

MARINE Management News

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



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Recreational Bottom-Fishing Regulations for 2004

by Connie Ryan, Research Manager

In Dec. 2003 the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) adopted changes to California's 2004 ocean sport fishing regulations for federally designated bottom fish (rockfish, lingcod, cabezon, kelp greenling, and California scorpionfish) and associated state-managed species (rock greenling, ocean whitefish and California sheephead). The Pacific Fishery Management Council (a federal agency) had previously adopted changes to bottom fish (also known as "groundfish") rules in Sept. 2003.

The 2004 regulations are now in effect in federal and state waters. Changes include an expanded fishing season (open period) for most species, from six to ten months in the area south of 40°10' N. latitude (near Cape Mendocino), and an expanded fishing area in the central and southern management areas. The following tables summarize the bottom fishing regulations for 2004.

Since the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) submitted the proposed regulations for the 2004 recreational bottom fish fishery, recreational harvest estimates (catch and discarded dead fish) for July and August of 2003 have become available from the Marine

Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey. The estimated harvest was considerably higher than anticipated, which resulted in the annual coastwide harvest limits for 2003 being exceeded for minor nearshore rockfish, canary rockfish, and lingcod. (A harvest limit is an agreed-upon limit within which the

"2004 Bottom Fishing Regulations"
continued on page 8

Fishermen, DFG, and University Scientists Join to Compare Survey Methods

by David Osorio, Marine Biologist



Commercial fisherman Sal Putruzello sets fishing gear
in Carmel Bay as part of a cooperative study.
photo by K. Blackhart

Department of Fish and Game (DFG) staff, university researchers, and Monterey area fishermen recently collaborated on a project examining two different methods of estimating fish abundance: the catch-per-unit-of-effort (CPUE) estimates of typical nearshore commercial fishing operations, and estimates of fish density from scuba diver visual surveys.

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New CPFV Logbook Regulations and Boat Limits Adopted

by Wendy Dunlap, Marine Biologist

Over the past few years, commercial passenger fishing vessel (CPFV) logbook information has become increasingly important to fisheries managers and enforcement staff, particularly for those fishes managed under annual harvest quotas. To ensure that managers get the best information, logbooks need to be filled out in a manner that satisfies regulation requirements. At the same time, CPFV operators have an understandable interest in maintaining the confidential nature of their logbooks.

During the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) meeting in Sacramento in December 2003, logbook regulation changes were adopted that will help the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) track logbooks, ensure that logbooks are completed prior to the end of fishing trips, and track species or species groups being taken. The new regulations will also clarify the terms of confidentiality for logbooks and help to make the logbooks more accessible to DFG representatives (see Section 195, Title 14, CCR, sub-sections (a) through (c), available online at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/oceanfish2004.pdf).

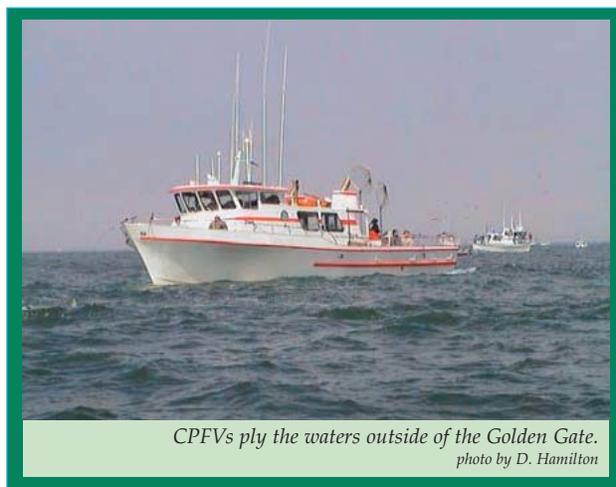
The Commission also adopted a set of rules that will establish boat limits for CPFVs under Section 195, sub-section (e). The new rules are pending approval by the Office of Administrative Law and are expected to take effect beginning March 1, 2004. The following is a brief summary of the new set of rules:

Boat limits are determined by multiplying the number of authorized anglers/passengers aboard by the individual daily bag limit for a species or species group.

- Only passengers may contribute towards the passenger boat limit.
- Vessel captains are responsible (and will be cited) for any boat over-limits.
- Crew members are NOT included when calculating the passenger boat limit (see sidebar

information, left).

- Crew members may NOT retain part of the passengers' boat limit.
- Crew members may assist passengers in their normal duties (see sidebar information, right).



CPFVs ply the waters outside of the Golden Gate.
photo by D. Hamilton

- Crew members may fish and retain only what they catch as individuals within their daily bag limits.
- Crew members may NOT give any of their personal daily bag limits to passengers.

In addition to boat limits for CPFVs, the Commission also adopted boat limits for private vessels. The boat limit on a private vessel is simply the daily bag limit times the number of authorized anglers on the vessel.

For both CPFVs and private vessels, boat limits apply until the anglers/passengers depart from the vessel. At the time of departure, bag limits are enforceable upon individual anglers.

For further information, please contact Mr. Steve Crooke, senior marine biologist, at (562) 342-7195. 🐟 🦑 🦐

Crew members' normal duties are defined as casting, setting trolling gear, gaffing or netting, obtaining bait, chumming, baiting, untangling hooks and lines, identifying, dispatching, filleting, counting, bagging, and otherwise handling fish taken by passengers.

Since the tide is right...



2004 Ocean Salmon Season to Open Feb. 14

by DFG Ocean Salmon Project Staff

Are you looking forward to the upcoming salmon season? Do you have questions about this year's salmon regulations? Read through the following summary and outlook for the 2004 season, check out the 2004 salmon fishing regulations (available online or through your local Department of Fish and Game office), and you'll be set to go!

