



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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Commission Approves Central Coast Marine Protected Areas; North-Central Coastal Areas To Be Considered Next

by DFG Staff

On April 13, 2007 the California Fish and Game Commission adopted regulations in a landmark decision to create a new suite of marine protected areas (MPAs) designed for California's central coast (between Pigeon Point in San Mateo County and Point Conception in Santa Barbara County). This move effectively launches the state's Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Program, which is designed to better conserve marine resources for their long-term sustainability while also enhancing outdoor recreation and ocean research opportunities along the coast.

"With our action today, California has embarked upon something historic and extraordinary," said Richard Rogers, president of the Commission. "With this vote, we have taken the first step to return our ocean waters to the place they used to be; an ocean full of sustainable abundance."

The Commission voted unanimously in favor of its preferred alternative: 29 MPAs along the central coast representing approximately 204 square miles (or approximately 18 percent) of state waters, with about 85 square miles (approximately 7.5% of the Central Coast Study Region)

designated as "no-take" state marine reserves along the central coast.

An overflow crowd of more than 200 people attended the Commission adoption hearing, with many providing final testimony regarding three MPA package proposals; those proposals included the Commission's preferred

alternative, which was initially voted on at the Commission's August 2006 meeting in Monterey. Each proposal underwent the required state environmental review and regulatory analysis.

The newly established MPAs represent the culmination of a two-year public process with nearly 60 public meetings held for stakeholders and scientists, as well as the oversight of the MLPA

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Blue Ribbon Task Force, convened by Secretary for Resources Mike Chrisman.

The California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), the lead agency charged with managing the state's living marine resources, will be responsible for implementing the MLPA Program, including all enforcement, research, and monitoring activities. The implementation date is expected to be sometime this summer. Recreational and commercial fishing seasons that open in May and June, including some salmon and groundfish fishing seasons, will not be affected by the new MPA regulations until after the implementation date. DFG will inform the public of the implementation date when it becomes known, and will publish and distribute materials specifying locations and any associated fishing restrictions for each MPA. The MLPA Web site (www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa) also contains the most up-to-date information concerning the new central coast MPAs.

New Study Region Preparations

Even before the central coast MPAs were approved, preparations had begun for the second phase of the MLPA Initiative process, which will focus on the north-central coast from Pigeon Point in San Mateo County to Alder Creek (near Point Arena) in Mendocino County.

Over the next year, stakeholders, scientists, task force members and MLPA Initiative staff will again engage in a cooperative effort to craft MPA alternatives for the new area. Lessons learned from the previous process will be incorporated; options will be proposed, reviewed, and adjusted, and ultimately the Commission will choose a single option for implementation.

Among the earliest actions taken in the second phase of the MLPA Initiative process was the appointment of a new Blue Ribbon

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Central Coast Marine Protected Areas Adopted April 13, 2007 Recreational and Commercial Uses	
MARINE PROTECTED AREAS	PERMITTED/PROHIBITED USES
Año Nuevo State Marine Conservation Area	No recreational take allowed. Allows commercial take of giant kelp by hand.
Greyhound Rock State Marine Conservation Area	Allows recreational take of giant kelp by hand, salmon, squid. Finfish other than salmon may be taken by hook and line from shore only . Allows commercial take of giant kelp by hand, salmon, squid.
Natural Bridges State Marine Reserve	No recreational or commercial take allowed.
Elkhorn Slough State Marine Reserve	No recreational or commercial take allowed.
Elkhorn Slough State Marine Conservation Area	Allows recreational take of finfish by hook and line; clams in area adjacent to DFG wildlife area in northwest. No commercial take allowed.
Moro Cojo Slough State Marine Reserve	No recreational or commercial take allowed.
Soquel Canyon State Marine Conservation Area	Allows recreational and commercial take of pelagic finfish ¹ .
Portuguese Ledge State Marine Conservation Area	Allows recreational and commercial take of pelagic finfish ¹ .
Edward F. Ricketts State Marine Conservation Area	Allows recreational take of finfish by hook and line. Allows commercial take of kelp by hand north of 36° 36.83' N. latitude with limits on monthly take.
Lovers Point State Marine Reserve	No recreational or commercial take allowed.
Pacific Grove Marine Gardens State Marine Conservation Area	Allows recreational take of finfish. Allows commercial take of kelp by hand with limits on monthly take.
Asilomar State Marine Reserve	No recreational or commercial take allowed.
Carmel Pinnacles State Marine Reserve	No recreational or commercial take allowed.
Carmel Bay State Marine Conservation Area	Allows recreational take of finfish. Allows commercial take of kelp by hand with limits on monthly take.
Point Lobos State Marine Reserve	No recreational or commercial take allowed.
Point Lobos State Marine Conservation Area	Allows recreational take of salmon, albacore. Allows commercial take of salmon, albacore, and spot prawn.
Point Sur State Marine Reserve	No recreational or commercial take allowed.
Point Sur State Marine Conservation Area	Allows recreational and commercial take of salmon and albacore.
Big Creek State Marine Reserve	No recreational or commercial take allowed.
Big Creek State Marine Conservation Area	Allows recreational take of salmon, albacore. Allows commercial take of salmon, albacore, and spot prawn.
Piedras Blancas State Marine Reserve	No recreational or commercial take allowed.
Piedras Blancas State Marine Conservation Area	Allows recreational and commercial take of salmon and albacore.
Cambria State Marine Conservation Area	Allows all recreational take. No commercial take allowed.
White Rock (Cambria) State Marine Conservation Area	No recreational take allowed. Allows commercial take of kelp with limits on monthly take.
Morro Bay State Marine Recreational Management Area	No recreational or commercial take allowed south of 35° 19.70' N. latitude. In other areas, allows recreational take of finfish. In other areas, allows commercial bait fish receiving, and aquaculture by permit.
Morro Bay State Marine Reserve	No recreational or commercial take allowed.
Point Buchon State Marine Reserve	No recreational or commercial take allowed.
Point Buchon State Marine Conservation Area	Allows recreational and commercial take of salmon and albacore.
Vandenberg State Marine Reserve	No recreational or commercial take allowed.

