

Practical Range of Management Specification Options for California's 2009-2010 Commercial and Recreational Groundfish Fisheries

COMMERCIAL

Specific Fishing Area Prohibitions

Proposals for incorporating yelloweye rockfish conservation areas (YRCA) into the management specifications are being considered off Crescent City. Coordinates for proposed commercial YRCAs off Crescent City are the same as the recreational fishery (Appendix 2, Point St. George & South Reef)).

Changes to Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) Lines

Proposals to modify RCA lines to more closely approximate depth contours were reviewed by CDFG and Enforcement staff. These changes are being considered in the following areas:

60 fathom

Morro Bay
Northern Channel Islands (west end)
Santa Cruz Island (Sandstone Point)
Santa Rosa Island (east point)
San Clemente Island (west end)
Catalina Island (west end)
Santa Monica Bay
San Diego

100 fathom

Pioneer Canyon
Westport

250 fathom

Tolo Banks

Minor nearshore rockfish options (North of 40°10' N lat.)

Possible trip limit restructuring or reductions are being considered based on the need to manage blue rockfish. Results of analyses will be provided at the June Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting.

Cabazon

Revisions to cabazon trip limits will be considered by California under its state management process after the Council's final adoption of an optimal yield (OY) at the June 2008 meeting.

Lingcod

- Consider decreasing minimum size limit from 24 inches total length (TL) to 22 inches TL

RECREATIONAL

Inseason management actions were taken at the September 2007 Council meeting to close the Northern and North-Central Management Areas on October 1. Despite the inseason action, the 2.1 mt harvest guideline for yelloweye rockfish was exceeded by 5.9 mt and the 9 mt harvest guideline for canary rockfish was exceeded by 1.9 mt. To prevent the harvest guidelines from being exceeded for yelloweye and canary rockfish in 2008 while maximizing the fishing opportunity for the recreational fishery, in May the depth restriction has been reduced to 20 fathoms (fm) in the Northern and North-Central Management Area.

Figure 1 below depicts the 2009-10 season and depth structure under the “no action alternative.” The projections of catch for the 2008 season indicate that despite the additional inseason constraints on depth, a reduced season length may be necessary later in the year to prevent the harvest guideline for yelloweye rockfish from being exceeded if 2008 catch and effort trends are similar to 2007. Additionally, uncertainties around the impacts of the salmon fishery closure on the groundfish fishery in the north make it more challenging to anticipate angler effort in 2008

Yelloweye rockfish will be the most constraining species for the Northern and North-Central North of Point Arena Management Areas in 2009-2010. Over 98% of the catch of yelloweye rockfish in 2007 was taken North of Point Arena (Mendocino County) so to limit the geographic extent of any action necessary in 2008 to minimize bycatch of yelloweye rockfish, a management line at Point Arena (N Latitude 38°57') will be used to subdivide the North-Central Management Area. The result will be two management areas to be referred to as the North-Central Management Area North of Point Arena and the North-Central Management Area South of Point Arena.

The 2009-2010 season management alternatives for the California recreational fishery have been developed to prevent the harvest guidelines of overfished species and species of concern from being exceeded. Final 2009-2010 harvest guidelines for the overfished species and other species of concern are dependent on the final Optimum Yield (OY) adopted by the Council and will be determined at the June 2008 meeting. Yelloweye rockfish will be the most constraining species for the Northern and North-Central Management Areas north of Point Arena. In the, Morro Bay South-Central Management Area, Monterey South-Central Management Area and North-Central Management Area South of Pt. Arena, blue rockfish and Minor Nearshore Rockfish South will be the most constraining groups. In the Southern Management Area, cowcod and bocaccio are the most constraining species. The depth restriction and season length diagrams below include shallower depth restrictions in the Northern and North-Central Management Area North of Point Arena. Due to the lower mortality on yelloweye rockfish in the North-Central Management Area south of Point Arena, relaxing the depth constraint to 30 fathoms to access species of shelf rockfish that would be included within the aggregate RCG complex bag limit of 10 fish is being considered to reduce impacts on the minor nearshore rockfish group which are likely to be constraining in this area in 2009-2010.

Range of Season and Depth Alternatives

The depth restrictions and season lengths resulting from a 13-mt yelloweye rockfish OY under a the status quo 2007 HG criteria for recreational HG sharing (see Figure 2), and 17-mt yelloweye rockfish OY with a 2006 HG criteria for recreational HG sharing (see Figure 3) provide the extremes of the range of the recreational fishing opportunity. Implementation of yelloweye rockfish conservation areas or reductions in bag limits in the 2009-2010 seasons could be considered secondarily to constrain catches in some areas in order to provide a longer fishing season. Use of the 2006 HG catch sharing alternative as opposed to the present 2007 HG used for apportionment of the recreational harvest guideline for initial analysis would result in appreciably more opportunity in the northern California recreational fishery, making the season length more comparable to that of Oregon and Washington recreational fisheries. For additional information and specifics, please refer to the briefing book document entitled "Yelloweye Rockfish Recreational Harvest Guideline Catch-Sharing Options for the 2009-2010 Regulatory Specifications and Implications for the California Recreational Fishery" for more information.