Salmon season opens along California's coast at different times depending on the area fished (see map of areas, below). All areas have a 24-inch minimum size limit (total length) through April 30, and 20-inch minimum size limit thereafter. The increased size limit during the early part of the season protects Sacramento River winter chinook, which are listed as endangered and protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The opening dates through April 30 were adopted by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) at their meeting in April 2003, and adopted by the California Fish and Game Commission shortly thereafter. The season starting May 1, 2004 and continuing through April 30, 2005 will be developed by the PFMC and the Commission during their March and April meetings this year. Public participation is encouraged during the following meeting dates:

- Feb 25 – DFG Salmon Informational Meeting, Santa Rosa



- Mar 8-12 – PFMC Meeting, Tacoma, WA
- Mar 30 – PFMC Public Hearing, Fort Bragg
- Apr 1-2 – Fish and Game Commission Meeting, Sacramento
- Apr 5-9 – PFMC Meeting, Sacramento

The outlook for the 2004 season is similar to the 2003 season in structure, distribution and abundance. In 2003, fish tended to be caught deeper and farther offshore. Recreational anglers who fished offshore during 2003 frequently encountered rough seas, marine mammals and tangles of jellyfish. This may have kept the recreational catch low compared to previous years, but the relatively high commercial catch suggests that a good number of fish were available.

For the first time since 1990, the Fort Bragg area commercial fishery was open from May through September (closed in June) in 2003,

providing nearly coast-wide commercial fishing opportunities. Almost 50% of the total statewide commercial harvest last year was landed in Fort Bragg. Throughout the state, commercial fishermen landed more fish while fishing fewer days. The combination of commercial boats being better suited to offshore fishing conditions than some recreational boats, and the good number of fish available probably contributed to the higher commercial catch rates.

"Salmon Opener"
continued on page 12

February - April 2004 Ocean Salmon Sport Regulations
(Regulations effective on May 1, 2004 will be decided by the Pacific Fishery Management Council in April)

Seasons	
Humbug Mtn (OR) to Horse Mtn:	
◆ Closed	
Horse Mountain to Point Arena:	
◆ Opens February 14, 2004 - 2 salmon per day of any species except coho - minimum size limit: 24 inches (total length)	
Point Arena to Pigeon Point:	◆ Opens April 17, 2004 - 2 salmon per day of any species except coho - minimum size limit: 24 inches (total length)
Pigeon Point to U.S.-Mexico Border:	◆ Opens April 3, 2004 - 2 salmon per day of any species except coho - minimum size limit: 24 inches (total length)

DFG Graphic U.S.-Mexico border

Volunteers to Help DFG with Fish Counting Efforts

by Briana Brady, Marine Biologist

Throughout the year, Department of Fish and Game (DFG) staff get in the water to record the types and sizes of fish they encounter. This sampling method provides an estimate of how many fish are present in a given area (density) and of the percentage of fish that fall within certain size categories (size frequency). Changes in these measures provide useful information on the health of fish resources.

The DFG is exploring the feasibility of expanding the amount of data collected by developing a volunteer diver program. To qualify for the program, DFG volunteer divers must possess the technical and physical skills for scuba diving, with further training in diving survey techniques provided by DFG.

One survey method that will be used by DFG volunteer divers is capturing fish on video. Using volunteers in this way will allow a number of areas to be surveyed relatively rapidly, followed by analysis later in the lab.



Gopher rockfish poses for a diver.
photo by Mike O'Donnell

DFG biologists will implement the pilot project this spring, and examine the viability of using volunteer divers on a wide-scale basis. Dive sites will include Stillwater Cove and Point Lobos Ecological Reserve in Monterey County. For more information, please contact Ms. Briana Brady, marine biologist, at (831) 649-2994. 🐠🌊

Abalone Sport Fishery Regulation Changes for 2004

by DFG Staff

When the 2004 abalone season opens in April, sport fishermen will be allowed to take the same number of red abalone as last year – 24. However, new regulations explaining how to fill out “abalone permit report cards” should be carefully reviewed by those who plan to seek out the tasty mollusk.

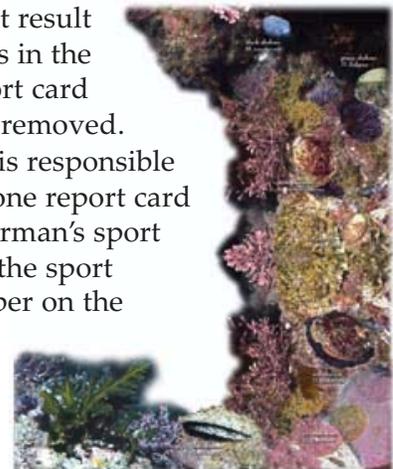
Enforcement of the 24-abalone limit is accomplished through the use of the abalone permit report cards, also known as an abalone “punch cards”. The regulatory language which provides for an abalone permit report card was amended this year to clearly spell out how the punch cards should be used. In particular, the new regulations clarify several points:

- Fishermen required to have a fishing license (over 16 years of age) are also required to have an abalone permit report card to take abalone.
- Abalone permit report cards must be completed immediately upon returning to the shore or boat with abalone, and the fishing location code must be written on the report card along with other required information.

- Paper “chads” that result from punching holes in the abalone permit report card must be completely removed.
- The license agent is responsible for writing the abalone report card number on the fisherman’s sport fishing license, and the sport fishing license number on the abalone permit report card.