¹ Pelagic finfish are defined as: northern anchovy (*Engraulis mordax*), barracudas (*Sphyraena* spp.), billfishes (family Istiophoridae), dolphinfish (*Coryphaena hippurus*), Pacific herring (*Clupea pallasii*), jack mackerel (*Trachurus symmetricus*), Pacific mackerel (*Scomber japonicus*), salmon (*Oncorhynchus* spp.), Pacific sardine (*Sardinops sagax*), blue shark (*Prionace glauca*), salmon shark (*Lamna ditropis*), shortfin mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*), thresher sharks (*Alopias* spp.), swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*), tunas (family Scombridae), and yellowtail (*Seriola lalandi*).

*Marlin is not allowed for commercial take.



Marine Management News Fish Identification Quiz!

by Mary Patyten, Research Writer

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

- The **species of the fish** pictured below (scientific name **and** an accepted common name), and
- The **daily bag limit during the open season**, as given in the recreational fishing regulations for California!

Be sure to type "May 2007 MMN Fish Quiz" in the "Subject" portion of your e-mail.

This fish begins life in California waters with many thousands—sometimes over a million—of its fellow larvae during the Jan. through May spawning period. Young fish begin moving inshore to intertidal and estuarine habitats at around 4 to 6 months old and 1 to 2 inches in length, although some may choose to stay near drifting algae and seagrass. As it matures, this fish moves into deeper water. It frequently forms loose schools 10 to 20 ft. above shallow (to 120 ft.) rocky reefs, but may also be observed as individual fish resting on rocky bottom, or schooling in midwater over deeper (to 240 ft.) reefs. Adults are most commonly found in water less than 55 ft. deep, but they have been found down to 1,200 ft.

This species ranges from the Aleutian Islands of western Alaska in the north to Huntington Beach, California in the south, but it is not frequently seen south of Pt. Conception.

This fish has a relatively fast growth rate. First year growth is usually 3½ to 4 inches; by age five, growth rate for females surpasses that of males, and by age 15, females may average about 2½ inches longer than males. This species reaches a maximum size of around 27 inches long and 10 lb., and can live to be 50 years old.



photo by E. Roberts

Recreational anglers often catch this fish, particularly in northern California. It is taken mostly incidentally in the commercial fishery, although increased landings have been seen for the live-fish fishery, primarily from Morro Bay north to Fort Bragg. The federal government has reported that the number of fish greater than

two years old underwent a 62 percent decline between 1945 and 1986; however since then, especially in 1994 and 1995, large numbers of new, younger fish have bolstered the population off

northern California and Oregon. The Pacific Fishery Management Council, which manages this and other groundfish species off the California coast, plans to hold an open, public meeting in mid-May to review the latest scientific information about this species (go to www.pcouncil.org/events/2007/star_May_Jun_07.html for more information).