The depth restrictions and season lengths resulting from the no action alternative (2008 status quo after the September 2007 inseason action) are provided for purposes of comparison to predicted future seasons. Implementation of YRCAs or reduced bag limits possibly could increase the season length in 2009-2010, and additional information on the implications of these management measures for season length will be provided in a CDFG supplemental report at the June Council meeting. At public meetings regarding the 2009-2010 regulations, stakeholder input indicated that anglers were not in favor of a reduction in bag limits given that only a 20% reduction in catch is anticipated under a reduction to a 6-fish bag limit.

In developing the YRCAs proposed in 2008, only areas in state waters could be considered without a Federal Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). Areas in Federal waters are now available for consideration of YRCA placement in 2009-2010 since they will be analyzed in the FEIS for 2009-2010. The input provided at the public meetings and a reanalysis of areas in both state and federal water resulted in development of the YRCAs in appendix 2. Catch savings analysis from these proposed areas are under development and estimates of potential catch savings that would result from their implementation may be provided at the June Council meeting.

The following additional changes to existing recreational management measures are proposed for consideration:

- Increase the bag limit for cabezon from 1 to 2 fish in some management areas.
- Increase the bag limit for bocaccio from 1 to 2 fish in some management areas south of 40-10.
- Increasing the bag limit for kelp greenling from 1 to 2 fish in some management areas.
- Elimination of gear restrictions for sanddabs and other flatfishes.
- Include Petrale sole in the group of sanddabs and other flatfish allowed during season closures.

- Reduce the size limit for lingcod north of Point Arena to 22 inches.
- Modify existing bag limits and bag compositions to better allow for take of unconstrained species and improve avoidance of constraining species (i.e., adjustments to existing RCG complex regulations).

Season and Depth Restriction Diagrams

Note that in the following season diagrams the following apply:

- All divers and shore-based anglers would be exempt from the seasonal closures and depth restrictions for rockfish, greenlings, California scorpionfish, California sheephead, and ocean whitefish and other federal groundfish. (Note: use of boats is permitted while diving for rockfish or other closed but not prohibited species during closed periods, provided no hook and line gear is on board or in possession)
- Exemptions to season restrictions for the retention and possession of leopard sharks in specified bays and estuaries by boat based anglers still apply in 2009-2010.
- The retention and possession of sanddabs and “other flatfishes” are exempt from season and depth restrictions.

Figure 1. Current California recreational fishery seasons and depth constraints, designed under a 23 mt yelloweye OY constraint; a 2.1 mt California yelloweye HG; current 10-fish bag limit and 2007 Status Quo HG Catch Sharing. NOTE: This figure is shown only to depict current seasons and depth structure and is not an option for 2009-10 based on reductions that will be made to the yelloweye OY for 2009-10.

California Adopted 2007-08 Management Option

RCG SEASON BY REGION

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

NOTES AND KEY:

RCG = Rockfish, cabezon, greenlings

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

In the South Region, CA scorpionfish is open 12 months: 0-40 fm January-February, 0-60 fm in March-December.

Figure 2. California recreational seasons and depth restrictions for 2009-10 designed under a 13 mt yelloweye OY (most restrictive OY alternative), a 1.1 mt California yelloweye HG (least beneficial for CA season length); current 10-fish bag limit and 2007 Status Quo HG Catch Sharing.

RCG SEASON BY REGION

Region	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
North Region	---	---	---	---	Open <20fm		---	---	---	---	---	---
North Central N. of Pt. Arena	---	---	---	---	---	<20fm	---	---	---	---	---	---
North Central S. of Pt. Arena	---	---	---	---	---	Open <30fm				---	---	
South Central - Monterey	---	---	---	---	Open <40fm							
South Central - Morro Bay	---	---	---	---	Open <40fm							
South Region	---	---	Open < 60fm									

NOTES AND KEY:

RCG = Rockfish, cabezon, greenlings

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

In the South Region, CA scorpionfish is open 12 months: 0-40 fm January-February, 0-60 fm in March-December.

Projected catch of constrained species for 2009-10 designed under a 13 mt yelloweye OY (most restrictive OY alternative), a 1.1 mt California yelloweye HG derived from 2007 Status Quo HG Catch Sharing (least beneficial for CA season length), and the current 10-fish bag limit.