These changes are expected to increase the ability of wardens to enforce the regulations which, in turn, will increase the accuracy of information about the number and location of abalone taken by sport fishermen.

The new regulations are available online at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/sportfishing_regs2004.html. For more information please contact Mr. Jerry Kashiwada, marine biologist, at (707) 964-0642 or e-mail jkashiwa@dfg.ca.gov. 🐠🌊



2004 Ocean Sport Fishing Regulation Book Available Online

by Mary Patyten, Research Writer

The 2004 Ocean Sport Fishing regulation book is now available online at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/sportfishing_regs2004.html, in PDF format. The online version is completely bookmarked for easy reference. The printed version is expected to arrive at Department of Fish and Game (DFG) offices sometime in late February or March.

The 2004 sport fishing regulation book includes the following changes:

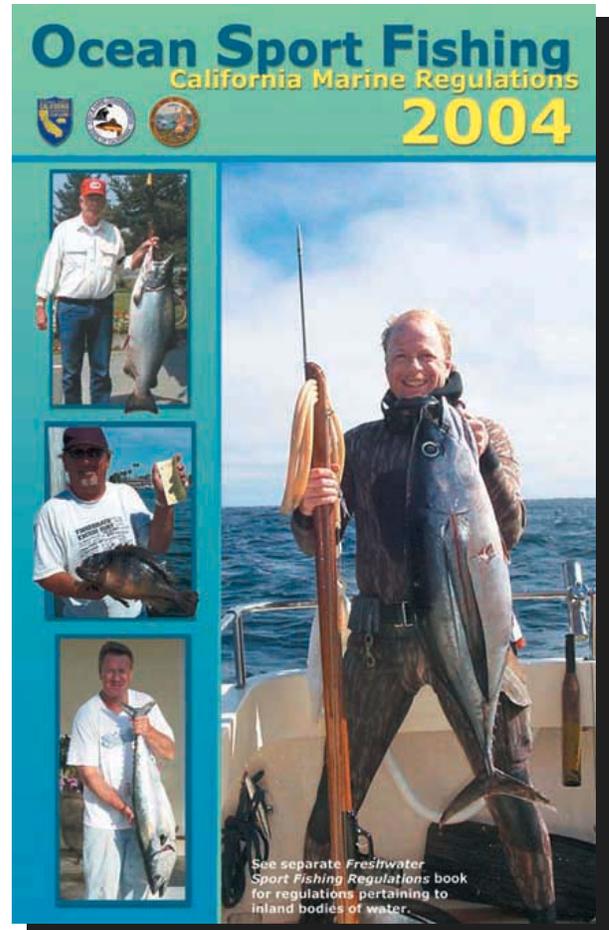
- Highlighting of new information for 2004
- An overview of changes in fishing license and stamp requirements (pg. 5)
- Tables summarizing bottom fishing regulations for northern, central and southern California (pgs. 6-8)
- A table outlining special limits for fish other than rockfish, lingcod, California scorpionfish, cabezon and greenlings (Section 27.60 (b)(3), pg.14)
- Definitions for management areas, seasons, depths, fishery closure processes, cowcod conservation areas, and California rockfish conservation areas (pgs.18-20)
- New rockfish limits (pgs. 14, 15, and 23)
- New abalone permit report card (pg. 26)
- Tables listing MPAs that regulate sport fishing, along with their general restrictions (pgs. 31-33)
- Descriptions of Marine Life Refuges and Marine Ecological Reserves that reference coordinates and major geographical features (pgs. 38-39)
- Interim recommendations for fish consumption in Tomales Bay (from the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment)(pg. 42)
- Declaration for Entry form (pg. 44)
- A description of the new method for estimating sport catch (*Estimating Saltwater Sport Catch and Effort in 2004*) (pg. 45)
- Diagrams of measurement methods for fish, clams, crab, abalone and lobster (pg. 48)

The 2004 Sport Fishing Regulation Book also includes three Sections which are expected to go into effect on March 1:

- Section 27.60(e) (Boat Limits, pg.15). Identifies new "boat limits" on certain finfish species. This regulation will allow authorized

anglers fishing aboard certain qualifying vessels to fish toward a total boat limit rather than for individual bag limits like in years past (see newsletter article on page 2).

- Section 29.15(h) (Abalone Permit Report Cards, pg. 26). Introduces and describes regulations associated with the new abalone permit report card (see newsletter article on page 4).



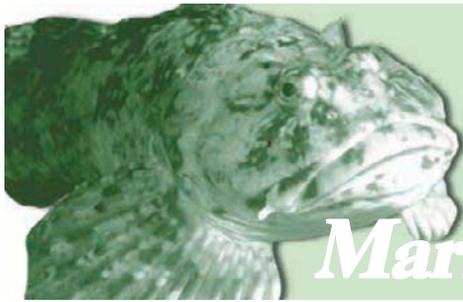
The cover of the 2004 Ocean Sport Fishing regulation book celebrates saltwater fishermen and their state record catches. Regulations are available online at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/sportfishing_regs2004.html.

Cover design by Mary Patyten

- Section 195, Title 14, CCR (Report of Fish Taken to be Made by Barge Owner or Vessel for Hire and Boat Limits, pg. 11). Reviews new logbook requirements and boat limits for CPFV owners and operators (see newsletter article on page 2).

A new cover design for the 2004 Ocean Sport Fishing regulation book celebrates California's saltwater fishermen through displaying their state record catches. DFG is pleased to

"2004 Regulations Online" continued on page 12



UPDATES

Marine Management News

UPDATE: 2003-2004 Herring Fishery



by Becky Ota, Senior Marine Biologist

To date, 1,500 tons of herring have been landed in the San Francisco Bay herring fishery for the 2003-2004 season. Because the herring spawning season will continue at least through March, conclusions cannot yet be drawn about the status of the stock.

