



# 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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## Lingcod, Rockfish Stock Assessments Report Healthier Populations

by Mary Patyten, Research Writer

The West Coast lingcod stock has been successfully rebuilt after being designated "overfished" by the federal government in 1999, the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (Council) has announced.

Lingcod are a favorite target of commercial and recreational fishermen. This voracious predator stakes out home territories in rocky reef areas, where it mainly preys on other fish.

"Rebuilding so quickly is a great success story that shows how the Council's cutbacks on fishing can work," said Council Executive Director, Donald McIsaac. "But even with the increased numbers, fishing for lingcod will still be restricted due to curtailments on fishing to allow rebuilding of canary and yelloweye rockfish, which live in similar habitat."



Lingcod, *Ophiodon elongatus*  
DFG file photo

The lingcod stock was scheduled to be rebuilt by 2009, but the new assessment showed that the rebuilding target has already been reached and surpassed by 60 percent. Rebuilding the stock was

accomplished without a complete closure of the lingcod or groundfish fisheries, sparing coastal communities whose economies depend to varying degrees on commercial and recreational fishing.

The status of other key "overfished" stocks has also significantly improved. The widow rockfish stock, which was declared "overfished" in 2001, increased in size by 25 percent between 2003 and 2005, and is now at 78 percent of its rebuilding target.

"Groundfish Stock Assessments" continued on page 8

## MLPA Initiative Focuses on Central California Coast

by Mary Patyten, Research Writer

California's marine biological diversity is a vital asset to the state and nation. In the late 1990s, the California

Legislature responded to declines in the state's marine environmental health with legislation that would help to protect our ocean.

The 1999 Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) is one such legislative act that aims to protect California's marine natural heritage by improving the State's existing array of marine protected areas (MPAs). MPAs will be designed, created, and managed according to sound science and with the goal of protecting the diversity and

abundance of marine life and the integrity of marine ecosystems.

To date, the MLPA has not been implemented as quickly as intended. The State of California now aims to achieve the goals of the MLPA by pursuing the California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative, a cooperative effort funded by a public-private partnership, and enhanced by the advice of scientists, resource managers, policy experts, stakeholder representatives, and interested members of the public.

The Initiative provides a more grounded, realistic approach to implementing the MLPA, giving priority to program components that can be effectively implemented now, and completing the remaining components in later phases. Information on the MLPA process is available on the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) Web site at [www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa), including important documents such as the Master Plan

"MLPA Initiative" continued on page 9

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# DFG Wildlife Protection Staff, Biologists Team Up To Conduct Research

by Mary Patyten, Research Writer

When Department of Fish and Game (DFG) research and enforcement personnel combine forces to accomplish their goals, good things can happen.

In August 2005, DFG biologists hitched a ride with enforcement personnel aboard the *P/V Swordfish* as they cruised the Channel Islands in southern California, to survey some of the Channel Islands marine protected areas (MPAs) using a remotely operated vehicle. The surveys help DFG to monitor fish and invertebrate populations within and around the MPAs.



*P/V Swordfish*  
DFG file photo



Wardens head off to patrol the California coast  
DFG photo by M. Patyten

DFG senior biologist Konstantin Karpov had nothing but praise for the *Swordfish* crew. "Thanks largely to the extraordinary cooperation, enthusiasm, and dedication of Lieutenants John Suchil and Robert Puccinelli as well as Wardens John Castro and Aaron Burger, we got the job done in both enforcement and research," he said.

After a training session, DFG enforcement staff worked with the researchers while continuing to patrol the Channel Islands MPAs. When the cruise was threatened by mechanical problems aboard the *Swordfish*, enforcement staff worked around the clock to fix the problem. The dedicated personnel aboard the *Swordfish* managed to save the cruise for both the enforcement personnel, who continued their patrols, and the biologists, who went on to collect 30 kilometers of transect data. Ten of those kilometers of data were collected in one day (a new record), and surveys were completed at sites off San Miguel Island that the biologists had been unable to reach for years due to bad weather.



