

SUMMARY OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
GROUNDFISH MANAGEMENT OPTION HEARING

Date:	July 25, 2002	Hearing Officer:	Ms. Marija Vojkovich
Location:	California Department of Fish and Game Office, Los Alamitos, California	<u>Council Members:</u>	Mr. Don Hansen Mr. Rod McInnis
Attendance:	28 public, 17 NMFS and CDFG	GMT Member:	Mr. Tom Barnes
Testifying:	17	CDFG Groundfish Staff:	Ms. Carrie Wilson
<u>Organizations Represented:</u> Newport Dory Fleet, Southern California Trawlers Association, United Anglers of Southern California, Sportfishing Association of California, Port San Luis Commercial Fishermen's Association, Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's Association			

Synopsis of Testimony

Of the 17 people testifying:

- Eight spoke primarily about the commercial fishery.
- Seven spoke about the recreational fishery.
- Two spoke about the regulatory process in general.

Representatives for both the commercial and recreational components of the southern California groundfish fishery expressed concern the management options for 2003 were based on survey data collected north of Point Conception. Survey data collected north of Point Conception does not reflect the status of the groundfish resources in southern California. They also indicated lingcod numbers were very high and there is no survey for them in the south.

Recreational Comments

Support for option 3.

Support for a nearshore recreational/commercial split of 84/16.

Add an option to allow the take of four vermillion rockfish in addition to the 10 rockfish bag limit. This action would take some fishing pressure off the nearshore groundfish stocks. South of Point Conception, red rockfish are not found in the same locations as bocaccio.

Add an option that would reduce the current bag limit to five rockfish and five sculpin, but increase the amount of time on the water (all-year-round fishery).

Support for a bag limit of three lingcod and consider a minimum size range from 22- to-24 inches (option 3).

Support for the United Anglers proposal which calls for a shelf closure between 40 and 70 fathoms for shelf rockfish. A handout was not distributed to provide more information regarding the United Anglers' proposal.

Support for a status quo option regarding the current bag limit, minimum size requirements for nearshore groundfish, and season closures. The proposed 2003 options would put too many people out of business.

Commercial Fishery Comments

Non-Trawl Options for Commercial Fixed Gear:

Several individuals expressed concern that the proposed management options presented tonight did not include trip limit allowances. They did not feel comfortable supporting any of the options presented until they knew how much fish could be landed.

There was support for option four (Cape Mendocino to Mexico Border), but those proponents would also like clarification regarding the trip limit allowance.

Support for an allowance of shelf species (400 pounds/month) harvested within the nearshore management zone.

The allocation for the nearshore fishery should be based on the historical catch record not the most recent trend.

No support for option one. There is not enough data to support a 10- to-150 fathom closure in southern California.

Add an option that would allow commercial fishermen to take an allotment of those species that are currently reserved specifically for recreational anglers: barred sand bass and kelp bass.

Support for the nearshore recreational/commercial split of 50/50.

Create a slot size limit option for cabezon and kelp greenling.

Add an option to increase the recreational and commercial optimum yield for lingcod.

Slope fishermen do not want the shelf closure to extend beyond 150 fathoms. They do not catch bocaccio beyond 150 fathoms in southern California.

Reducing the nearshore management zone to less than 20 fathoms would increase the interaction rate between the recreational and commercial components of the nearshore fishery.

There is a small artisanal hook-and-line fishery for Pacific sanddab at Catalina Island. Their catch is sold to the Island restaurants. The current shelf closure has put them out of business. A representative (Mr. Joel Burt) of the fishery provided a handout that summarized the sanddab fishery at the Island. See attachment.

Nongroundfish Trawl Options:

Will the state's exempted trawl fishery be required to conform to the requirements of the NMFS's limited entry trawl fishery. If so, trawl fishermen targeting California halibut should not be required to use an excluder, because they use a large mesh (8-1/2") net when targeting halibut. Also, the exempted fishery will soon have observers on board to document any bycatch.