The San Francisco Bay fishery is divided into three different groups, or "platoons". The first platoon fishes in December and the other two platoons fish in January and February on alternating weeks. The December fishery (DH) was extremely slow, with fishermen landing only 7 tons of their 628-ton quota. The other two platoons started fishing on January 4, and

continued fishing on alternate weeks. The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) closed these two platoons on Jan. 20 and Jan. 28 respectively, when their combined landings filled the 1,392-ton quota. The DH fishermen were then allowed to return and fish for the remainder of their quota.

Tomales Bay has been experiencing a rather abundant herring season with significant spawning events occurring in both December and January. As of Feb. 5, over 5,000 tons of herring have spawned in the Bay and, pursuant to regulation, the Tomales Bay seasonal quota was

"Herring Fishery" continued on page 12

UPDATE: Market Squid Fishery Management Plan

by Dale Sweetnam, Senior Marine Biologist

Public testimony was taken on the Market Squid Fishery Management Plan at the Dec. 5 Fish and Game Commission (Commission) meeting. The Commission asked the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to include additional alternatives. The Commission also asked DFG to schedule a meeting to explore potential solutions for reducing squid fishery/seabird interactions at the Farallon Islands. The Natural Resources Defense Council sponsored the meeting, which took place on Jan. 27, 2004.

A revised draft of the Market Squid Fishery Management Plan that incorporates changes requested by the public and the Commission will be available for public review in April, 2004. Public testimony on the management plan will be taken at the May Commission meeting in San Diego with adoption scheduled for the late August Commission meeting in San Luis Obispo.

For more information, please contact Mr. Dale Sweetnam, marine biologist, at (858) 546-7170. 🐟 🐙

UPDATE: Spot Prawn Trawl-to-Trap Conversion Program

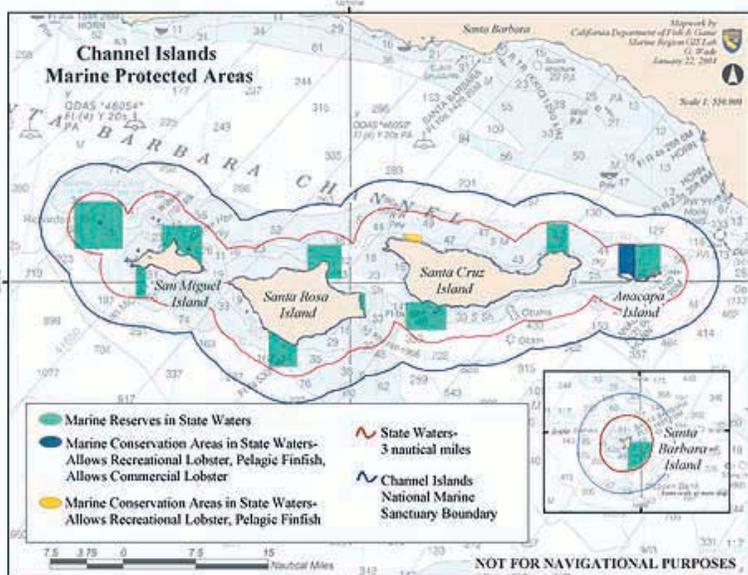
by Kristine Barsky, Senior Marine Biologist Specialist

In April 2003, the Fish and Game Commission's (Commission) action to prohibit the take of spot prawns using trawl nets went into effect. This action was taken primarily to eliminate the bycatch of rockfish in spot prawn trawl nets, particularly bocaccio, canary, cowcod, and darkblotched rockfishes. These species are all designated as "overfished" by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Recognizing the impact this ban had on trawl fishermen, the Commission directed the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to develop options for a spot prawn trawl-to-trap conversion program. The conversion program would add a limited number of permits to the restricted access trap fishery. These permits would be offered to the owners of former spot prawn trawl vessels that met one or more vessel-based qualifying requirements.

The current restricted access spot prawn trap fishery has two types, or tiers, of vessel-based permits, with 21 permits existing statewide. Trap

"Spot Prawn Conversion" continued on page 11



Channel Islands Marine Protected Areas map courtesy Marine Region GIS Laboratory

UPDATE: Channel Islands MPA Monitoring Plan

by Chuck Valle, Associate Marine Biologist

The ongoing management of the Channel Islands Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) requires monitoring of biological, social, and economic impacts. In March, 2003 a workshop was held to help develop a comprehensive monitoring plan. At the workshop, representatives from recreational and commercial fisheries, the scientific community, conservation groups, government agencies, and the general public developed preliminary biological and socio-economic monitoring recommendations. Further discussions with interested parties and preliminary data collection efforts led to the creation of a comprehensive monitoring plan. The purpose of this plan is to provide an overview of activities that will be included in annual monitoring programs.

The plan identifies specific monitoring activities, types of data collected, and how these data will be used to determine the effects of MPAs on species, ecosystems, and fisheries in the northern Channel Islands area.

The plan was made available for public review at the Feb. 5, 2004 Commission meeting in Long Beach. A draft of the plan is available on the DFG Marine Region Web site at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/channel_islands/monitoring.html. For further information, please call Mr. John Ugoretz, senior marine biologist, at (805) 560-6758 or e-mail jugoretz@dfg.ca.gov.