Remotely operated vehicles video-monitor marine protected areas.  
Left: Rockfish near rocky substrate  
Below: Treefish hovers near a crevice  
DFG file photos



Remotely operated vehicle heads into the depths  
DFG photo by M. Patyten

The moral of the tale? Sometimes it takes a little improvisation, but by pooling resources during times of reduced budgets DFG will continue to protect, maintain, enhance and restore California's marine ecosystems, for their ecological values and their use and enjoyment by the public. 🐠

Since the tide is right...







## Marine Management News Fish Identification Quiz!

by Mary Patyten, Research Writer

Welcome to the Marine Management News Fish Identification Quiz for March! Here's your chance to show off your knowledge and win an official Department of Fish and Game fish tagging cap (left). To win, simply be the first to send an e-mail to [AskMarine@dfg.ca.gov](mailto:AskMarine@dfg.ca.gov) correctly identifying:

- The species of the fish pictured below (scientific name and an accepted common name), and
- The current daily bag limits, as given in the recreational fishing regulations for California! Be sure to type "March 2006 MMN Fish Quiz" in the "Subject" portion of your e-mail.

This fish begins life in California waters with many thousands – sometimes millions – of its fellow larvae during spawning periods from Oct. through July in southern California and Jan. through May in central and northern California. Very young fish stay in the upper water column for up to 5 ½ months before settling into various nearshore bottom habitats, often near rocky patches or eelgrass beds.

While still small enough to fit in an adult's hand, young fish are sometimes caught from piers in large numbers. (Note: keeping fish less than 10 inches in length of this species is illegal, so becoming familiar with the appearance of juvenile fish is important!) Young fish are also sometimes found in great numbers near oil platforms in central and southern California.

Adults of this species are most commonly found at depths ranging from 165 to 825 ft. Their geographic range extends from the Alaskan Peninsula to central Baja California, but they are most abundant from Oregon to northern Baja California.

This species grows relatively fast for this particular genus of fish, up to almost 1 millimeter a day while very young. Off California, most males are sexually mature by the time they reach 22 inches in length, while females reach maturity by 24 inches. Once this fish hits maturity, the females are generally bigger than the males. This species reaches a maximum length of 36 inches, and around 15 lbs maximum weight.

In the 1800s, Italian fishermen gave this fish its common name, which means "bigmouth." Over the years, it has been targeted by commercial gillnet,



photo by E. Roberts



juvenile

photo courtesy T. Burgess

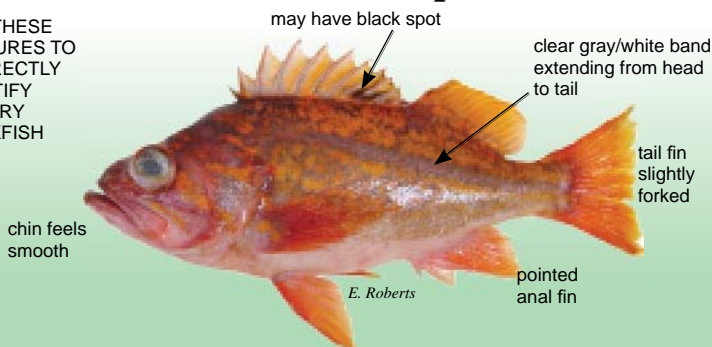
hook-and-line, and trawl fishermen, and has also been a staple of the recreational fishery. By the

late 1990s, it is estimated that the species' ability to reproduce had fallen to a mere 2 percent of it's mid-1960s capability, and catches had dropped drastically. The species has been declared "overfished" by the Pacific Fishery Management Council, and a management plan has been implemented to rebuild the population.

If you think you know this species of fish, claim your prize by being the first to send an e-mail to the DFG at [AskMarine@dfg.ca.gov](mailto:AskMarine@dfg.ca.gov) with the correct scientific and common name, and the current daily bag limits. Again, be sure to type "March 2006 MMN Fish Quiz" in the "Subject" portion of your e-mail. Answers to the quiz and the winner's name will be published in the June issue of *Marine Management News*. 🐟

## And the winner of the September Fish Identification Quiz is...

USE THESE FEATURES TO CORRECTLY IDENTIFY CANARY ROCKFISH



E. Roberts

Captain Tom Mattusch of El Granada, California, a commercial passenger fishing vessel owner/operator who runs the F/V *Huli Cat* out of Half Moon Bay! Congratulations Tom!!

