

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

COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL

Specific Fishing Area Prohibitions

Proposals for incorporating yelloweye rockfish conservation areas into the management specifications are still being developed.

Changes to Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) lines

Proposals from industry to modify RCA lines to more closely approximate depth contours are being reviewed by CDFG and Enforcement staff.

COMMERCIAL

Most commercial groundfish fishery options will be covered under the general range of federal commercial options. For the nearshore fishery and cabezon, greenling and California sheephead, regional allocation or setting of regional TACs will not be considered for 2009-2010.

Commercial management options will implement regional needs where possible and include the following considerations:

Cabezon, Greenlings, and California Sheephead:

- Cabezon:
 - Consider even distribution of trip limits throughout season
 - Consider increasing trip limits for 2010
- Greenling, and Sheephead: Status quo trip limits

Nearshore Rockfish and Lingcod:

Coastwide:

- Consider reduced RCA closure (i.e., allow access to deeper water) between OR/CA border and Pt. Conception (34°27' N latitude)
- Lingcod:
 - Status quo spawning closure is Nov-Apr.
 - Consider shortening duration of nesting closure when nearshore is open (i.e., allow lingcod retention in Nov, Dec, Jan or Feb)
 - Consider decreasing minimum size limit from 24 inches TL to 22 inches TL

North of 40°10' N latitude:

Minor Nearshore Rockfish options:

- Near-status quo trip limit options
 - Consider lower limits, removing blue rockfish from the black/blue rockfish sub-limit, and re-structuring the black, blue, and minor nearshore rockfishes trip limit matrix.
 - Consider shorter season

South of 40°10' N latitude:

- Keep status quo 10-month season with Mar-Apr closure
- Shallow nearshore rockfish options:
 - Near-status quo trip limit options
- Deeper nearshore rockfish options:
 - Near-status quo options with different limits seasonally north and south of Pt. Conception (34°27' N latitude) due to regional preferences in seasonal opportunities.
 - Consider shorter season
- California scorpionfish:
 - Increase trip limits all open months

RECREATIONAL

The California Department of Fish and Game is proposing a range of options for structuring the 2009-2010 recreational groundfish fisheries with the intent of remaining within harvest guidelines (HGs), particularly for species under rebuilding plans. This range of options includes the following:

- Continued non-retention of cowcod, canary and yelloweye rockfish statewide (retention of canary rockfish may be allowed in limited numbers in a portion of the state if the OY is increased)
- Management specifications which are structured around constituents' preferred fishing seasons while still providing as much fishing opportunity as possible
- Alternatives that allow for more access to deeper waters paired with bycatch reduction tools (hot spots, gear restrictions, barotrauma reduction devices)
- Use of closed seasons, depth restrictions, bag limits, and size limits in combination to manage recreational catch to specified harvest limits
- Inclusion of Point Arena as a management line within the North Central Management Area

Management Specifications Under Consideration for 2009-2010
(Seasons and Depth Restrictions)

NORTH COAST MANAGEMENT AREA

(between 40°10' N lat. and 42° 00' N lat.)

Seasons: 2 - 9 months open for groundfish fishing

Depth restrictions: 0-20 fm, 0-30 fm

Status Quo: 8 months at 0-20 fm (Based on March 2008 inseason changes)

NORTH-CENTRAL COAST MANAGEMENT AREA

(between 40° 10' N lat. and 37° 11' N lat.)

Seasons: 5 - 9 months open for groundfish fishing

Depth restrictions: 0-20 fm, 0-30 fm, 0-40 fm

Status Quo: 6 months at 0-20 fm (Based on March 2008 inseason changes)

MONTEREY SOUTH-CENTRAL COAST MANAGEMENT AREA

(between 37° 11' N lat. and 36° 00' N lat.)

Seasons: 5 - 9 months open for groundfish fishing

Depth restrictions: 0-20 fm, 0-30 fm, 0-40 fm

Status Quo: 7 months at 0-40 fm

MORRO BAY SOUTH-CENTRAL COAST MANAGEMENT AREA

(between 36° 00' N. lat. and 34° 27' N. lat.)

Seasons: 5 - 9 months open for groundfish fishing

Depth restrictions: 0-20 fm, 0-30 fm, 0-40 fm

Status Quo: 7 months at 0-40 fm; California scorpionfish retention during all months when rockfish open

SOUTH COAST MANAGEMENT AREA

(between 34° 27' N. lat. and CA/Mexico border)

Seasons: 6-11 months open for groundfish fishing; California scorpionfish: 8-12 months; status quo 12 months

Depth restrictions: 0-40 fm and 0-60 fm; status quo 0-40 fm and 0-60 fm. Allow California scorpionfish retention during all months when rockfish open.