Due to State budget restraints, the *Marine Management News* will only be published electronically until further notice. Sign up for automatic, electronic notification of new issues at:

www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/subscribe

Copies are available for viewing or printing from the Marine Region Web site at:

www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/index_newsletter

UPDATE: MLPA Process On Hold

For information on the MLPA process, check the following Marine Region Web pages:

MLPA Process On Hold - Questions and Answers

www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa_questions.html

Letter to Marine Life Protection Act Interested Parties

www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa_questions.html#letter



Get hooked on the Department of Fish and Game's Marine Region Web site

Log onto the Marine Region's Web site to find all the latest information on commercial and recreational fisheries. The Web site provides an easy way to catch up on new regulations, groundbreaking research, and public meetings. Log on today and see what hooks your attention at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/

"2004 Bottom Fishing Regulations" continued from page 1

catches for commercial and recreational fisheries are kept.) In addition, higher than expected recreational take (catch and discarded dead fish) of cabezon, greenlings and California sheephead caused those fisheries to reach their 2003 harvest limits earlier than expected.

The higher than expected catches and discards, and the resulting closures, prompted DFG to propose further changes to the 2004 regulations. The proposed regulations would:

- Eliminate the sub-bag limit for shallow nearshore rockfish within the bag limit for the Rockfish, Cabezon and Greenlings Complex (RCG Complex).
- Establish state-wide bag limits for rockfish, cabezon, and greenlings.
- Add a number of fisheries to the list of recreational fisheries that DFG may close if an annual harvest limit for lingcod, rockfish, a subgroup of rockfish, and/or California

scorpionfish has been exceeded or is projected to be exceeded.

The Commission is expected to take action on these proposals at the Commission's March meeting in Redding. Written comments should be sent to the Fish and Game Commission, at 1416 Ninth Street, Box 944209, Sacramento, CA 94244-2090. Comments will also be accepted by fax at (916) 653-5040, or by e-mail at FGC@dfg.ca.gov. The Commission requests that written comments be submitted by February 27, 2004. Written comments must be received no later than March 5 at the meeting in Redding. Oral comments may also be provided to the Commission at the meeting on March 5.

The initial regulatory documents required to consider these changes and the proposed regulatory language are available on the Commission Web site at www.dfg.ca.gov/fg_comm. For more information, contact Ms. Connie Ryan, research manager, at (650) 631-2536.



2004 Recreational Bottom Fishing Regulations: Southern Management Area



Ocean waters between 34°27' N. latitude (Point Conception) and the U.S.-Mexican Border

Species	Time Period ³	Depth Limit	Daily Bag Limit ³	Size Limit ¹
RCG Complex (including all species of Rockfish, Cabezon and Greenlings as defined in Section 1.91)	<u>Open</u> Mar-Dec; <u>Closed</u> Jan-Feb	may only be taken in less than 360 feet (60 fathoms) ²	10 fish in combination; see sub-limits for shallow nearshore rockfish, cabezon, greenlings, and bocaccio, cowcod, canary and yelloweye rockfishes	See individual species and groups below
Shallow Nearshore Rockfish (as defined in Section 1.90; includes Black-and-yellow, China, Grass, Gopher and Kelp Rockfishes)	<u>Open</u> Mar-Dec; <u>Closed</u> Jan-Feb	may only be taken in less than 360 feet (60 fathoms) ²	2 fish in combination; also included in the 10-fish aggregate RCG complex bag limit	
Cabezon	<u>Open</u> Mar-Dec; <u>Closed</u> Jan-Feb	may only be taken in less than 360 feet (60 fathoms) ²	3 fish; also included in the 10-fish aggregate RCG complex bag limit	15" total length
Kelp and Rock Greenlings	<u>Open</u> Mar-Dec; <u>Closed</u> Jan-Feb	may only be taken in less than 360 feet (60 fathoms) ²	2 fish in combination; also included in the 10-fish aggregate RCG complex bag limit	12" total length
Canary, Cowcod, and Yelloweye Rockfishes	CLOSED all year; NO RETENTION		NO RETENTION (zero)	
Bocaccio	<u>Open</u> Mar-Dec; <u>Closed</u> Jan-Feb	may only be taken in less than 360 feet (60 fathoms) ²	1 fish; also included in the 10-fish aggregate RCG complex bag limit	10" total length
Lingcod	<u>Open</u> Mar- OCT <u>Closed</u> Jan-Feb AND Nov-Dec as of Apr 1	may only be taken in less than 360 feet (60 fathoms) ²	1 fish, as of April 1	30" total length, as of April 1
California Scorpionfish	<u>Open</u> Mar, April, Nov, and Dec; <u>Closed</u> Jan, Feb, and May-Oct	may only be taken in less than 360 feet (60 fathoms) ²	5 per person	10" total length
Ocean Whitefish	<u>Open</u> Mar-Dec; <u>Closed</u> Jan-Feb	may only be taken in less than 360 feet (60 fathoms) ²	10 per person	
California Sheephead	<u>Open</u> Mar-Dec; <u>Closed</u> Jan-Feb	may only be taken in less than 360 feet (60 fathoms) ²	5 per person	12" total length

1. See regulations for information on gear restrictions and fillet lengths

2. In the Cowcod Conservation Areas fishing is prohibited in waters greater than 120 feet (20 fathoms).

3. Subject to in-season change. Check the Marine Region Web site at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd, or call your local DFG office for the latest information.