Captain Mattusch correctly identified last issue's mystery fish (left) as a canary rockfish, *Sebastes pinniger*. The bag limit for canary rockfish is currently zero fish – they may not be retained.

# Pier Rats, Jack Smelt, and Dancing Walleyes

*CRFS Sampler Kirk Lombard meets and greets  
the pier fishermen of the city*

*by Kirk Lombard, Fisheries Technician*

*photo courtesy K. Lombard*

Over the past year, Kirk Lombard has worked as a sampler for the California Recreational Fisheries Survey, a joint project of the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC). For Kirk, this has meant spending a great deal of time in places where anglers gather along the shore: piers, docks, jetties, launch ramps, and beaches. He interviews fishermen, measuring and weighing their fish, and answers questions regarding fishing regulations, all to keep tabs on the status and health of nearshore fish populations. But, as he describes in this article, it's the stories, the interactions, and the remarkable characters he meets that keeps his job interesting.

Sunday morning, 7:15 am. The alarm clock rings but I'm already up and about—the coffee is brewing, the toaster is toasting, my rucksack is packed full of forms, and my fish measuring equipment, (scales, board, tape measure) is sitting by the door. I quickly scarf down a bagel, pound my coffee, and put on my beige shirt with the DFG and PSMFC badges sewn onto the shoulders. Donning a DFG baseball cap, I head for my white, 1991 Toyota Tercel.

My assignment for today — in official DFG jargon — is MM SFO 04. MM stands for “man made,” and SFO 04 is the fancy-sounding code name for a geographic area in San Francisco which includes Pier 7, The Ferry Platform Building, South Harbor Marina Pier, and Agua Vista Pier. I am responsible for visiting all these “man-made” areas (in this case, piers), monitoring the catch on each, and interviewing all the anglers who finish fishing while I am there.

Fifteen minutes after getting into my car, I arrive at Pier 7. Parking in this area can be tricky, but the guy at the parking lot says he'll let me in for free if I tell him

where the stripers are biting. I tell him, “Off the rocks at Coyote Point.” Since the stripers are always biting (more or less) off the rocks at Coyote Point, this isn't much in the way of an inside scoop. The parking attendant smiles and gives me a free pass.

I get out of my car and cross the street. My eyes scour the pier for anglers. As part of my CRFS duties, every time I approach or leave a pier I am expected to do a head count. I can already see the tell-tale signs of “pier rats” (this is the term by which serious pier anglers often refer to themselves): shopping carts with buckets and jerry-rigged PVC rod holders lashed in with bungee cords.

I walk down the pier to introduce myself to the anglers and tell them a little about the CRFS project. About halfway down I recognize several faces from last month. Suddenly one of the anglers flashes a big smile and yells, “Hey, it's Fish and Game, quick, hide the abalones!” The five other fishermen on the pier howl with delight at this.

*“Pier Rats” continued on page 5*



A second guy, Eddie, steps forward. Eddie always wears the same hat: a crusty old Giants cap from the Willie McCovey days, festooned with rusty perch jigs. In anticipation of the questions I always ask, Eddie calls out: "Not finished, San Mateo, 3 hours, jack smelt." All the other guys burst out laughing again. Everybody here has done the CRFS interview numerous times, so they all know the questions: Are you finished fishing today? What county do you live in? How many hours have you been out here? Have you caught anything?

After a few more jokes and a very friendly exchange of pleasantries, the anglers show me some of the more impressive examples of their fishing skill: one 19-inch striped bass, a couple of 14+ inch jack smelt, a pair of bat ray wings already carved up into "bay scallops" and a walleye surfperch with strange markings: bars, red cheeks, yellow pectoral fins.

As one of my ongoing side projects for the DFG, I am assembling a field guide to common Bay Area surfperches. I ask the friendly lady with the wildy colored walleye surfperch if I can please photograph her fish. She scowls at me and says: "If that fish becomes famous, will you guys give me any money?"

"Yes," I say, winking to the others, "but only if it tap dances and sings."

