.gov or write:

P.O. Box 944209, Sacramento, CA 95814

Correction: In the September issue, we ran an article called "Squid Stranded on a San Diego Beach." The article was co-authored by Valerie Taylor in addition to Annette Henry who had been the only author listed in that issue. 🐟

Map located on http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/newsletter/ci_map.html

Herring Fishery Update

...by **Susan Ashcraft**, Associate Marine Biologist

San Francisco Bay:

Dec. 1, 2002 marked the season opening date for the 2002-03 commercial Pacific herring roe fishery in San Francisco Bay. The 2002-03 season dates are Dec. 1 to 20, 2002, and from Jan. 5 to March 14, 2003. No fishing is permitted on weekends. The 2002-03 sac roe quota is 3,262 tons. The remainder of the bay's 3,540 ton-quota was allocated to the Herring Eggs on Kelp fishery and the Fresh Fish market. The sac roe tonnage was divided among three fishing groups (platoons), in proportion to the number of permits per group, as follows:

- DH Platoon (133 permits): 1,015 tons
- Even Platoon (145 permits): 1,108 tons
- Odd Platoon (149 permits): 1,138 tons



Herring boat
Photo: DFG staff

The DH platoon fishes in December, and the Even and Odd platoons alternate fishing weeks beginning in January. This season, the *Even* platoon fishes first (starting Jan. 5), and the *Odd* platoon fishes second (starting Jan. 12).

Tomales Bay:

The Tomales Bay roe herring fishery season is from Dec. 29 to 31, 2002, and from Jan. 5 to March 7, 2003. The 2002-03 sac roe quota is 300 tons for the single fishing group of 35 permittees. Possible in-season quota adjustments are as follows:

- Increase to 400 tons if escapement reaches or exceeds 3,000 tons prior to Feb. 15;
- Increase to 500 tons if escapement reaches or exceeds 4,000 tons prior to Feb. 15.

The September 2002 newsletter contains a detailed article on this fishery. For complete regulations, season summary reports, and other information on California's herring fisheries, you may log on to www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/herring, or contact herring fishery manager Becky Ota at bota@dfg.ca.gov or 650-631-6789. 🐟

Calendar of Upcoming Meetings

Fish and Game Commission Meetings 2003

www.dfg.ca.gov/fg_comm/2003mtgs.html

Feb. 6-7	Sacramento	Aug. 28-29	Santa Rosa
April 3-4	Visalia	Oct. 2-3	Redding
May 6-8	Riverside	Nov. 6-7	San Diego
June 19-20	Mammoth Lakes	Dec. 4-5	Sacramento
Aug. 1-2	Long Beach/ Los Angeles/ San Pedro		

Pacific Fishery Management Council 2003

www.pcouncil.org/events/future.html

Mar. 10-14	Sacramento	Sept. 8-12	Seattle, WA
April 7-10	Vancouver, WA	Nov. 3-7	San Diego
June 16-20	San Mateo County		

For the latest information on upcoming Marine Region meetings, please check out our Calendar of Events at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/calendar/index.html or contact our DFG office in Monterey at (831) 649-2870.

("Relief Program" continued from page 1)

Cowcod, which have been declared as "overfished" by the Pacific Fishery Management Council, are currently being managed under a federal rebuilding plan. Federal and state scientists are investigating new methods to gather data on the cowcod population off California.

The field work part of the project has been successful thanks to the expertise and professional services provided by the owner and crew of the "Outer Limits."



Recovering the ROV aboard the "Outer Limits"
Photo: Ed Roberts

Data Collection - Nearshore Groundfish Tagging Project

As a part of the federal Groundfish Disaster Relief Program, the DFG is cooperating with an independent consultant, Dr. Doyle A. Hanan, who obtained the grant, and the Sportfishing Association of California to gather data on several species of nearshore groundfish found in the southern California bight. By chartering local CPFVs to take biologists to where the fish are, the project benefits from the knowledge of the party boat skippers, while at the same time assisting the industry by putting some money back into the portion of the industry dependent upon the groundfish fishery.

The species of fish being targeted for tagging include cabezon, California scorpionfish (aka "sculpin"), lingcod, California sheephead and numerous species of rockfish such as brown rockfish and kelp rockfish.

The project hopes to gain additional information on the growth, movement and population structure of these species. Some, such as treefish (a type of rockfish), are poorly understood by scientists.



Tagging a California scorpionfish on the "Sea Star" Photo: Ed Roberts

Each tag, which is inserted into the back of the fish just below the dorsal fin, is a small, yellow, plastic tube that reads "CDFG REWARD (562) 342-7100" on one side, with a four digit serial number on the other. Anglers that catch a tagged fish should keep the fish whole, note the location and depth where it was caught, and contact DFG at the phone number above. If the fish cannot legally be kept (too short, or out of season), note the tag number, length of the fish, and the location and depth, prior to returning the fish to the water. Anglers returning a tagged fish will receive a baseball cap or tee-shirt with the project logo on it. For more information, contact Ed Roberts at (562) 342-7199. 🐟

Look for our Survey in the Next Issue of MMN

We want your input on how we're doing! In our next issue of *Marine Management News* (MMN), we are going to run a survey. We need to find out if we are fulfilling your information needs, and remove subscribers from the mailing list who no longer wish to receive the newsletter.

We are striving to keep the lines of communication open between us (the Marine Region) and you (our valued public). In the following issue of MMN, please look for our survey. We need your constructive evaluation of the newsletter so we can improve our product. To save money, we will ask each subscriber to pay for the return postage of the survey. The survey will also be offered online so you can save on the return postage cost. As a thank you for your participation, we will offer prizes by picking names randomly from those who complete and return the survey. 🐟

The Marine Life Management Act

California's 1998 Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) is an innovative, collaborative, science-based approach to managing all of California's living marine resources. One of its major goals is the long-term sustainability of our resources and our fisheries. The MLMA recognizes and values the non-consumptive benefits of healthy marine life as well as the interests of those who are economically dependent upon them. Implementation and enforcement of the MLMA is the responsibility of the California Department of Fish and Game, whose mission is to conserve wildlife and the habitats upon which they depend through good science and informed citizen involvement. For more information visit www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd.

"To protect, maintain, enhance, and restore California's marine ecosystems for their ecological values and their use and enjoyment by the public"



MARINE *Management News*

Marine Management News is published quarterly by the Marine Region of the California Department of Fish and Game and is for everyone interested in the management and conservation of California's living marine resources. Through this newsletter we hope to inform all associates and constituents interested in participating in and/or tracking the progress of the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA). The MLMA places a strong emphasis on decision-making that is open and involves people who are interested in or affected by management measures.

For more information on the MLMA or to sign up to get more involved, please visit our web site at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlma/index.html.

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