If you think you know this species of fish, claim your prize by being the first to send an e-mail to DFG at AskMarine@dfg.ca.gov with the correct scientific and common name, and the daily bag limit during open season. Again, be sure to type "May 2007 MMN Fish Quiz" in the "Subject" portion of your e-mail.

Answers to the quiz and winner's names will be provided in the next issue of *Marine Management News*. 🐟

California Fishing Passport Event Scheduled

The California Fishing Passport program is a new fishing incentive and angler recognition program designed to highlight and promote fishing throughout the state. A **California Fishing Passport** (available at all DFG offices) serves as the basis of the program, and includes 150 different species of fresh and saltwater finfish and shellfish. With this passport as a guide, anglers are encouraged to "Take the Passport Challenge" to get out, go fishing, and try to catch one of every species listed. Visit www.fishingpassport.org for more information about the California Fishing Passport program! 🐟

Upcoming Saltwater Event:

Ocean Sportfishing Trip

Sunday, June 3, 2007

Time: 12:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Location: Helgren's Sportfishing, Oceanside

Abapalooza: The 2006 San Miguel Island Abalone Survey

DFG Marine Biologist Derek Stein describes his experiences during the most extensive dive survey DFG has ever conducted at the island.

by Derek Stein, Associate Marine Biologist

San Miguel Island capped in fog.
photo by D. Stein

I awoke abruptly to the beeping of my alarm clock; in the background I could hear nylon lines chattering on sailboat masts, and flags snapping in the stiff breeze. It felt particularly early to me after an exhausting week of preparing and planning for the most extensive dive survey the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), and likely anyone else, has ever conducted at San Miguel Island. I was fortunate that my little travel alarm's constant *beep* was loud enough to make me realize I had to get up. I willed my body out of the bunk in time to pack up, eat half a donut, and walk over to the *R/V Garibaldi*.

My excitement - or maybe anxiety - over the coming days motivated me to walk faster along the dimly lit, wooden docks of Santa Barbara Harbor. After meeting my fellow divers and the captain of the *Garibaldi*, I helped to untie the lines before the boat eased away from the dock. As I watched one of the other nine boats participating in the survey pass by, I began to feel a bit more at ease... until I heard the latest weather report, and anxiety began to creep back into the pit of my stomach.

San Miguel Island is notorious for its foul, unforgiving, and unpredictable weather. The water is also always cold, but oxygen- and nutrient-rich. Although it is part of the Channel Islands National Park and the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, hardly anyone has been to San Miguel Island except elephant seals, white sharks, and the sea urchin fishermen that harvest the reefs to provide urchin roe, known as uni, to sushi lovers around the world.

Our goal for this trip was important: to conduct a "snapshot" survey that would provide an estimate of the red abalone population at San

Miguel Island, which could potentially be used to re-open a limited commercial and sport fishery there.

The marine habitat of San Miguel Island is more rich and diverse than other islands in the park. The southern, lee side of the island has large, dense beds of *Macrocystis*, or giant kelp, which grow from the submerged rocky reefs up to the water's surface. Large rockfish, wolf-eel, and soupfin shark are some of its more interesting finned inhabitants. The northwest end includes a "foul area" riddled with exposed rocks and pounded by large, unblocked swells that roll in from the open Pacific. The island doesn't offer much refuge for boaters, and even the good anchorages are often extremely windy. Despite the frequently adverse conditions, the island is spectacular, and under water it is even better.

More than 60 people from state and federal agencies, universities, commercial fisheries, and volunteer organizations slowly moved through the Santa Barbara Channel to San Miguel Island, a trip that usually takes about three to four hours. This truly historical, collaborative effort involved many different interest groups determined to gather the best information possible about San Miguel Island abalone populations. As we entered the aptly named "Windy Lane", it became apparent that the ominous forecast for the outer waters had been accurate. We were in for a windy week.

"Abapalooza" continued on page 5



The author prepares to dive
photo by P. Coulston

"Abapalooza" continued from page 4

Because of the wind, we were mostly limited to surveying the southwest and southeast sectors of the island, which are more protected—though "protected" is a relative term at San Miguel. Since most of the abalone grounds are on this "back side" of the island anyway, we were still able to complete some of our scheduled diving during periods of high wind.