Before heading back to my roost at the entrance to the pier, I tell the anglers that I will be here for a few hours and that I would love to measure their fish and ask them a few questions when they are finished for the day. The woman with the weird walleye surfperch winks and says, "We know the drill."

At 11:30 a.m. I leave Pier 7. In the three hours since I arrived, fourteen people have started fishing, four have left the pier, and three have consented to be interviewed — only one grumpy guy refused to show me his fish. I have catalogued all this information on my forms. The morning tally reads: 1 striped bass, 27 jack smelt, 8 white croakers (kingfish), 3 staghorn sculpins (bullheads), 5 walleye perch and 1 tiny, brown smoothhound shark (sand shark). I have interviewed all the willing anglers for demographic information and measured and weighed every single fish. Unfortunately, though, I left my trusty hand towel at home, and my hands and clothes are now completely covered in fish slime! (When working as a sampler, one can expect to spend a lot of time in two places: piers and laundromats).



*The author measures a pier fisherman's catch.  
photo courtesy K. Lombard*

After doing a head count to see how many people are still fishing on the pier, I pack up all my gear and set off for more adventures in fish sampling at the Ferry Building, South Harbor Marina Pier, and Agua Vista Pier.

When I finally call it quits for the day, I've completed ten hours of interviewing fishermen in the area. On each pier there are characters, stories, fish tales and images that linger in my mind long after I've clocked out for the night. I took this job because I love fish, plain and simple, but what keeps me going back are the stories, the interactions and the

remarkable characters I meet in the world of piers and docks and jetties. 🐟



*Pier fisherman  
Andy Pappas, the  
"Crab King," with  
a shopping cart  
rigged to facilitate  
pier fishing.*

*photo by  
K. Lombard*



*photo by K. Lombard*



# UPDATES

## Marine Management News

### DFG Announces Additional Ocean Fishing Opportunities for California Scorpionfish

by DFG Staff

The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) announces an in-season regulation change pertaining to California scorpionfish that will provide more fishing opportunities for marine recreational anglers in state waters off Southern California.

The fishery for California scorpionfish, commonly known as *sculpin*, will open March 1, so that the recreational fishing season and depth restrictions will align with rockfish seasons and depths. The recreational fishery for scorpionfish will open only in state waters (generally out to three miles) for the area from Point Conception south to the Mexico border. Federal waters will be closed to fishing for California scorpionfish until October. The daily sport bag and possession limit remains at five fish.

For more information, see the press release posted to the Marine Region Newsroom at [www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/newsreleases2006.html](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/newsreleases2006.html). 🐟

### 2005 Recreational Cabezon Fishery Closed December 1

by DFG Staff

The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) suspended the recreational cabezon fishery on Dec. 1, 2005, and recreational anglers were prohibited from retaining cabezon (*Scorpaenichthys marmoratus*) for the remainder of the year.

Cabezon is a nearshore fish species found primarily in California's northern and central coastal areas and in coastal waters surrounding Southern California's Channel Islands.

Estimates from the California Recreational Fisheries Survey indicate that the annual allocation for recreationally caught cabezon, 92,800 pounds, would be reached or exceeded by Dec. 1.

In 2004 the groundfish fishery, which includes cabezon, remained open throughout the year because the recreational cabezon allocation was higher.

The recreational and commercial fisheries for cabezon are managed independently. The commercial cabezon fishery closed on Oct. 1, 2005 when the yearly allocation was reached early. 🐟

### In-Season Changes Made to Southern California Groundfish Regulations

by DFG Staff

In-season changes made since January 1, 2006 mean that some groundfish regulations contained in the 2006 California Ocean Sport Fishing Regulations booklet are no longer effective for the area from Lopez Point to the Mexico border. In order to help anglers understand and comply with the most current ocean sport fishing regulations, DFG is offering updated bottom fishing summary tables (available at [www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/bfregs2006.html](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/bfregs2006.html)) that incorporate all recent regulation changes. Regulations for the area north of Lopez Point have not changed.