2004 Recreational Bottom Fishing Regulations: Central Management Area
 Ocean waters between 40°10' N. latitude (near Cape Mendocino) and 34°27' N. latitude (Point Conception)

Species	Time Period ³	Depth Limit	Daily Bag Limit ³	Size Limit ¹
RCG Complex (including all species of Rockfish, Cabezon and Greenlings as defined in Section 1.91)	<u>Open</u> Jan, Feb, and May-Dec <u>Closed</u> Mar-April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan, Feb, and Sep-Dec may only be taken in less than 180 feet (30 fathoms)²; May-Aug may only be taken in less than 120 feet (20 fathoms)² 	10 fish in combination; see sub-limits for shallow nearshore rockfish, cabezon, greenlings, and bocaccio, cowcod, canary and yelloweye rockfishes	see individual species and groups below
Shallow Nearshore Rockfish (as defined in Section 1.90; includes Black-and-yellow, China, Grass, Gopher and Kelp Rockfishes)	<u>Open</u> Jan, Feb, and May-Dec <u>Closed</u> Mar-April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan, Feb, and Sep-Dec may only be taken in less than 180 feet (30 fathoms)²; May-Aug may only be taken in less than 120 feet (20 fathoms)² 	2 fish in combination; also included in the 10-fish aggregate RCG complex bag limit	
Cabezon	<u>Open</u> Jan, Feb, and May-Dec; <u>Closed</u> Mar-April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan, Feb, and Sep-Dec may only be taken in less than 180 feet (30 fathoms)²; May-Aug may only be taken in less than 120 feet (20 fathoms)² 	3 fish; also included in the 10-fish aggregate RCG complex bag limit	15" total length
Kelp and Rock Greenlings	<u>Open</u> Jan, Feb, and May-Dec; <u>Closed</u> Mar-April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan, Feb, and Sep-Dec may only be taken in less than 180 feet (30 fathoms)²; May-Aug may only be taken in less than 120 feet (20 fathoms)² 	2 fish in combination; also included in the 10-fish aggregate RCG complex bag limit	12" total length
Canary, Cowcod, and Yelloweye Rockfishes	CLOSED all year; NO RETENTION		NO RETENTION (zero)	
Bocaccio	<u>Open</u> Jan, Feb, and May-Dec; <u>Closed</u> Mar-April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan, Feb, and Sep-Dec may only be taken in less than 180 feet (30 fathoms)²; May-Aug may only be taken in less than 120 feet (20 fathoms)² 	1 fish; also included in the 10-fish aggregate RCG complex bag limit	10" total length
Lingcod	<u>Open</u> Jan, Feb, and May- OCT <u>Closed</u> Mar-April AND Nov-Dec as of April 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan, Feb, and Sep-OCT may only be taken in less than 180 feet (30 fathoms)²; May-Aug may only be taken in less than 120 feet (20 fathoms)² 	1 fish, as of April 1	30" total length, as of April 1
California Scorpionfish	<u>Open</u> Jan, Feb, and May-Dec; <u>Closed</u> Mar-April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan, Feb, and Sep-Dec may only be taken in less than 180 feet (30 fathoms)²; May-Aug may only be taken in less than 120 feet (20 fathoms)² 	5 per person	10" total length
Ocean Whitefish	Same as the rockfish and lingcod seasons	Same as the rockfish and lingcod fishing depths	10 per person	
California Sheephead	Same as the rockfish and lingcod seasons	Same as the rockfish and lingcod fishing depths	5 per person	12" total length

1. See regulations for information on gear restrictions and fillet lengths

2. Around the Farallon Islands and Nooday Rock fishing is prohibited between the shoreline and 60 feet (10 fathoms); fishing is prohibited at Cordell Bank

3. Subject to in-season change. Check the Marine Region Web site at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd, or call your local DFG office for the latest information.



2004 Recreational Bottom Fishing Regulations: Northern Management Area

Ocean waters between the California-Oregon Border and 40°10' N. latitude (near Cape Mendocino)



Species	Time Period ²	Depth Limit	Daily Bag Limit ²	Size Limit ¹
Rockfish	Open all year	no depth restrictions	10 fish in combination; see sub-limits for bocaccio, canary, and yelloweye rockfishes	see individual species below
Canary, Cowcod, and Yelloweye Rockfishes	CLOSED all year; NO RETENTION		NO RETENTION (zero)	
Bocaccio	Open all year	no depth restrictions	2 per person; also included in the 10-fish aggregate rockfish bag limit.	10" total length
Cabazon	Open all year	no depth restrictions	10 per person	15" total length
Kelp and Rock Greenlings	Open all year	no depth restrictions	10 kelp greenling per person; 10 rock greenling per person	12" total length
Lingcod	Open: Jan-Oct Closed: Nov-Dec	no depth restrictions	1 fish, as of April 1	30" total length, as of April 1

1. See regulations for information on gear restrictions and fillet lengths

2. Subject to in-season change. Check the Marine Region Web site at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd, or call your local DFG office for the latest information.

New Method for Estimating Saltwater Recreational Catch in 2004

by Ed Roberts, Marine Biologist

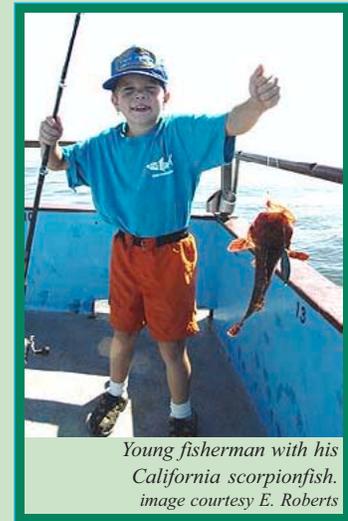
In response to concerns over the use of the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) program for making in-season management decisions, the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) have developed a new method for estimating total saltwater recreational catch and effort in California.