The survey procedure was simple; getting used to carrying all the gear and not losing it was usually the greatest challenge. Dive teams surveyed pre-determined, random points within the island's kelp beds. After descending on a point, divers reeled out a 30-meter-long transect line over rocky habitat. Abalone were then counted and measured along the line and within two meters flanking either side. This method provided us with a sample count of the abalone, which could be extrapolated to the rest of the island's rocky reef habitat with a certain level of statistical confidence. We also recorded information about the number of kelp plants we encountered, water depth, and type of relief and habitat. Fortunately, the weather improved slightly as the week wore on, enabling us to eventually survey the northwest part of the island as well, including Castle Rock and the foul area.

The survey divers collected a huge amount of data, despite less than perfect conditions. Fifty-two divers completed about 630 dives during the five-day survey, with a bottom time of 28,000 minutes, which equals about 20 days of diving. In some locations abalone were abundant, even more abundant than in good locations on the northern California coast. In other locations, where habitat was less ideal, very few abalone were seen. A wide range of abalone sizes were present, from ½ inch to over 11 inches, with an average size of 7¼ inches.

"Abapalooza" continued on page 9



Red abalone "hanging out" with a lingcod at San Miguel Island.
photo by J. Altstatt

Hello... It's DFG Calling!

Your Participation in a Coastwide Fishery Survey Directly Impacts Fishery Management

by Sandra Owen, Senior Biologist Supervisor

"Hello, I'm calling for the California Department of Fish and Game, which is collecting information about sport fishing. Your phone number was selected at random from all sport fishing license holders. May I ask you a few questions? The information you provide will be confidential."

If you are a licensed sport fisherman, you may have already received a phone call just like this. You probably offered information about your state and county of permanent residence, and then listened as the interviewer continued to ask a few more questions about your fishing habits:

"This is a very important study on sport fishing in California. By "sport fishing" I mean the primary purpose of fishing was for personal fun, relaxation or food— not for income or employment. For this entire survey please exclude any non-sport fishing trips and trips outside of California. In the past 12 months, have you gone freshwater or saltwater sport fishing, including finfish and shellfish, in the state of California?"

Many sport fishermen (anglers) have had the opportunity to participate in the angler license survey and report it as an interesting and worthwhile experience. Typical comments include:

"I love talking to you guys, you can call anytime. I believe in what California Fish and Game does, so, no, I don't mind," and, "Yeah, I've been waiting for your call. I was wondering when you guys would be calling!"

Why is this angler telephone survey important?

The goal of fishery managers is to maximize the opportunities for anglers consistent with sustaining fish populations. Without valid scientific information, managers may be forced to work with less reliable total catch estimates. If the estimates are too high, seasons might be closed earlier than they need to be. If the estimates are too low, people may catch more fish than the resource can support. The better the information, the more reliable the estimates are. Angler telephone surveys produce one source of reliable information for managing the fisheries.

The telephone survey is part of a comprehensive program to estimate the total catch of ocean finfish species along the entire California coastline and the total effort expended

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UPDATES

Marine Management News

DFG Develops Recreational Cowcod Conservation Area Table, Reformats Regulations

by Marci Yaremko, Marine Regulatory Unit

Anglers who have reviewed their copy of the 2007 regulations booklet may have noticed that the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) has made changes to the format of the groundfish management area regulations and the summary tables that begin after the map on page five of the booklet. In particular, the Cowcod Conservation Areas (CCAs) are now addressed as an individual management area in Section 27.50 of the Title 14 regulations. Previously, the regulations for the CCAs were included with Southern Groundfish Management Area regulations (now found in Section 27.45).

The changes were made to improve the clarity of the regulations for CCAs. In prior years, anglers have commented to DFG staff that some of the specific regulations that apply only for the CCAs were difficult to locate within the Southern Area regulations. For example, in the CCAs, anglers are not allowed to retain any species of shelf or slope rockfish, or most other species of federal groundfish. Moreover, fishing for groundfish species that may be retained is generally limited to waters less than 120 ft. (20 fathoms) in depth. These CCA regulations are quite different from those that apply to the southern area.

To address concerns, the DFG created stand-alone regulation sections for each of the six groundfish management areas. These regulations begin with Section 27.20, which provides general definitions and provisions that apply to all six of the groundfish management areas, followed by Sections 27.25, 27.30, 27.35, 27.40, 27.45 and 27.50, which define specific seasons, boundaries, depth constraints, and exceptions that apply to each groundfish management area individually.

While the regulations and summary tables have a different look this year, it is important for anglers to realize that changes were made only to the format and organizational structure. There are actually no substantive changes to the regulations themselves.