#### Lopez Point (Monterey County) to Point Conception (Santa Barbara County):

- *Rockfish, cabezon, greenlings, lingcod and other federal groundfish and associated state-managed species*: Open May 1 through September 30 in "Groundfish Changes" continued on page 10

### Commercial Dungeness Crab Season Opener Delayed Twice

by Mary Patyten, Research Writer

On Nov. 22 and again on Dec. 9, 2005 Department of Fish and Game Director Ryan Broddrick notified fishermen that the opening of commercial Dungeness crab season in northern California would be postponed due to poor quality crab conditions.

Dungeness crab populations are tested prior to the opening of the season to determine if crabs have filled out their newly molted shells sufficiently to meet market demand. The first postponement delayed crabbing in Fish and Game Districts 6, 7, 8, and 9 (Mendocino, Humboldt and Del Norte Counties) until Dec. 16, pending further testing. However, notice of the next postponement came on Dec. 9, after tests on Dec. 7 indicated that the crabs would not be ready for harvest on Dec. 16.

The second postponement delayed the commercial Dungeness crab opener until Dec. 31. Crabbing was concurrently delayed off Oregon and Washington until Dec. 31, and crabbers who had harvested

"Dungeness Crab" continued on page 10



## Public Encouraged to Participate in Federal Groundfish Management Process

by Mary Patyten, Research Writer

The Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council's) groundfish fishery management plan provides guidance for managing over 80 species of fish that live near or on the bottom of the ocean. The plan includes fisheries in both the recreational and commercial sectors. Regular review of fisheries data and other scientific information helps the Council to manage fishing activity and monitor the health of fisheries in conjunction with fishery managers in Washington, Oregon and California.

Regular review of new data is now completed within a two-year management cycle, replacing the previous one-year cycle. The two-year cycle provides adequate time for public input and comment, and for the Council to work on critical groundfish issues and complete the regulatory process before the new fishing season begins.

Biennial management measures are prepared using a three-meeting process that occurs in November, April and June:

- In November, the Council decides on preliminary harvest levels and management measures
- In April, the Council decides on final harvest levels, and refines management measures
- In June, the Council decides on final management measures

Members of the commercial and recreational fishing communities, the environmental community, and the public are encouraged to testify at Council meetings and hearings. Upcoming meetings for the 2007-2008 management cycle include:

**April 2-7, 2006**

**Sacramento, California**

Doubletree Hotel Sacramento  
2001 Point West Way  
Sacramento, CA 95815  
Phone: (916) 929-8855 or (800) 222-8733

**June 11-16, 2006**

**Foster City, California**

Crowne Plaza Mid-Peninsula  
1221 Chess Drive  
Foster City, California 94404  
Phone: (650) 570-5700  
or (800) 227-6963

*"Groundfish" continued on page 10*

## Get Hooked on the Marine Region Web Site!

by Aaron Del Monte, Assistant Information Systems Analyst and Marine Region Webmaster

For the latest information on fishing regulations, marine resources, and news affecting our California coastline, your first stop should be the Department of Fish and Game Marine Region Web site, located at [www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd). This comprehensive information source currently contains approximately 2,000 Web pages readily available to the public. If you are new to the Marine Region Web site, we invite you to see what a truly valuable resource we have created. For those of you who have already visited our Web site, be sure to check back regularly, since new features, updates, and press releases are added every week. Here are a few recent, noteworthy additions to our Web site:

### Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative

[www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa): This partnership between government agencies and private entities is striving to achieve the original MLPA goals. The 1999 MLPA directed the state to improve California's existing array of marine protected areas in order to, among other things, protect marine life and habitats, marine ecosystems, and marine natural heritage, as well as improve recreational, educational and study opportunities provided by marine ecosystems. This Web site, which includes many recent additions, contains information including up-to-date meeting information, public comments and documents for review.

In the coming weeks, this Web site will undergo a major transformation. The new site will be even easier to navigate, and will include a number of interactive features, including the capability of constituents to actively submit comments regarding the MLPA Initiative.

### Status of the Fisheries Reports

[www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/status](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/status): This comprehensive review of California's fisheries is a key tool for developing effective fisheries management. The 2001 edition of the report, which contains detailed information on close to 200 species, has been featured on our Web site for several years. The 2003 edition of the report has recently been added, which contains updated information on 14 species.

