

POSSIBLE CHANGES TO THE 2008 CALIFORNIA RECREATIONAL GROUND FISH FISHERY REGULATORY SPECIFICATIONS

At the September 2007 Council meeting, the Council took action to close portions of California's recreational groundfish fishery on October 1, 2007 due to concerns that the harvest guidelines for canary and yelloweye rockfish would be exceeded if the fishery continued. Subsequently, the state took conforming action to close the North and North Central management areas and California will be monitoring recreational catches for the remainder of the year to determine the total take of these species. To prevent exceeding canary and yelloweye rockfish harvest guidelines for the California recreational fishery in 2008, the CDFG will develop alternative management options for the 2008 season and request conforming actions in federal waters at the March 2008 Council meeting. The CDFG will be analyzing and considering use of some or all of the following management actions to prevent the harvest guidelines from being exceeded for these species in the 2008 recreational fishery:

- Reduction of bag limits in the Northern Management Region.
- Shallower depth restrictions in the Northern and North-Central Management Regions to reduce the by-catch of these restricted species which are found in greater abundance at depths over 20fm.
- Shortened fishing seasons in the Northern (as short as 2 – 3 months).and North Central Management Regions (as short as 4 – 5 months)
- Yelloweye rockfish conservation areas (temporary no take areas) where there is high catch of this species.
- Use of the existing management line at Point Arena (Mendocino County), south of which the catch of yelloweye rockfish is greatly decreased.

These measures will be evaluated using the complete 2007 California Recreational Fishery Survey (CRFS) data for the Northern and North-Central Management Regions updated to December 31st standards (see the June 2007 Council meeting Agenda Item B.3, Recreational Fishery Information Network Data and Sampling Refinements.) In addition, the CRFS program has proposed shifts in district boundary lines used in estimates and the analyses will also incorporate these resulting changes in catch estimates. The changes to the catch estimation methods and district boundary lines will change the catch estimates used as baseline data in the groundfish catch projection model (RecFISH). Substitution of the current CRFS catch estimates with the revised CRFS estimates as baseline data will alter the output of the RecFISH model from the present estimations and thus the outcome of proposed management actions modeled in RecFISH. Incorporation of the revised CRFS data prior to modeling management options will ensure that the data used in modeling the 2008 season is comparable to the data that will be used in inseason catch tracking in 2008. Therefore, it is prudent to use the revised CRFS data (available after December 31st) to model the 2008 season.