The DFG welcomes feedback from the public

2007 Recreational Ocean Fishing Regulations Booklet Available!

by Mary Patyten, Research Writer

The 2007 Ocean Sport Fishing regulations booklet is now available online (at www.dfg.ca.gov/regulations) and wherever fishing licenses are sold.

Notable changes for 2007 include the following:

- Section 27.67, Transport of Recreational Finfish Through a Restricted Fishing Area, has been eliminated.
- The North-Central Groundfish Management Area is open June 1-Nov. 30 this year, and is closed during December (opens & closes one month earlier than in 2006)
- The Monterey South-Central Groundfish Management Area is open May 1-Nov. 30 this year, and is closed during December (seven-month season – one month longer than in 2006)
- The Morro Bay South-Central Groundfish Management Area is open May 1-Nov. 30 this year, and is closed during December (seven-month season – one month longer than in 2006)
- The California scorpionfish fishery is open year-round in the Southern Groundfish Management Area (three months longer than in 2006).
- A new Cowcod Conservation Areas groundfish regulation summary table has been added (*see article, left*)
- Some groundfish regulations have been reformatted (*see article, left*)
- Sturgeon fishermen are now required to possess a Sturgeon Fishing Report Card (see Section 27.90 for important details). These report cards are provided free of charge.
- The Pacific halibut season runs from May 1-Oct. 31 (one month longer than in 2006), and the minimum size limit has been eliminated.

Be sure to pick up (or download) your copy of the 2007 Ocean Sport Fishing regulations booklet! 🐟

regarding these changes, as well as any additional suggestions for making the regulations clear and enforceable. Suggestions and questions may be e-mailed to AskMarine@dfg.ca.gov, or contact your local DFG office. 🐟

Recreational Ocean Salmon Seasons Set for 2007

by Mary Patyten, Research Writer

The following recreational ocean salmon seasons were ratified by the California Fish and Game Commission in April, and are expected to become effective in May:

California-Oregon border to Horse Mountain (40°05'00" N. lat.) and Humboldt Bay.

All waters of the ocean north of Horse Mountain and in Humboldt Bay are open to salmon fishing from May 5 through Sept. 4, 2007.

Exception: The ocean area surrounding the Klamath River mouth bounded on the north by 41°38'48" N lat. (approximately 6 nautical miles north of the Klamath River mouth), on the south by 41°26'48" N. lat. (approximately 6 nautical miles south of the Klamath River mouth), and extending 3 nautical miles offshore is closed to salmon fishing between Aug. 1 and Aug. 31. No salmon may be taken at any time in ocean waters at the mouths of the Smith and Klamath rivers and during Aug. and Sept. at the mouth of the Eel River.

Between Horse Mountain and Point Arena (38°57'30" N. lat.)

All waters of the ocean between Horse Mountain and Point Arena are open to salmon fishing from Feb. 17 through Nov. 11, 2007.

Between Point Arena and Pigeon Point (37°11'00" N. lat.)

All waters of the ocean between Point Arena and Pigeon Point are open to fishing from April 7 through Nov. 11, 2007.

Between Pigeon Point and the U.S.-Mexico Border.

All waters of the ocean south of Pigeon Point are open to salmon fishing from April 7 through Oct. 7, 2007.

The daily bag limit remains 2 fish per day. The size limit north of Horse Mt. is 24 inches total length; south of Horse Mt. the size limit is 20 inches total length. The one-rod-per-angler restriction north of Pt. Conception is still in effect, and other restrictions on the method of take are also in effect. For more information about ocean salmon fishing, visit the salmon resources Web page at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/oceansalmon.html, call the Recreational Ocean Salmon Fishing hotline at 707-576-3429, or look for the complete, revised *Section 27.80 - Salmon* in the 2007 Ocean and Freshwater Sport Fishing Regulation Supplement booklet due out by June. 🐟

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/marine. This comprehensive information source currently contains well over 2,000 Web pages readily available to the public. If you are new to the Marine Region Web site, we invite you to explore our site to see what a truly valuable resource we have created. For those 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 updates to our Web site:

Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative 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 design and manage a network of marine protected areas (MPAs) 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 up-to-date information about this exciting endeavor, including up-to-date meeting information, public comments and documents for review.

The MLPA Initiative was created as a pilot project along the central coast of California. The California Fish and Game Commission recently adopted regulations to create a new suite of MPAs designed for the central coast. For more information about these MPAs, visit www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa/ccmpas.html.

The second phase of the MLPA Initiative is focused on the north-central coast, from Alder Creek in Mendocino County to Pigeon Point in San Mateo County. For more information on the North Central Coast Project, visit www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa/northcentralcoast.html.