### Abalone Recovery and Management Plan

[www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/armp](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/armp): The Abalone Recovery and Management Plan was adopted by the Fish and Game Commission on Dec. 9, 2005. The final version

*"Web Site Update" continued on page 11*

The darkblotched rockfish stock, which was also declared “overfished” in 2001, increased by 25 percent between 2001 and 2005, and is now at 40 percent of its rebuilding target. Another hopeful sign for this species is that biologists predict three strong year-classes of juvenile darkblotched rockfish will join the adult population soon, increasing its breeding potential.


Assessments for other “overfished” stocks showed modest improvements, with a few showing little or no improvement.

The assessment for cowcod, which was declared “overfished” in 2000, showed modest improvement, while assessments for Pacific ocean perch and bocaccio (declared “overfished” in 1999) and canary rockfish (declared “overfished” in 2000) showed no significant change between 2003 and 2005. An assessment for yelloweye rockfish, which was declared “overfished” in 2002, showed the population to be in slightly worse shape.

#### **Assessments Valuable for Management**


“Stock assessments, especially for nearshore fish, are a valuable part of efforts to increase our knowledge base and improve nearshore ecosystem management,” said Department of Fish and Game Offshore Ecosystem Coordinator Marija Vojkovich.

In May 2005 two stock assessments were completed along the California coast that provide encouraging news about the health of California scorpionfish and gopher rockfish. The California scorpionfish assessment showed the stock to be healthy, paving the way for increased recreational fishing opportunities in southern California for that species. The gopher rockfish assessment, which was conducted north of Point Conception, also indicated a healthy population.

In all, the Council considered peer-reviewed stock assessments for 23 species of groundfish in November, 2005. To date, the Council has adopted rebuilding plans for eight “overfished” species. 

## **Meet Us At The Sports Shows!**

If you attend one of the many sports shows in California this spring, be sure to stop by the Department of Fish and Game booth to buy your license, chat with a warden, or discuss marine research with a Department biologist! Remaining shows this year include:



### **How do federal “rebuilding plans” for groundfish stocks affect fishing regulations?**


Rebuilding plans generally include management policies that reduce the catch of “overfished” species, often by limiting fishing so that a stock can grow to a healthy, legally-mandated level that can sustain a given amount of fishing pressure. When necessary, the Pacific Fishery Management Council may:

- Temporarily close large areas to certain types of fishing
- Enact regulations that discourage fishing in rocky habitat
- Curtail quotas or bag limits
- Implement other measures to ensure the long-term health of fish populations

Management measures are included in fishery management plans for salmon, groundfish, highly migratory species (including tunas), and coastal pelagic species (including mackerels). The Groundfish Management Plan covers more than 82 species, including rockfish and lingcod (for a complete list of species covered by the Groundfish Management Plan, go to [www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/groundfish\\_fedlist.html](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/groundfish_fedlist.html)).

The Council is one of eight regional fishery management councils that manage fisheries from 3 to 200 miles offshore (the State of California manages waters from 0 to 3 miles offshore). The Council is responsible for fisheries off the coasts of Washington, Oregon, and California.

For more information on overfishing and stock rebuilding, visit the Council’s online collection of fact sheets at [www.pccouncil.org/pfmcfacts.html](http://www.pccouncil.org/pfmcfacts.html).



**Long Beach – Mar. 1-5**  
Fred Hall Fishing Tackle and Boat Show  
Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center  
[www.fredhall.com](http://www.fredhall.com)

**Del Mar – Mar 15-19**  
Fred Hall Fishing Tackle and Boat Show  
Del Mar Fairgrounds  
[www.fredhall.com](http://www.fredhall.com)  
See you there!



# UPCOMING MLPA INITIATIVE MEETINGS

## BLUE RIBBON TASK FORCE MEETINGS:

**Tuesday, March 14, 2006**

(10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.)

**Wednesday, March 15, 2006**

(8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.)

Embassy Suites Hotel  
1441 Canyon del Rey  
Seaside, CA 93955

## SCIENCE ADVISORY TEAM MEETINGS:

**March 2, 2006**

Location: San Jose area (*check  
website for updated location  
information*)

**May 1, 2006**

Location: San Jose area (*check  
website for updated location  
information*)

Visit the MLPA Web Site  
For The Latest  
Information

[www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa)

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For automatic, electronic notification of  
in-season fishing regulation changes,  
sign up for the Marine Region mailing  
list at:

[www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/subscribe.html](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/subscribe.html)

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## *"MLPA Initiative" continued from page 1*

Master Plan Framework, which guides the current process and will guide future implementation efforts.

