

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON 2019-2020
RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL MANAGEMENT MEASURES

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) offers the following recommendations to assist Council consideration in deciding a Final Preferred Alternative (FPA) for season structure and management measures in California for 2019-2020. CDFW supports adopting the PPA identified in April 2018 (Agenda Item F.5.a, Supplemental CDFW Report 1) as the FPA with some minor modifications. The recommended FPA is described below.

Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCA)

Revisions to Waypoints

CDFW recommends adopting the PPA as the FPA (with no modifications) for revisions to waypoints as summarized below.

- The 75 fm depth contour is proposed to be modified at Santa Cruz Island in southern California.
- The 100 fm depth contour is proposed to be modified in the following northern California areas:
 - Spanish Canyon
 - Delgada Canyon
- The 125 fm depth contour is proposed to be modified in the following areas:
 - Delgada Canyon in northern California,
 - Cordell Bank northwest of San Francisco,
 - Point Ano Nuevo in central California,
 - San Miguel Island in southern California,
 - Anacapa Island in southern California.
- The 150 fm depth contour is proposed to be modified in the following southern California areas:
 - San Miguel Island
 - Anacapa Island in southern California.

Cowcod Conservation Area (CCA) Depth Restrictions

No modifications to the PPA are proposed. CDFW supports increasing the allowable fishing depths for commercial fixed gear and recreational fisheries in the Western CCA from 20 fm to 40 fm. With the significant improvement in the 2013 cowcod stock status, total mortality far below the ACL in recent years, and NMFS hook-and-line survey data demonstrating zero cowcod impacts in the depths and region being proposed for opening, CDFW sees minimal risk of exceeding the cowcod ACT - let alone the cowcod ACL - as a result of this action.

Commercial Non-trawl RCA between 42° and 40°10' North latitude

Although CDFW did not include changes to the non-trawl RCA between 42° and 40°10' North latitude as part of the PPA in April 2018, and recommends status-quo RCAs in this area as the FPA, there is interest in retaining the opportunity to make this change at a future date. CDFW would like to confirm with NMFS what the appropriate process would be to initiate a change (i.e. two meeting process, inseason) should it be desired.

California Recreational Fishery

Season Structure

In accordance with CDFW’s policy to provide a stable fishery and minimize inseason disruptions, open season dates and depth limits are designed to maximize fishing opportunity while keeping catch within specified harvest limits. To that end, CDFW is recommending a minor change to the PPA to change the season date in the San Francisco Management Area from April 15 to April 1 (Figure 1). This would align the season start dates for those management areas between 40°10' and 34°27' N latitude.

Management Area	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Northern	Closed			May 1 – Oct 31 <30fm							All Depth	
Mendocino	Closed			May 1 – Oct 31 <20fm							All Depth	
San Francisco	Closed			April 1 – Dec 31 <40fm								
Central	Closed			April 1 – Dec 31 <50fm								
Southern	Closed		Mar 1 – Dec 31 <75 fm									

Figure 1. Final Preferred Alternative for California recreational groundfish season structure in 2019-2020.

California scorpionfish

As the FPA, CDFW supports allowing retention of California scorpionfish year-round in the Southern Management Area. In all other management areas, the open season for California scorpionfish would remain the same as the recreational groundfish season (e.g., the Rockfish, Cabezon, and Greenling (RCG) season).

Bag Limits

CDFW supports the PPA as the FPA with one modification noted below.

Canary Rockfish - No changes are proposed from the PPA. CDFW supports increasing the sub-bag limit to two fish, consistent with the March 2018 inseason action approved by the Council and implemented by NMFS on April 13, 2018.

Lingcod – No changes are proposed from the PPA. CDFW supports reducing the bag limit south of 40°10' N latitude from two fish to one fish. No changes are proposed to the bag limit north of 40°10' N latitude. The statewide size limit would remain 22” total length.

Cabezon – While intended to reduce complexity, based on public input, CDFW no longer recommends eliminating the sub-bag limit within the 10-fish RCG bag limit at this time. CDFW supports maintaining the three-fish sub-bag limit for this species (status quo) as the FPA.