The DFG and PSMFC began conducting the new California Recreational Fisheries Survey (CRFS) program in Jan. 2004. This single, coordinated program will sample recreational anglers who fish from boats (private boats, rental boats and party/charter boats) and from shore (pier, jetty, beach and bank). The CRFS program incorporates many improvements over the existing MRFSS program. These improvements include: increased sampling, estimates of private skiff effort, grouping of trips by target species, dividing the state into smaller geographic regions, and using an angler license database for effort estimates. The CRFS program will provide more accurate and timely information on which to base management decisions.

As a result of the increased levels of sampling, recreational fishermen are more likely to encounter DFG/PSMFC representatives conducting the CRFS program. Avid anglers may be approached several times per year. Angler cooperation is critical to the success of the survey – please take the time to participate. Every fishing trip is different – different target species, locations, gear, etc. – so even if you have completed the survey before, please cooperate each time you are asked.

The DFG is also asking for angler cooperation in establishing the angler license data base. One in twenty anglers will be asked to provide their name and telephone number at the time of purchase for a potential telephone survey. It is anticipated that only one angler in a hundred may be contacted to provide fishing information on the previous month's fishing activity.

For more information about CRFS, call Mr. Ed Roberts, marine biologist, at (562) 342-7199 or e-mail eroberts@dfg.ca.gov.



Young fisherman with his California scorpionfish. image courtesy E. Roberts

New California Sheephead Assessment Under Way

by Meisha Key, Research Analyst

California sheephead are shallow nearshore finfish found in the coastal waters of southern California and Mexico. This species supports recreational and commercial fisheries that are managed by the State (within State waters), and regulated by the Fish and Game Commission. The California sheephead is one of nineteen fishes included in California's Nearshore Fishery Management Plan.

Starting in Feb. 2004, the Department of Fish and Game will be collaborating with the University of California at Santa Cruz to complete a stock assessment on California sheephead. The health of the California sheephead population is currently unknown. Consequently, fishery managers are placed in a position of making management decisions under "poor data"

conditions. This has resulted in managers taking precautionary actions to reduce the risk of overfishing. The upcoming California sheephead stock assessment will help to



California sheephead.
photo courtesy E. Roberts

address these management concerns by providing a better scientific basis for management decisions.

The assessment model and results will undergo peer review by a panel of stock assessment scientists. All issues identified through peer review will be addressed in the final report, which is scheduled for completion in September 2004. For more information, please contact Ms. Meisha Key, research analyst, at mkey@dfg.ca.gov

"Spot Prawn Conversion" continued from page 6

vessels are usually owner-operated, and tend to be smaller than the vessels in the trawl fleet. Adding converted vessels to the trap fishery will require the development of a capacity goal, additional permit structure and possibly new fishing regulations.



Spot prawn trap.
photo courtesy J. Geever

Current trap fishermen are concerned about the potential resource depletion and gear congestion that a conversion program may cause on traditional trapping grounds. It is also not known how many of the spot prawn trawl fishermen will be willing and/or able to convert to trap fishing. Since trawling is usually more efficient for taking spot prawns, it is unlikely that converted vessels will achieve their previous level of harvest, at least initially. In light of these and other unknowns, DFG believes a cautious, conservative approach is warranted for this conversion program so that a healthy fishery is not placed in jeopardy.

The DFG has completed a timeline for the conversion process, and plans to submit a conversion package to the Commission in March. The Commission is then expected to publish notice of the intent to establish the conversion

program. A discussion hearing will be scheduled for the Commission's meeting in San Diego on May 5-6, 2004. Adoption could occur at the late August Commission meeting in San Luis Obispo, with regulations going in effect as early as October. Adoption could occur earlier if there are

no major changes needed in the package after the May discussion meeting.

The DFG held two scoping sessions in January to obtain public input on the conversion program. Comments received during these scoping sessions and through letters, e-mails and phone calls will be incorporated into the formal document presented to the Commission. DFG will compile a comprehensive package of options for a conversion program which can be evaluated and discussed during the Commission's normal rulemaking process.

Please contact Senior Marine Biologists Paul Reilly in the Monterey office at (831) 649-2879 / preilly@dfg.ca.gov or Kristine Barsky in Ventura at (805) 985-3114 / kbarsky@dfg.ca.gov with your comments or questions on the conversion program.

congratulate 2004's "cover fishermen", Joe Tobin, Frank Cox, Joseph Kokrak, and Kim Larson, each of whom proudly counts a state record fish to his fishing credits. For more information on state record fish, go to www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/faqtrph3.html.

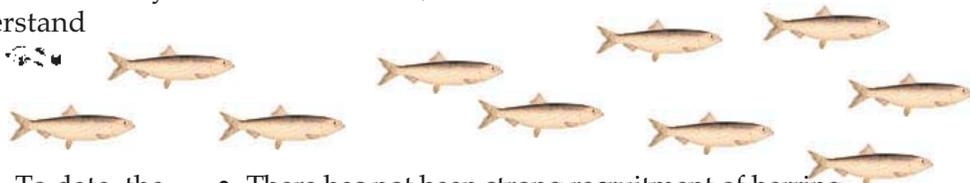
Fishermen should also check the online California Ocean Fishing Regulations Map at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/fishing_map.html for the latest fishing information. To use the map, simply click on the portion of the coast that you plan to fish, and you will be taken to a summary of current sport fishing opportunities available in that area, presented in an easy-to-understand format.



DFG's clickable fishing map, located at: www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/fishing_map.html. Click on the portion of the coast where you plan to fish to view fishing opportunities in that area.