Status Quo: 10 months, 0-60 fm groundfish fishery; California scorpionfish retention 2 months at 0-40 fm, and 10 months at 60 fm,

North, Central and South RLMAs

- Lingcod nesting closure: 3-4 months (for spawning period within January, February, March and December)
- Status Quo: Lingcod nesting closure is Jan-Mar and December

Bag limits

Within the 20 finfish bag limit, the following ranges would be analyzed with the option for differential bag limits for boat and shore anglers and differences between regions (with diver limits set to those of shore anglers):

- Lingcod 1-3 fish, status quo: 2 fish
- RCG (all rockfish, cabezon, kelp greenling, and rock greenling) keep as 10 per bag with following sub-bag limits:
 - Bocaccio south of 40°10' N. lat. 1-2 fish, Status quo: 1 fish
 - Bocaccio north of 40° 10' N. lat. Status quo: 2 fish
 - Cabezon 1-2 fish; Status quo: 1 fish
 - Greenlings (all species of genus *Hexagrammos*) 1-3 fish, Status quo: 2 fish
 - Black Rockfish, Status quo: 10 fish
 - Blue Rockfish, Status quo: 10 fish
 - Lingcod 2-3 fish, Status quo: 2 fish
 - Canary Rockfish 1 fish, Status quo: 0 retention
- RCG (all rockfish, cabezon, kelp greenling, and rock greenling) first 5-10 fish per bag with the following sub-bag limits:
 - Cabezon 1-2 fish, Status quo: 1 fish
 - Greenlings (all species of the genus *Hexagrammos*) 1-3 fish, Status quo: 2 fish
 - Lingcod 1-3 fish, Status quo: 2 fish not included in 10 fish RCG limit
 - Canary, cowcod, and yelloweye rockfish allowed within 5-10 fish limit, Status quo: prohibited
- California scorpionfish, Status quo: 5 fish

Size limits

- Lingcod 22-26 inches TL, Status quo: 24 inches
- Bocaccio Status quo: 10 inches TL
- Cabezon Status quo: 15 inches TL
- Kelp greenling (and other species of the genus *Hexagrammos*), Status quo: 12 inches TL
- California scorpionfish Status quo: 10 inches TL

Filet size limits

- Lingcod filet size changed if size limit changed; Status quo: 16 inches and must bear an intact 1 inch square patch of skin
- All others: Status quo

Gear restrictions

- Rockfish Status quo: limit of 2 hooks and 1 line
- Lingcod Status quo: limit of 2 hooks and 1 line
- “Other flatfish” no hook or weight restrictions when rockfish is closed, Status quo: limit of up to 12 hooks, “Number 2” or smaller, which measure no more than 11 mm point to shank, and up to 2 pounds of weight per line
- Require the possession (one per private vessel and two per CPFV) and use of a “descending assistance device” to minimize barotrauma, Status quo: none required

Proposed Inclusion of Pt. Arena as a Management Line

- Pt. Arena would be included as a management line within the North-Central Management Regions above or below which management actions could be taken or differing regulations could be established.

Specific Fishing Area Prohibitions

Farallon Islands:

Status quo: Waters less than 10 fm in depth around the Farallon Island and Noonday Rock are closed at all times for all groundfish species. Divers and shore-based anglers are NOT exempt from these area closures.

Cordell Bank:

Status Quo: Waters of Cordell Bank less than 100 fm in depth are closed at all times for all groundfish species except Pacific Sanddabs and Other Flatfish.

Cowcod Conservation Areas:

Status quo: Waters within the areas designated as the Cowcod Conservation Areas are closed to fishing for groundfish at all times except for Pacific sanddabs and Other Flatfish and in waters shallower than the 20 fm depth contour, California scorpionfish, nearshore rockfish, cabezon, greenlings, California sheephead, ocean whitefish, and lingcod may be taken.

Other Rebuilding Stock Rockfish Conservation Areas

Other Groundfish Areas of Concern are currently under consideration due to high take of rebuilding species.

Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Areas (regulations apply to boat-based anglers only, exceptions apply for Pacific sanddabs and Other flatfish, and shore-based anglers and divers):

Point St George Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (Del Norte County)

The area between a line extending from shore due West through the NOAA buoy off Point St. George at 41° 51' 00" North latitude and a line extending due West from Castle Rock at 41° 45' 40" North latitude are closed to fishing for all federal managed Groundfish species at all times.

Punta Gorda Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (Humboldt County)

The area 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 are closed to fishing for all federal managed Groundfish species at all times.

Point Delgada Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (Humboldt County)

The area between 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 are closed to fishing for all federal managed Groundfish species at all times.

Bells Point Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (Mendocino County)

The area 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; are closed to fishing for all federal managed Groundfish species at all times.

Point Cabrillo Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area (Mendocino County)

The area between a line extending due West from Hare Creek 39° 25' 00" North latitude south and a line extending due West from Point Cabrillo 39° 21' 00" North latitude are closed to fishing for all federal managed Groundfish species at all times.

Additional YRCAs in the Northern and North-Central Management Area or other Management Areas to the south may be identified in addition to the areas noted above for inclusion in the 2009-2010 regulatory specifications, pending additional analysis. Conforming actions will be pursued in federal waters for areas outside state waters that are found to result in high catch of yelloweye rockfish.