Species	Projected Catch (mt)
Bocaccio	49.48
Canary	6.98
Yelloweye	1.07
Widow	5.95
Cowcod	0.10

Figure 3. California Recreational Season and Depth Restrictions under the 17 mt yelloweye OY (most liberal OY alternative), a 2.6 mt California yelloweye HG derived from 2006 HG Catch Sharing (most beneficial for CA season structure), and the current 10-fish bag limit.

RCG SEASON BY REGION													
Region	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
North Region	---	---	---	---	Open <20fm			---	---	---	---	---	
North Central N. of Pt. Arena	---	---	---	---	---	Open <20fm		---	---	---	---	---	
North Central S. of Pt. Arena	---	---	---	---	---	Open <30fm				---	---	---	
South Central - Monterey	---	---	---	---	Open <40fm						---	---	---
South Central - Morro Bay	---	---	---	---	Open <40fm						---	---	---
South Region	---	---	Open <60fm									---	---

NOTES AND KEY:

RCG = Rockfish, cabezon, greenlings

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

In the South Region, CA scorpionfish is open 12 months: 0-40 fm January-February, 0-60 fm in March-December.

Projected catch of constrained species for 2009-10 designed under a 17 mt yelloweye OY (most restrictive OY alternative), a 2.6 mt California yelloweye HG derived from 2007 Status Quo HG Catch Sharing (most beneficial for CA season length), and the current 10-fish bag limit.

Species	Projected Catch (mt)
Bocaccio	50.88
Canary	8.43
Yelloweye	2.45
Widow	6.41
Cowcod	0.10

Appendices:

Appendix 1. Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Areas (YRCAs) Previously Proposed in State Waters for 2008

The following are descriptions of the five proposed Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Areas that are contained entirely within state waters and were previously considered for 2008 inseason management purposes. Public comments were received on these proposed areas at the 2008 and 2009-2010 public meetings regarding the proposed implementation of the YRCAs proposed below. Subsequently, the Department has analyzed alternatives including four additional areas that include both federal and state waters (see Appendix 2).

Point St. George YRCA (Del Norte County)

Defined as the area within state waters between a line extending due West through the NOAA buoy off of Point St. George at 41° 51' 00" North latitude and a line extending due West from Castle Rock at 41° 45' 40" North latitude; from shore to the state/federal water boundary.

Punta Gorda YRCA (Humboldt County)

Defined as the area within state waters between a line extending due West from the Punta Gorda Lighthouse at 40° 15' 15" North latitude and a line extending due West from Reynolds Creek mouth at 40° 12' 00" North latitude; from shore to the state/federal water boundary.

Point Delgada YRCA (Humboldt County)

Defined as the area within state waters south of a line extending due West from Yellow Bluff at 40° 02' 35" North latitude and West of a line extending due South from Dead Man's Gulch at 124° 03' 26" West longitude, to the state/federal water boundary.

Bells Point YRCA (Mendocino County)

The area within state waters between a line extending due West from Switzer Rock 39° 38' 50" North latitude and a line extending due West from Kibesillah Rock at 39° 34' 08" North latitude; from shore to the state/federal water boundary.

Point Cabrillo YRCA (Mendocino County)

The area within state waters between a line extending due West from Hare Creek 39° 25' 00" North latitude and a line extending due West from Point Cabrillo 39° 21' 00" North latitude; from shore to the state/federal water boundary.

Appendix 2. YRCAs in State and Federal Water Proposed for 2009-2010

The following areas are proposed YRCAs for possible use in the 2009-2010 season. The savings that would result from implementation of these areas are still being analyzed. These areas may be refined by public input in addition to the results of the catch savings analysis.