Most recently, DFG has focused on implementing the MLPA by using an initial regional process along the central California coast (defined as state waters from Pigeon Pt. to Pt. Conception). After a 7-month stakeholder-based process, draft packages of potential revisions to the existing array of MPAs, including potential new MPAs, are now available for public review and comment. These packages were developed by stakeholder representatives and are presently undergoing scientific and policy review. To view the packages, including descriptions and rationales for the revisions, visit the MLPA Web site.

Two meetings were set by the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force to review the packages (January 31-February 1 and March 14-15). At the meetings, the Task Force will provide the DFG with its recommendations on the packages. The DFG will review the Task Force recommendations, select a preferred alternative, and present the packages to the Fish and Game Commission, most likely in May, 2006.

The Commission may then direct the DFG to take steps to enact regulations and complete an environmental review document for the proposal. The Commission may adopt a central coast component of a statewide MPA network in November, 2006 after several public hearings.

The public is invited to review proposed MPA packages and other documents online at [www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa/draftdocuments.html](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa/draftdocuments.html). Public comments, which are posted online, may be submitted at [www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa/publiccomments.html](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa/publiccomments.html). 



**Have a question?**

**Need help identifying a fish?**



honeycomb rockfish  
*Sebastes umbrosus*  
photo by E. Roberts

**E-mail your questions to:**

**AskMarine@dfg.ca.gov**



# A Big Thank You To *Marine Management News* Readers!

by Mary Patyten, Research Writer



A big **thank you** goes out to our readers who participated in the online *Marine Management News* newsletter survey this fall. The Department of Fish and Game's Marine Region strives to bring you important information through a variety of venues including this newsletter, and we want to hear your thoughts and ideas concerning how we can improve our efforts. If you have suggestions or comments concerning the newsletter please feel free to e-mail Mary Patyten, *Marine Management News* editor at [mpatyten@dfg.ca.gov](mailto:mpatyten@dfg.ca.gov), or simply watch for our 2006 survey.

Also, congratulations go out to Liz Taylor who won our survey drawing for a free copy of *California's Living Marine Resources: A Status Report*. Liz is currently the president of DOER Marine, a company based in Alameda, California that specializes in sub-sea robotics and submersible systems. Congratulations, Liz! 🐟🦀

## "Groundfish Changes" continued from page 6

waters less than 240 feet (40 fathoms) deep for boat-based anglers.

### Point Conception to the Mexico Border:

- *Rockfish, cabezon, other federal groundfish (except California scorpionfish and lingcod), and California sheephead and other associated state-managed species:* Open March 1 through August 31 in all waters less than 360 feet (60 fathoms) deep; September 1 through September 30 in all waters less than 180 feet (30 fathoms) deep for boat-based anglers.
- *California scorpionfish:* Open March 1 through August 31 only in state waters less than 360 feet (60 fathoms) deep; September 1 through September 30 in state waters less than 180 feet (30 fathoms) deep for boat-based anglers.
- *Lingcod:* Open April 1 through August 31 in all waters less than 360 feet (60 fathoms) deep; September 1 through September 30 in waters less than 180 feet (30 fathoms) deep for boat-based anglers.

Note that these seasons and depth restrictions apply specifically to boat-based anglers; rockfish, cabezon, greenlings and scorpionfish are open to shore-based anglers year-round. Lingcod is closed to all recreational angling from January 1 through March 31 and December 1 through December 31 (during the spawning season).

Additional in-season changes are being considered to recreational seasons for groundfish including rockfish, lingcod, cabezon, greenling, scorpionfish and others for implementation later in 2006. To stay informed of in-season regulation changes, call the groundfish hotline (831) 649-2801, visit the Marine Region Web site at [www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd) or call your local DFG office. 🐟🦀

## "Dungeness Crab" continued from page 6

Dungeness crab south of Mendocino County were required to wait until Jan. 30 to harvest crab in any of the previously closed areas. The entire coast north of Point Arena opened on Dec. 31.

