

## CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS FOR 2017

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) provides the following update regarding yelloweye rockfish mortality and the potential need for inseason changes to California recreational groundfish regulations for 2017.

Yelloweye rockfish encounters in California's recreational fishery are tracked weekly during the open season to prevent catches from exceeding the harvest guideline (HG) of 3.9 mt. Catch estimates from the California Recreational Fishery Survey (CRFS) are available approximately six weeks after a month of fishing is complete. Staff tally the number of encounters from weekly sample information from CRFS field staff, and create a relationship of sample data to monthly estimates from past years to determine an Anticipated Catch Value (ACV). The ACV is used as a proxy indicator of catch during the time that CRFS estimates are not yet available for a fishing month. Once CRFS estimates become available, that information replaces the weekly ACV value. The ACV represents the best available information to inform cumulative catch to date; however, CDFW notes there is inherent uncertainty in the ACV values and resulting estimates can be higher or lower than the ACVs.

On August 24, 2017, CDFW staff alerted NMFS that cumulative catches in 2017 were tracking high compared to recent years. While some increases were expected in response to increases in allowable fishing depths in most areas of the state and longer seasons in some areas, monthly catches in July and August surpassed the highest levels seen in prior years and exceeded expectations.

In response to these high encounters, CDFW issued a press release<sup>1</sup> on August 25, 2017 reminding all anglers to avoid yelloweye rockfish and to return any encountered fish with the use of a descending device to minimize injury and mortality.

The latest catch and projection information, through September 10, 2017 suggests that 3.59 mt of yelloweye rockfish have been taken to date (Table 1). Unless action is taken to reduce encounters, current projections suggest that by year's end, the fishery would take 4.54 mt; which is above the California yelloweye HG.

Following from past industry recommendations, CDFW's priority is to maintain open fishing seasons for as many months as possible. CDFW will work with industry representatives this week on possible inseason alternatives to reduce allowable fishing depths that would provide for the longest seasons possible while staying within harvest limits.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://cdfgnews.wordpress.com/2017/08/25/anglers-reminded-to-avoid-yelloweye-rockfish/>

Table 1. Summary of projected impacts for yelloweye rockfish through September 10, 2017 and projected impacts through 2017 assuming status quo seasons and depths. Data are preliminary.

	<b>ACV</b>	<b>CRFS Estimate</b>	<b>Best Estimate of Catch</b>
<b>January</b>	0.00	0	0
<b>February</b>	0.00	0	0
<b>March</b>	0.04	0.04	0.04
<b>April</b>	0.03	0.05	0.05
<b>May</b>	0.26	0.32	0.32
<b>June</b>	0.54	0.52	0.52
<b>July</b>	0.75	0.79	0.79
<b>August</b>	1.56		1.56
<b>September (through Sept 10)</b>	0.31		0.63
<b>October</b>			0.37
<b>November</b>			0.13
<b>December</b>			0.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.59</b>		<b>4.54</b>