

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME REPORT ON REVISED
INSEASON MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS FOR THE 2006 CALIFORNIA
RECREATIONAL FISHING SEASON**

In the Agenda Item F.4.c, CDFG Report, the California Department of Fish and Game provides an inseason proposal for the recreational 2006 groundfish fishery that includes changing the open recreational fishing depths from the Oregon/California border (42° N. lat.) to Lopez Point (46° N. lat) to 0-40 fm.. Under that proposal, the projected impact for widow rockfish in the bycatch scorecard increased to 17.6 although this additional impact was not expected to result in an increase above the OY. The projected increased impact on canary rockfish in the bycatch scorecard (6.2 mt) increased to 7.9 mt -- well under the harvest guideline.

After further review of the risks associated with moving anglers into deeper waters and a review of additional canary depth distribution information, concerns arose over the uncertainty of increased encounters with canary rockfish and widow rockfish above model estimates. Higher than projected canary or widow take could result in later inseason action to decrease the RCA boundary or close the fishery. Given that CDFG would like to prevent such an action, and given the unknown risks associated with the initial proposal, CDFG determined that a more prudent approach was warranted.

This revised supplemental report presents an alternative preferred proposal that provides for increasing the open recreational fishing depths to 30 fm from Cape Mendocino (42° 10' N. lat.) to Lopez Point as well as providing an additional month of fishing in the area between Lopez Point and Point Conception (34° 27' N. lat.). Similar to the previous proposal, this proposal includes increasing the depth in the Southern RLMA to 60 fms in September and October.

The rationale for relaxing the current depth restrictions is the same as that provided in the Agenda Item F.4.c CDFG Report. To summarize, the 2005 season and depth structure had been conservatively crafted using MRFSS data to minimize the possibility that recreational catches of some groundfish species of interest exceeded their harvest guidelines, or OYs. The 2005 California Recreational Fisheries Survey (CRFS) estimates of total recreational take showed that harvest of overfished species was well below their respective California recreational harvest targets, particularly for canary rockfish. CDFG wants to simplify regulations and relieve, where possible, economic burdens that resulted from overly restricted seasons and depths. In addition, CDFG has concerns about the pressure on "data poor" nearshore stocks that have received heavy fishing pressure since 2003 as fishing has been concentrated within 20 fms.

Under the revised proposal, recreational model projection results estimate canary rockfish impacts to be 7.7 mt when the North Central and South Central RLMAs are open to 30 fms. The projected impact for widow rockfish under this revised proposal would be 7.7 mt. All projected catch estimates continue to remain within harvest targets, allocations and harvest guidelines. CDFG continues to track catches on a monthly basis through the CRFS program.

The proposed season and depth structure for this revised alternative, and a table showing its projected impacts are provided below.

California Recreational Inseason Action Revised Alternative Proposal

Changes to Current 2006 Management (SQ):

DEPTHS: North Central and South Central Monterey areas - open 0-30 fm; South area Sep.- Oct. open 0-60 fm

MONTHS: Add October for South-Central Morro Bay

RCG SEASON BY REGION

Region	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
North Region	---	---	---	---	> 30fm Closed							
North Central	---	---	---	---	---	---	> 30fm Closed					
South Central - Monterey	---	---	---	---	---	---	> 30fm Closed					
South Central - Morro Bay	---	---	---	---	> 40fm Closed						---	---
South Region *	---	---	> 60fm Closed									

Notes and key for above table provided below.

NOTES AND KEY:

Shore fishing allowed in all waters in all months

RCG = Rockfish, cabezon, and greenlings

--- = Closed to boat-based fishing for RCG

Lingcod season is open only when RCG is open, except closed [December,] January, February & March for spawning.

[Suboption under this proposal would open lingcod fishing in Dec. in all areas but South Central Morro Bay.]

*In the South Region, CA scorpionfish is open 10 months: 0-60 fm for March-December.

Current 2006 Management Structure (Status Quo)

RCG SEASON BY REGION

Region	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
North Region	---	---	---	---	> 30fm Closed							
North Central	---	---	---	---	---	---	> 20fm Closed					
South Central - Monterey	---	---	---	---	---	---	> 20fm Closed					
South Central - Morro Bay	---	---	---	---	> 40fm Closed					---	---	---
South Region*	---	---	> 60fm Closed						>30 fm		> 60fm	

NOTES AND KEY:

Shore fishing allowed in all waters in all months

RCG = Rockfish, cabezon, greenlings

--- = Closed to boat-based fishing for RCG

Lingcod season is open only when RCG is open, except closed Dec, Jan, Feb & Mar for spawning.

*In all regions including the South Region, the CA scorpionfish season matches the nearshore RF season.

ESTIMATED IMPACTS RESULTING FROM ACTION:

Species		2005 CRFS Catch Estimates (Actual)	Projected 2006 Catch Estimates Under Current Regulations ⁷	Projected 2006 Catch Estimates Under Proposed Changes	HG ¹ , updated impact estimate ² , or HT ³
Rebuilding Species	Bocaccio	38	52	65	65 ²
	Canary	2.3	6.1	7.7	9.3 ¹
	Cowcod	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4 ³
	Darkblotched	0	0	0	0 ²
	Lingcod	300	254	262 ⁶	422 ¹
	POP	0	0	0	0 ²
	Widow	1.7	5.6	7.7	7.7 ²
Yelloweye	1.7	1.5	1.5	3.7 ¹	
Other Target Species	Black RF	180	176	172	171 ³
	Minor NS RF North (40°10' – CA/OR)	19.9	17.3	17.3	17.3 ²
	Minor NS RF South (40°10' – US/Mexico)	430	447 ⁵	480 ⁵	383 ³
	Cabazon	41.8	37.0	40.3	42.1 ⁴
	Greenlings	4.8	6.7	6.8	15.5 ⁴

1 – Harvest Guideline (HG) established in Federal Regulations

2 – Best estimate of recreational impact in 2006

3 – Harvest Target (HT): For black rockfish, this is the state-derived recreational harvest target within the Federal HG for CA recreational and commercial catch, combined. The black rockfish recreational target is derived from CA Fish and Game Commission allocation guidance between recreational and commercial sectors.

4 – Total Allowable Catch (TAC) established in State Regulations.

5 – Includes increased take of California scorpionfish projected under California regulations which now couples fishing for California scorpionfish with fishing for nearshore rockfish, resulting in the same seasons and depths for both.

6 – This is the projected impact for lingcod with December closed.

7 – The estimates for 2006 have been updated since the first inseason proposal for the June 2006 Council meeting was submitted.

In summary, the specific actions proposed related to recreational fishing for rockfish and associated species are:

- Increase recreational fishing depths from Cape Mendocino (42° 10' N. lat.) to Lopez Point to 0-30 fm during open months
- Allow fishing out to 40 fms in October in the area between Lopez Point and Point Conception (34° 27' N. lat.)
- Allow recreational fishing out to 60 fms in the Southern RLMA in September and October consistent with other months

- The season and depths for scorpionfish would be the same as the Southern RLMA season for rockfish, and associates species.

A suboption considered under this proposal would open lingcod fishing in December for all areas but South Central Morro Bay. However, this suboption is not possible as it was not considered in the 2005-2006 EIS.