Ocean Salmon Seasons www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/oceansalmon.html: Many recent updates to ocean salmon regulations have been posted on this page. On April 7, the recreational fishery

"Web Site Update" continued on page 11

Creature Feature

the Thornback

by DFG Staff

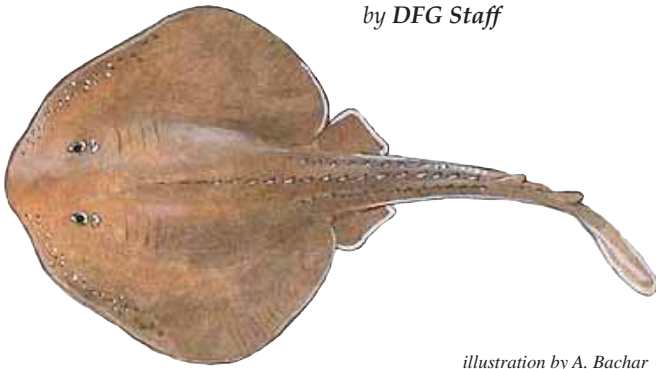


illustration by A. Bachar

Thornbacks are rays that are often found in shallow, nearshore waters, resting on sandy bottoms partially or completely buried in the sediments. They are common off southern California, but rare north of Monterey Bay.

Thornbacks are usually found in water less than 18 ft. deep, but have been recorded to depths of over 400 ft. They are primarily found on the mud and sand bottoms of bays and sloughs, lagoons, coastal beaches, and in and around kelp forests. Thornbacks are known to concentrate in large numbers in certain coastal bays and sloughs, including Elkhorn Slough.

Distinguishing Characteristics

Brown or brownish olive above; belly white or buff. Three rows of strong spines along middle of back and tail; patches of spines on shoulders and near eyes. Body disk wider than it is long. Two dorsal fins (first dorsal fin at mid-tail) and tail fin present; snout broadly rounded. Skin fairly smooth, covered with fine shagreen.

Life History & Other Notes

Thornbacks are livebearers. Mating occurs in the summer with birthing the following summer (usually in August). Litter size ranges from one to 15 pups. They are fairly docile rays, and are easily approached by divers.

This Creature Feature is an excerpt from the California Finfish and Shellfish Identification Book. Visit www.fishingpassport.org, and take the Passport Challenge today! 🐠

<p>Thornback SCIENTIFIC NAME <i>Platyrrhynoides triseriata</i> OTHER COMMON NAMES <i>California thornback,</i> <i>prickleback shark</i> RANGE & HABITAT <i>Monterey Bay southward in sandy</i> <i>and muddy nearshore environments,</i> <i>especially</i> <i>bays and sloughs</i> LENGTH To 3 ft. DIET & SUGGESTED BAIT <i>Eats worms, crabs, shrimp, squid,</i> <i>and small fishes. Squid and anchovies</i> <i>work best for bait</i></p>

“MLPA Initiative” continued from page 2

Task Force in late February. The task force directs funding for the project, prepares information and recommendations for coordinating the management of MPAs with federal agencies, and oversees an iterative process with regional stakeholders and scientists to develop alternative MPA proposals. The new task force members are:

- Susan Golding (Chair), President and Chief Executive Officer of The Golding Group and former Mayor of San Diego
- William W. Anderson, President of Westrec Marina Management, Inc.
- Don Benninghoven, retired as Executive Director of the League of California Cities and later of the City-County-School Partnership
- Meg Caldwell, Director and Senior Lecturer on Law at Stanford Law School’s Environment and Natural Resources Law & Policy Program
- Catherine Reheis-Boyd, Chief Operating Officer and Chief of Staff for the Western States Petroleum Association

“This group represents a wide range of perspectives and is highly regarded for having good judgment,” said Secretary for Resources Mike Chrisman. “Their track record of results and breadth of experience in statewide and national policymaking has already played a huge role in the success of this effort and will continue to do so.”

To introduce interested parties to the second phase of the MLPA process, five public workshops were held in March 2007 from Gualala to Half Moon Bay. More than 175 people participated in the workshops, where questions were answered and input was received on the initiative process.

Nominations were also accepted in April 2007 for members of two advisory groups, the Regional Stakeholder Group and the Science Advisory Team. The Regional Stakeholder Group will provide local knowledge, evaluate existing MPAs, develop MPA proposals and discuss MLPA process issues with various constituent groups. The Science Advisory Team will provide scientific knowledge and expert opinions for use in developing MPAs, and will review draft documents, MPA proposals, and scientific papers using established scientific guidelines.

