

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON
CALIFORNIA SCORPIONFISH AND BLACK ROCKFISH

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) provides the following update on the progress of the 2014 California scorpionfish fishery as well as potential modifications to the 2015-2016 recreational fishery for California scorpionfish and black rockfish.

California Scorpionfish

On November 15, 2014 CDFW closed the recreational and commercial California scorpionfish fishery statewide due to projected attainment of a federally established annual catch limit (ACL) (Agenda Item J.8.b, Supplemental CDFW Report). Impacts in the recreational fishery were higher than projected due to an unexpected increase in directed targeting and effort during these months.

Given that the ACL in 2015 and 2016 will be decreasing (114 mt and 111 mt, respectively) modifications to the recreational fishery will likely be necessary to ensure that harvest stays within allowable limits. Table 1 provides a summary of monthly landings by sector during 2011 and 2014. The CDFW is committed to working with both industry and National Marine Fisheries Service to ensure that necessary measures are taken so stay within established limits.

Black Rockfish

During every biennial specifications and management process a decision must be made on which years of data should be used and what the cut-off date for new information should be. It has been acknowledged that there are drawbacks to using older data to project impacts in future years, yet this approach was chosen in order to increase the likelihood of meeting a January 1 implementation date. As new data become available, they can be taken into consideration and changes to management measures made where appropriate.

For the 2015 and 2016 process, the “most recent year” of data used in modeling the recreational fishery was 2012. Recent data for black rockfish indicate that effort in 2013 and 2014 is much higher than in previous years and higher than what was accounted for during 2015-2016 regulation development (Table 2). If this higher effort continues into 2015 and 2016 and/or other circumstances result in further increases, the recreational allocation for black rockfish may be exceeded.

Given the most recent information on fishery performance, CDFW recommends implementing a 5-fish sub-bag limit on black rockfish within the overall 10-fish bag limit for rockfish, cabezon, and greenling. A 5-fish sub-bag limit is expected to spread the fishing opportunity throughout the year while keeping mortality within allowable limits.

Table 1. Recreational and commercial landings (in metric tons) of California scorpionfish, 2011-2014.

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2011	Rec	4.5	6.1	4.2	7.2	7.5	5.6	17.9	17.4	8.7	7.4	4.7	8.4	99.6
	Com	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.4	1.2	0.9	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.6	4.6
2012	Rec	7.9	9.3	3.7	6.7	12.2	16.7	7.7	29.7	9.7	6.8	2.9	3.0	116.3
	Com	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.6	0.9	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.1	3.9
2013	Rec	3.2	9.0	3.2	5.9	17.1	22.3	27.4	8.9	3.3	3.5	5.1	3.3	112.2
	Com	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.8	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	2.7
2014	Rec	8.0	5.1	2.3	5.2	19.3	37.4	19.9	10.9	7.4				115.5
	Com	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.3						0.9

Table 2. Recreational mortality of black rockfish (in metric tons) in California by district and month, 2011-2013.

2011													
District	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.5	11.4	37.2	41.3	43.2	14.7	16.0	7.2	6.4	178.5
Southern				0.0									0.0
						0.0	0.0						0.0
Central		0.0	0.0		0.3	0.5	7.2	2.8	1.8	1.5	0.9	1.2	16.3
SF					0.2	3.9	4.1	10.2	5.0	6.6	6.2	5.0	41.2
Mendo				0.3	2.3	4.4	5.4	5.0	2.1	1.4	0.1	0.1	21.1
Northern	0.6	0.0		0.2	8.6	28.4	24.6	25.2	5.8	6.5		0.0	99.9

2012													
District	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	21.9	27.1	56.8	43.3	22.3	25.4	9.4	3.9	210.4
Southern												0.0	0.0
							0.0				0.0		0.0
Central		0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	2.1	3.0	5.1	3.8	3.3	2.4	0.9	24.9
SF					0.0	5.0	14.8	11.4	12.6	12.7	4.7	3.0	64.2
Mendo			0.2	0.0	3.3	3.5	11.1	7.7	1.7	0.5	2.3		30.4
Northern	0.0			0.0	14.3	16.4	27.8	19.2	4.2	9.0			90.9

2013													
District	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
	0.0	0.0	1.6	1.5	17.8	39.4	74.5	100.0	53.2	33.9	24.7	15.9	362.6
Southern													
			0.0	0.0							0.0		0.0
Central	0.0		0.1		6.8	6.5	8.3	8.0	6.1	8.3	5.4	5.9	55.4
SF		0.0	0.0	0.0		14.7	37.8	36.9	28.4	19.4	17.5	9.9	164.5
Mendo			1.4	0.0	3.6	2.4	8.5	15.9	6.3	1.3	0.4	0.0	39.8
Northern		0.0	0.1	1.5	7.4	15.8	19.9	39.3	12.4	5.0	1.4	0.1	102.9