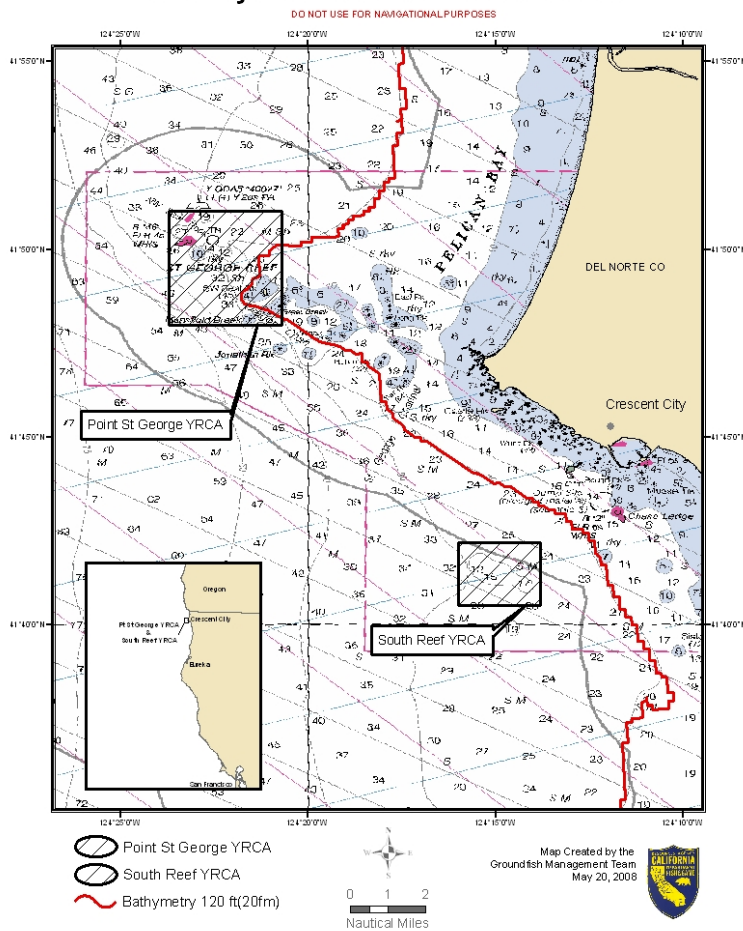
Point St. George

41° 51.00' N. lat. 124° 23.75' W. long.
41° 51.00' N. lat. 124° 20.75' W. long.
41° 48.00' N. lat. 124° 20.75' W. long.
41° 48.00' N. lat. 124° 23.75' W. long.

South Reef

41° 42.20' N. lat. 124° 16.00' W. long.
41° 42.20' N. lat. 124° 13.80' W. long.
41° 40.50' N. lat. 124° 13.80' W. long.
41° 40.50' N. lat. 124° 16.00' W. long.

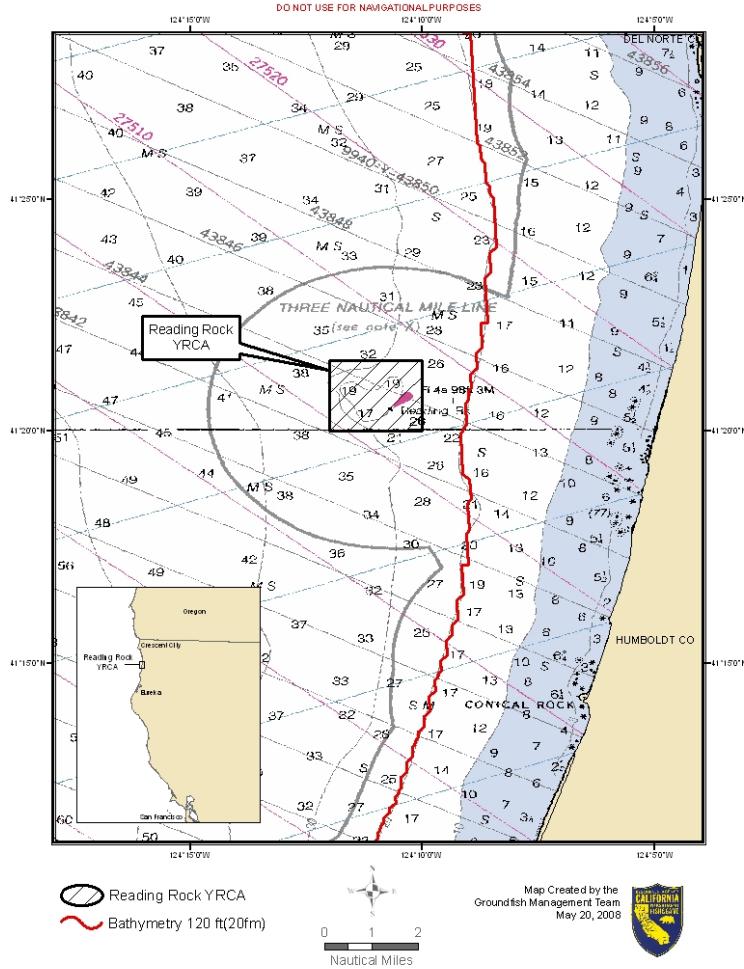
Point St. George & South Reef Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area



Reading Rock

41° 21.50' N. lat. 124° 12.00' W. long.
41° 21.50' N. lat. 124° 10.00' W. long.
41° 20.00' N. lat. 124° 10.00' W. long.
41° 20.00' N. lat. 124° 12.00' W. long.

Reading Rock Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area



Point Delgada (north)

- 39° 59.00' N. lat. 124° 5.00' W. long.
- 39° 59.00' N. lat. 124° 3.00' W. long.
- 39° 57.00' N. lat. 124° 3.00' W. long.
- 39° 57.00' N. lat. 124° 5.00' W. long.

Point Delgada (south)

- 39° 57.00' N. lat. 124° 5.00' W. long.
- 39° 57.00' N. lat. 124° 2.00' W. long.
- 39° 54.00' N. lat. 124° 2.00' W. long.
- 39° 54.00' N. lat. 124° 5.00' W. long.

Point Delgada Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area