In the last two years, large numbers of coho salmon have been caught in California's ocean waters. Coho salmon are identified by the narrow light gray band at the base of the bottom teeth (see diagram comparing king and coho salmon, page 3). Many of these fish originated from hatcheries in the Columbia River Basin, while some were central California coast coho protected as "threatened" under the ESA. The retention of coho salmon is prohibited in all California ocean waters. Please take the time to correctly identify each salmon caught before removing it from the water. All coho must be released immediately.

The 2004 ocean salmon seasons, regulations, and a coho identification poster can be found on the DFG Marine Region Web site at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/oceansalmon.html. Anglers may call the Ocean Salmon Hotline at (707) 576-3429 to hear the latest California ocean salmon sport regulations or call (707) 576-2882 for more information.



increased from 300 tons to 500 tons. To date, the total amount of herring landed in Tomales Bay has reached almost 300 tons.

This fishery will close on March 5. The Humboldt Bay and Crescent City Harbor fisheries will close on March 9 and March 23, respectively.

Concerns regarding the SF Bay Fishery

On Aug. 29, 2003, the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) voted to provide San Francisco Bay commercial herring fishermen with a reduced fishery quota of 2,200 tons and a shorter season (by one month).

A number of concerns were discussed during the Commission's deliberations:

- Older fish are not present in the proportions expected from prior sampling. The DFG's management strategy has been to focus the harvest on age 4 and older herring. Age 5 and older herring, which supported the fishery for the past 30 years, has declined to a very low percentage of the catch. In recent years there has been a substantial increase in the number of age 3 herring caught by the fishery.

- There has not been strong recruitment of herring into the gillnet fishery since the 1997 El Niño.
- The commercial fishery catch-per-unit-of-effort has declined markedly in recent years.
- The spawning biomass has been well below the long-term average since the 1997 El Niño.

The 2003-2004 season for the San Francisco Bay herring fishery will close on February 13, 2004. DFG research staff will remain in the field at least through March and possibly into early April locating schools of herring and herring spawn to complete their assessment of this year's stock size (biomass). DFG continues to have the same concerns regarding the status of the San Francisco Bay population, and will be monitoring the stock closely.

For more information, contact Mr. Eric Larson, bays and estuaries ecosystem coordinator, at (650) 631-6788 or e-mail elarson@dfg.ca.gov.

**Have a question? Need help identifying a fish?
Send your e-mail questions to:
AskMarine@dfg.ca.gov**

Although estimates of fish abundance have long been made using the catch rates of different fishing activities, this method has not been compared with direct observation (fish counts) by trained scuba divers in shallow waters. Information from these comparative studies will be used by fishery managers to improve survey techniques and population estimates of nearshore fishes, and to improve estimates of by-catch (non-targeted fish) in nearshore fisheries.

Field work for this project took place in Carmel Bay, Monterey County in October and November, 2003. Four survey methods were compared: fish traps, 2 types of hook-and-line gear, and diver visual surveys.

Each survey method was found to have its unique strengths. Standardized fishing operations can cover larger areas more efficiently, while scuba-based surveys provide information on a wider variety of species than are caught from boats. Preliminary data analysis shows distinct differences in both the catch rate and species assemblages caught by each of the fishing methods. This supports the notion that careful consideration needs to be given to "species of interest" before fishing gear is selected for any wide-scale survey.

The effort was headed up by marine biologists Rick Starr (University of California

Sea Grant program) and Mark Carr (University of California at Santa Cruz), and The Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries. Two Monterey fishermen joined university and DFG divers and scientific support staff at 4 survey sites over a span of 16 days. In addition to diver support, DFG provided project planning and computer mapping support, data consolidation, and data analysis for the project. Analysis of fish size data from the catches and of the fish diversity and sizes from the diver data is currently in process (*a follow-up article will cover the results in a future issue of Marine Management News*).

A related project is currently in the preparation stages in Ft. Bragg. As in Carmel, different fishing techniques will be compared for their efficiency and selectivity. However, up north, divers will be replaced by a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) for the visual survey component. The use of ROVs rather than divers allows a larger area of much deeper habitat to be surveyed.

The process of generating this information has improved communication between fishermen and DFG scientists, relative to understanding the differences between fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data sources.

For more information, please contact Mr. David Osorio, marine biologist at (831) 649-7195, or e-mail dosorio@dfg.ca.gov.

Calendar of Fishery-Related Meetings

2004 Fish and Game Commission

www.dfg.ca.gov/fg_comml/2004/2004mtgs.html

March 4 - 5
Redding

June 24 - 25
Crescent City

April 1 - 2
Sacramento

August 5 - 6
Bridgeport

April 22
(teleconference call)
Sacramento

August 26 - 27
San Luis Obispo

May 4 - 6
San Diego

October 21 - 22
Concord

December 2 - 3
Monterey

2004 Pacific Fishery Management Council

www.pcouncil.org/events/future.html

March 7 - 12
Tacoma, WA

April 4 - 9
Sacramento, CA

June 13 - 18
Foster City, CA

September 12 - 17
San Diego, CA

October 31 - Nov 5
Portland OR

For the latest information on upcoming fishery-related meetings, please go to our Calendar of Events at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/index_calendar.html or contact the Monterey DFG office at (831) 649-2870.

MARINE Management News

Marine Management News is published quarterly by the Marine Region of the California Department of Fish and Game for everyone interested in the management and conservation of California's living marine resources. Through this newsletter we hope to keep all associates and constituents interested in participating in and/or tracking the progress of the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) informed of developments. The MLMA strongly emphasizes an open decision-making process that involves people interested in or affected by management measures.

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

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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.

DFG Marine Region's mission:
***"To protect, maintain, enhance, and restore
California's marine ecosystems for their
ecological values and their use and
enjoyment by the public"***