Fishermen are allowed to set crabbing gear 36 hours in advance of the opener, after noon on Dec. 29.

California's recreational Dungeness crab season and the commercial season south of Mendocino County opened without delay.

For more information about recreational and commercial Dungeness crabbing, visit the DFG's Marine Region Web site at [www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/dungeness.html](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/dungeness.html). 🐟🦀

## "Groundfish Process" continued from page 7

For detailed information about how to participate in making groundfish management decisions as a member of the public, visit [www.pccouncil.org/operations/involved.html](http://www.pccouncil.org/operations/involved.html). More information about groundfish management is available at the Council website at [www.pccouncil.org](http://www.pccouncil.org). 🐟🦀



of the plan is now available on the website for viewing in both html and PDF formats.

Here are some of our most popular pages:

**California Ocean Sport Fishing Regulations Map**  
[www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/fishing\\_map.html](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/fishing_map.html): Going ocean fishing? This should be your first stop. Simply click the marine location where you plan to fish and you will access a compact list of sport fishing regulations for that area. The pages are printer-friendly, so you can print the regulations and take them with you on your next fishing trip. These pages are updated frequently, so you can be assured that they contain the most up-to-date information.

**2006 Ocean Sport Fishing Regulations**  
[www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/sportfishing\\_regs2006.html](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/sportfishing_regs2006.html): The entire 2006 Ocean Sport Fishing Regulations booklet is conveniently located on our Web site. Besides the downloadable booklet, the page contains a number of helpful links, including 2006 In-Season Ocean Fishing Regulation Changes, Fish Identification Illustrations and Photographs and other helpful resources. This is currently one of the most visited pages on our entire Web site.

**Laws and Regulations Page**  
[www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/regulations.html](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/regulations.html): This page is your main source for information concerning commercial and sport fishing regulations. Over 30 links connect you to a variety of information concerning current regulations.

**Fishing Page** [www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/fishing.html](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/fishing.html): One of our most popular pages of all, this page contains links to the three resources listed above, as well as information on specific species, permits and licenses, record fish and invertebrate trophies, and a number of annual reports and sets of data. Whether you are a recreational or commercial fisherman, you're sure to find some useful information on this page.

**A-to-Z Directory**  
[www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/index\\_directory.html](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/index_directory.html): Can't seem to find what you're looking for? Don't worry! Just visit our A-to-Z Directory, and there you will see an alphabetized list of resources available to you on our Web site.

Finally, we'd like to thank you to those who participated in our annual Web Site Survey, which was recently featured on our Web site. Your responses will help us develop the Marine Region Web site to best meet your needs. Congratulations to Cory Uhrich of Pleasanton, California, whose name was chosen in our survey drawing for a free copy of DFG's *California's Living Marine Resources: A Status Report*. Cory is a Quality Engineer for Oracle Corporation, and is also a recreational fisherman and spear fisherman. Look for our next Web survey in summer, 2006. 🐟

Recreational  
Groundfish  
Regulations Hotline  
**831-649-2801**

Recreational  
Ocean Salmon  
Regulations Hotline  
**707-576-3429**

## Upcoming Commission and Council Meetings

**2006 Fish and Game Commission**  
[www.fgc.ca.gov/2006/2006mtgs.html](http://www.fgc.ca.gov/2006/2006mtgs.html)

**March 2-3**  
Riverside

**April 6-7**  
Monterey

**May 2-4**  
Kings Beach

**May 23**  
**Sacramento**  
*(tentative joint meeting with  
MLPA Task Force)*

**June 22-23**  
Mammoth Lakes

**2006 Pacific Fishery Management Council**  
[www.pccouncil.org/events/future.html](http://www.pccouncil.org/events/future.html)

**March 5-10**  
Seattle, WA

**April 2-7**  
Sacramento, CA

**June 11-16**  
Foster City, CA

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](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/index_calendar.html) or contact the Monterey DFG office at (831) 649-2870.

## **MARINE Management News**

**M**arine 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](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd).

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### **The Marine Life Management Act**

**C**alifornia's Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) of 1998 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](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd).

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