The date for the first Regional Stakeholder Group meeting has been set for May 22-23 in San Rafael. MLPA Initiative meeting information is posted on the MLPA website at www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa. 🐠

How You Can Participate in the Second Phase of the California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

Blue Ribbon Task Force meetings

- Attend and provide comment at meetings
- Invited stakeholders make presentations
- View live webcasts
- View video and listen to audio tapes archived on the MLPA Web site

Master Plan Science Advisory Team meetings

- Attend and provide comments at meetings
- View video and listen to audio tapes archived on the MLPA website

Statewide Interests Group meetings

- Representatives suggest strategies for public involvement

North Central Coast Project

- Provide comments and suggestions on the North Central Coast Regional Profile
- Work with a member of the Regional Stakeholder Group to ensure various interests and needs are addressed while packages of MPAs are being developed
- Attend and provide comment at regional stakeholder group meetings
- View live webcasts
- View video and listen to audio tapes archived on the MLPA Web site

California Fish and Game Commission meetings

- Attend and provide comments at meetings
- View live webcasts
- View video and listen to audio tapes archived on the MLPA Web site

Workshops

- Participate in workshops

Ongoing

- Review documents for comment on MLPA Web site
- Submit comments, ideas and suggestions to MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov
- Contact MLPA staff (contact information on Web site)

For more information about the MLPA Initiative, please visit www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa, call us at (916) 653-5656 or send mail to (address at right):

The data from this survey have many important implications for how a fishery would be managed if San Miguel Island were opened up for harvest. The Abalone Advisory Group, a constituent group appointed by the Director with approval from the Commission that represents all interested parties, is currently reviewing the results of the survey and discussing possible management options. They will provide recommendations to DFG regarding a total allowable catch for San Miguel Island red abalone, alternatives for allocation between recreational and commercial take, alternate regulations to achieve the total allowable catch and allocation; and potential management, enforcement, and monitoring techniques. The DFG will use this information in recommendations to the Fish and Game Commission if and when a red abalone fishery at San Miguel Island is considered.

The August 2006 survey was a great success despite the foul weather. DFG is currently planning another survey for July-Sept, 2007. The 2007 surveys will include additional randomized points around the island, and may also include a more "invasive" survey to account for younger abalone that may be hidden under rocks.

More information about the 2006 surveys, including reports, protocols, and survey video can be found on the DFG website at http://ftp.dfg.ca.gov/public/r7_mr/aag. Abalone Advisory Group public meeting dates are posted on the Fish and Game Commission webpage at www.fgc.ca.gov/2007/2007submtgs.html.



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by anglers to catch those fish. The program is called the California Recreational Fisheries Survey (CRFS).

The program is designed for quick turnaround of the data so total catch estimates are available within 30 days after the end of the month. And, the program provides catch estimates on a much finer geographic scale than previous surveys. This means that fishery managers can better monitor the recreational catches and make decisions to expand or close fishing seasons as needed more quickly than in the past.

Because the coastline of California is so vast, more than 1,100 miles, and contains many bays, piers, jetties, and marinas where anglers fish, and because anglers fish from private boats and commercial passenger fishing vessels (also known as partyboats), four methods were devised to gather information on the total catch and fishing effort from the Mexican border to the Oregon border.

What are the survey methods?

In addition to the telephone survey, the CRFS program uses:

- A field survey to gather data on catch,
- A field survey to gather data on effort, and
- A telephone survey of commercial passenger fishing vessel operators to gather data on effort from that sector.

The information from all four surveys is used to produce estimates of total catch by marine sport anglers. The estimates are by month, by species, and by area, and are reported in numbers of fish and by weight. The estimates are available on the Recreational Fisheries Information Network (RecFIN) at www.recfin.org.

What is the information used for?

The information is used to produce statistically valid data for fisheries management. Without statistically valid data, managers may close or limit fisheries as a precautionary measure. The data are also used in stock assessments to determine the robustness of the fish stocks fishermen rely on, to determine the most appropriate size limits to provide for reproductive maturity before a fish can be taken, and to set fishing seasons to manage the fisheries so anglers have the most opportunities that the fisheries can provide.

How can anglers become eligible to participate in the telephone survey?

Each sport fisherman can volunteer his or her name and telephone number if asked by the license agent when they purchase a license.