General Public Comment

In the future, data collected by nongovernment organizations should be considered when making management decisions.

The department needs to do a better job of announcing these public meetings in advance.

No flag salute at the beginning of the meeting, very un-American.

The federal groundfish plan does not address bycatch adequately.

Written Statements (attached)

Mr. Joel Burt provided a written report regarding an artisanal hook-and-line fishery for Pacific sanddab at Catalina Island.

PMFC
08/22/02

Joel D. Burt – Gregory J. Wenger
(addresses below)

July 23, 2002

TO: Department of Fish and Game
Pacific Fishery Management Council
Council Operations

FROM: Joel D. Burt
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Commercial License #48785
Vessel #39368

Gregory J. Wenger
301 Whittley Avenue
Post Office Box 2351
Avalon, CA 90704
(310) 510-1742
Commercial License #86433
Vessel # 31171

SUBJECT: Exemption for Commercial Sand Dab Fishing, Santa Catalina Island

As an introduction, we, Joel Burt and Gregory Wenger, are commercial fisherman catching sand dabs off of Santa Catalina Island. We, as sand dab fishermen using rod and reel, hook and line, have no impact on rockfish. Mr. Burt is retired and has been fishing sand dabs for four years to supplement his income; and Mr. Wenger has been fishing for three years to support his family. Preceding Joel Burt, Burl Foster fished sand dabs on Catalina for 18 years in the same manner. All sand dabs we catch are sold to Armstrong's Restaurant in Avalon, on Santa Catalina Island, and we catch and sell only what the restaurant calls for.

We catch 99% sand dabs; less than 1% of our catch is fish other than sand dabs. A few times a year we catch other sellable fish. We fish hook and line on the sand bottom of Santa Catalina Island. We are not fishing around rockfish habitats, and are not hurting the ecosystems.

On July 1, 2002, some major closures occurred that effect rock fishing and depth of fishing in waters past 20 fathoms. We agree with the rockfish closures. However, the proposed closures threaten our sand dab fishing and threaten to put us out of business.

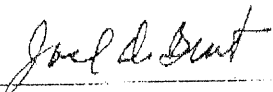
To the extent you go forward with closures that affect our fisheries, we are asking you, the Council, and the Department of Fish and Game, for an exemption or experimental license to allow us to continue fishing sand dabs off of Santa Catalina Island with rod and reel, hook and line, and would welcome observers on our boats.

Gregory Wenger is on the Catalina MLPA panel, a 12-member panel working with the Department of Fish and Game to help protect and place closures around Santa Catalina Island. We have been working with the Department of Fish and Game on this project since March 2002. We are under the impression we will have something to say about any closures around the island, and that is why we formed the panel and the Department of Fish and Game agreed to work with us.

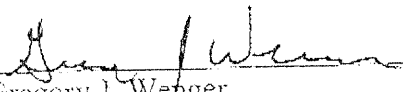
Attached, for your information, is a copy our fishing history.

Thank you very much for your time and for considering our proposal.

Respectfully,



Joel D. Burt



Gregory J. Wenger

Joel Burt
L 48785 - V39368

Fishing History

Year	Days Fished	Income	Sand dabs in Pounds	Rockfish in Pounds	Other in Pounds
1999	63	\$9,004	2,705 lbs	65 lbs	0
2000	61	\$8,013	2,336 lbs	62 lbs	67 lbs Mako shark
2001	61	\$9,140	2,778 lbs	0	34 lbs Mako shark
2002	23	\$3,312	1,019 lbs	0	0
Total			8,838 lbs	127 lbs	101 lbs

Gregory Wenger
L86433 - V31171

Year	Days Fished	Income	Sand dabs in Pounds	Rockfish in Pounds	Other in Pounds
2000	(records forthcoming; unavailable at this time)				
2001	192	\$29,407.38	12,125 lbs	0	42 lbs Mako shark
2002	122	\$7,421.88	5,360 lbs	134 lbs	0
Total			17,485 lbs	134 lbs	42 lbs

