

From: Louie Zimm, Southern California Charter Representative on the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel

To: Pacific Fisheries Management Council

Re: H.9 Consideration of Inseason Adjustments to the Recreational Groundfish Fishery South of 34° 27' N. Latitude

I would like to inform the council regarding a difficult situation that confronts our Southern California fleet and ask for remedy for the 2014 season.

In March of this year (2013), the CDFW mandated size limit on Spotted Sand Bass, Barred Sand Bass and Calico Bass was increased from 12 inches to 14 inches. This regulatory change immediately forced the fleet to a 95% live discard situation that will continue as the biomass alters its size profile over the next few years. Thousands of bass were discarded with few retained by anglers.

Barred Sandbass and Calico Bass were the primary fall back target of recreational fishing boats during the January and February rockfish closure.

In this present situation, until the size distribution of the bass population alters, recreational anglers are left with very little opportunity during the January/February time frame.

The commercial passenger vessel fleet has been hit especially hard by these combined access restrictions. This January and February, the fleet will be facing layoffs, if passengers have no reasonable opportunity to retain any catches. The CPFV fleet is very concerned about the looming loss of their licensed captains as these trained and highly skilled folks will seek other employment and not return to the fleet.

Access to the rockfish resource is already severely restricted due to existing CCA and RCA area closures. We have also been hit with the movement (by in-season action) of the inshore RCA line from 60 to 50 fathoms.

The primary reason for the Jan./Dec. closure is to restrict the catch of bocaccio. However, we now see that the population of bocaccio is rebounding significantly of Southern California. (See Information Agenda Item G.7.a, Supplemental Attachment 5 from September 2013 Briefing Book). This document shows a projected 2015 OFL of 1,444 tons south of 40 deg., 10 min. latitude with a range of alternative 2015 ABC's from 910 to 1380 tons. This contrasts with the previously proposed 2015 OFL of 881 tons. This substantial increase in recommended OFL is due to greatly increased recruitment.

The scorecard from F9b_SUP_GMT_JUN2013BB shows a projected impact of 125 tons by the California recreational fishery for 2013. This is 23.5% under the allowed attainment of the 163.5 metric ton allocation for this fishery. This ACL is based on a total harvest specification of only 320 tons for the entire bocaccio fishery.

We assert that the impact of a January/February opening of the recreational fishery for rockfish in the Southern California bight would not be sufficient to attain our present ACL and would have no chance of attaining future increased ACLs of this rapidly expanding population of bocaccio.

We also maintain that our present restriction to waters shallower than 50 fathoms greatly restricts our access to the majority of the bocaccio population. This, in conjunction with the bocaccio sub-limit of 3 fish will continue to restrict our impacts.

Please make an in-season adjustment to allow a recreational fishery for groundfish south of 34° 27' N. Latitude, during the months of January and February 2014. If this is not possible, at the very least, please consider weekend openings for recreational anglers to access rockfish off Southern California during January and February. This would allow our fleet to provide some sort of employment to our men and women during January and February of 2014.



www.californiasportfishing.org

October 8, 2013

Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC)
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101

- Portland, Oregon 97220

Dear PFMC,

The Sportfishing Association of California represents the majority of the commercial passenger sportfishing vessels in Southern California. This fleet is an important element to the economic welfare of the harbors they operate from. The purpose of this letter is to bring to your attention a serious issue that is on the horizon for our boats.

This past spring the California Department of Fish and Wildlife changed the length of retainable kelp and sand bass in our state from 12" to 14". This resulted in an almost "no take" situation with thousands of bass released for a handful retained. The end result was the boats had to shift to rockfish or highly migratory species while they wait for the bass population to increase in age and size. This will take several years.

At issue, is in January and February there will be no highly migratory species available, there will be no legitimate bass fishery, and the rockfish closure will be in effect. We are quite concerned that our customers will not have anything to go fishing for and that the boats will be shut down for nine weeks. We stand to lose many of our trained licensed Captains through layoffs and we run the risk of them not returning.

The purpose of the January/February rockfish closure was to assist the rebuilding process for bocaccio. The facts indicate the population has rebounded well and we do not believe there is any concern that we will reach the ACL as the recovery continues. We would therefore respectfully request consideration be given to opening rockfishing in Southern California for the months of January and February. Additionally, we recommend strong consideration be given to moving the RCA lines back into 60 fathoms. The cowcod population is rebounding and through avoidance and descending device use we believe the recovery is safe with little impact by recreational fishing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ken Franke". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Ken Franke
President

October 9, 2013

To Council Chairman Lowman and Council Members,

Dear Members:

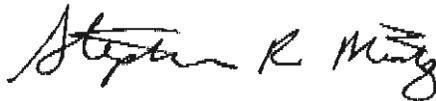
My name is Stephen Mintz and I have been a full time commercial fisherman since 1979. I have fished ground fish including halibut, white sea bass, and rockfish, both set gill-net and hook and line since 1984. Presently I fish albacore, swordfish drift-net and set gill-net for bank rock. Most of my set gill-net fishing has been off the central California coast. I have seen the regulations change tremendously, going from no limits to what we have today.

I have been targeting bank rockfish with my set gill-nets since 1998. These nets fish very clean with zero mammal or sea bird interactions. Also zero take on cowl cod, yellow eye, and other species of concern, with minimal interactions of Boccaccio, Chili Pepper, and other rockfish.

The Bank rockfish population appears to be healthy and even a very experienced Hook and Line Fisherman has great difficulty in harvesting any substantial amounts, leaving only the Drag-Net and Set-Gill Net as the harvest tools.

I am requesting for any reasonable increase in catch limits for the Bank Rockfish in open access, That the council would feel comfortable with.

Thank you,



Stephen Mintz