Individual licenses are sold from booklets that contain 20 licenses. Each booklet has a space on the cover for one fisherman's name and telephone number. License agents are instructed to ask each fisherman for that information until one fisherman volunteers their information. Once a name and telephone number is volunteered, the agent does not ask again until a new booklet is opened. Because license agents are often busy with several customers at once, license buyers can help the program by mentioning they are interested in having their name and telephone number included on the booklet cover if the cover is still blank.

The booklet covers are returned to the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) License and Revenue Branch. Then, they are sent to a DFG contractor who enters the information into a database and conducts the telephone survey. In 2006, more than 26,000 phone calls were made from the database. While that seems like a very large number of calls, for various reasons not all calls result in an interview.

How often will a fisherman be contacted?

Once a name and telephone number is in the database, that angler is eligible to be drawn on a monthly basis. All numbers are pooled together and names are randomly selected with a statistical program. This means some people may never be called while others may receive several phone calls a year. It is a process similar to jury duty: some people seem to be called every year while others are never called.

How long will the interview take?

The answer depends on how much fishing the angler has done in the last month: if none to very little---the interview is just a couple of minutes; if a lot of fishing---the interview may take as long as 15 minutes. It is as important to interview those who did not fish at all in the previous month as it is to interview those who fished quite a lot.

Will the information be confidential?

Absolutely. Names, telephone numbers, and interview answers are not shared with anyone.

Can a fisherman ask to be removed from the database?

Yes. However, the more names in the database, the better the information DFG receives for use in managing the sport fisheries.

Why is it important to participate?

The survey helps fishery managers set the most optimal fishing opportunities for anglers and for the resources.

All fisheries in California are managed with the best available scientific information. Because there

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"Survey" continued from page 10

are so many miles of coastline in California and so many private marinas that people fish from, it is impossible to determine the total catch of all the hundreds of species of fish taken by sport anglers from a field survey alone.

The telephone survey is a major component of the process to understand the total catch by anglers and the total amount of effort spent in taking those fish. The four components (field survey for catch, field survey for effort, fisherman telephone survey, and the commercial passenger fishing vessel telephone survey) are all important methods of gathering the information.

Does my participation affect future management?

Absolutely! With every voluntary and confidential interview, DFG has more information to use in managing the fisheries. Without the information, anglers may lose fishing opportunities because of a lack of statistically valid fishery data.

Is the interview fun?

According to the contractor who conducts the telephone interview, "There are a lot people I talk to who are so very grateful that I've called. They tell me their whole life's "fishing" stories - how they got started fishing, how often they fish, the kinds of species they target along with what they actually catch, when and where they buy their licenses - just about everything regarding fishing. They are eager to tell me all this information and consistently thank me for calling."

Participating in an interview gives you not only the chance to re-live your fishing experiences, but to have an impact on the future of fishery management as well! More information about the CRFS program may be found at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/crfs.html.

"Web site update" continued from page 7

for ocean salmon opened from Point Arena to the U.S.-Mexico border. Also, the first April commercial ocean salmon season took place in the Fort Bragg area since 1979 has been approved by the PFMC. Please visit this page to learn about these recent changes, and to gather additional information regarding current California ocean salmon regulations.

The Latest Marine-Related News Headlines
www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/newsreleases2007.html:

This page contains links to all DFG marine-related news releases for 2007, including news about ocean salmon, abalone and sturgeon seasons and regulations. News about ocean fisheries, the MLPA Initiative, and other important items are just a click away on this page.

Here are some of our most popular pages:

California Ocean Sport Fishing Regulations Map
www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/fishing_map.html

2007 Ocean Sport Fishing Regulations
www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/sportfishing_regs2007.html

Laws and Regulations Page
www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/regulations.html:

Fishing Page www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/fishing.html

A-to-Z Directory www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/index_directory.html

Recreational
Groundfish
Regulations Hotline
831-649-2801

Recreational
Ocean Salmon
Regulations Hotline
707-576-3429

Upcoming Commission and Council Meetings

2007 Fish and Game Commission
www.fgc.ca.gov/2007/2007mtgs.html

May 3 - 4
San Diego

June 7 - 8
Truckee

July 12 -13
Bridgeport

August 9 - 10
Santa Barbara

October 11 - 12
Concord

November 1 - 2
Sacramento

2007 Pacific Fishery Management Council
www.pcouncil.org/events/future.html

June 10 - 15
Foster City

September 9 - 14
TBD

November 4 - 9
San Diego

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/marine.

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The Marine Life Management Act

California'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/marine.

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"