

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON INSEASON
ADJUSTMENTS – FINAL ACTION

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) provides the following update regarding yelloweye rockfish in the California recreational groundfish fishery during 2018.

State Action

Most recreational groundfish management areas off California open in the month of April or May. Yelloweye rockfish encounters in California's recreational fishery are tracked weekly to monitor catch levels against the harvest guideline (HG) of 3.9 mt. CDFW field intercept records revealed that yelloweye encounters were tracking high beginning in May, associated with a few extended periods of excellent weather. June fishery performance was largely as expected, followed by July numbers that were again higher than expected, compared with values used pre-season to develop management recommendations for the 2017-18 harvest specifications.

On August 13, 2018 CDFW held a call with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to discuss updated catch information through August 5, and indicated that 2.49 mt of yelloweye rockfish has been taken. Projections suggested that without taking action to reduce encounters, the fishery would be at 4.8 mt by year's end. While NMFS does have the ability to change regulations inseason outside of the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) process using automatic action, that process can only be used if an HG is expected to be met or exceeded prior to the start of the next scheduled Council meeting. As of August 13, catch projections did not indicate the HG would be met or exceeded prior to the start of the September Council meeting.

As a result, CDFW took action independently of the Council or federal action, to restrict the allowable fishing depths in state waters north of Point Conception to depths that were in effect during the 2016 season, which reduced allowable depths by 10 fathoms in most management areas. CDFW issued a press release (pasted below) announcing the changes that took effect August 25, 2018.

Catch to Date

Current catch information now available through August 19, 2018 suggests that 3.22 mt of yelloweye rockfish have been taken (Table 1). Updated catch projections, including expected fishery effort shifts due to the August 25 inseason depth change, predict 4.47 mt of yelloweye rockfish mortality through the end of 2018.

CDFW will provide updated catch information during the September Council meeting, along with an updated analysis of projected total impacts for yelloweye rockfish, and federal inseason management recommendations for 2018.

Table 1. Summary of projected impacts for yelloweye rockfish through August 19, 2018 and projected impacts through 2018. Data are preliminary.

	Catch to Date		Best Estimate of Catch (Aug. 25, 2018)
	ACV	Estimate	
January	0.00	0.00	0.00
February	0.00	0.00	0.00
March	0.01	0.02	0.02
April	0.05	0.10	0.10
May	0.70	0.68	0.68
June	0.30	0.36	0.36
July	1.12		1.12
August (through Aug 19)	0.96		1.25
September			0.40
October			0.25
November			0.15
December			0.15
Total		3.22	4.47

Press Release – available at [CDFW News](#).

Changes to Recreational Groundfish Regulations Effective Aug. 25

August 15, 2018

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) announces new recreational fishing restrictions will soon go into effect for groundfish in waters north of Point Conception to the Oregon/California state line. The changes to the authorized fishing depths described below take effect Saturday, Aug. 25 at 12:01 a.m.

The recreational groundfish fishery depth restrictions will be as follows:

- Northern Management Area (Oregon/California state line to Cape Mendocino): Take is prohibited seaward of 20 fathoms (120 feet) in depth through Dec. 31.
- Mendocino Management Area (Cape Mendocino to Point Arena): Take is prohibited seaward of 20 fathoms (120 feet) in depth through Dec. 31.
- San Francisco Management Area (Point Arena to Pigeon Point): Take is prohibited seaward of the 30 fathom depth contour (180 feet) through Dec. 31.
- Central Management Area (Pigeon Point to Point Conception): Take is prohibited seaward of the 40 fathom depth contour (240 feet) through Dec. 31.
- Southern Management Area (Point Conception to the U.S./Mexico border): Take is prohibited seaward of the 60 fathom depth contour (360 feet) through Dec. 31. No changes are slated for this area.

- Note that in the months of November-December, allowable fishing depths in the Northern and Mendocino Management Areas will remain at 20 fathoms, and will not extend to unlimited depths.

The 20 fathom depth restriction is described by the general depth contour (California Code of Regulations Title 14, section 27.20(a)). The 30, 40 and 60 fathom depth contours are defined by straight lines connecting the waypoints as adopted in Federal regulations (Code of Federal Regulations Title 50, Part 660, Subpart G).

Based on recent bycatch estimates for yelloweye rockfish (*Sebastes ruberrimus*) from the California sport fishery, CDFW projects that the harvest guideline specified in federal regulation for 2018 (3.9 metric tons) will be exceeded unless changes are made. Pursuant to CCR Title 14, section 27.20(e), CDFW has the authority to make modifications to the fishery to avoid exceeding the limit, and must issue notice of any changes at least 10 days in advance of the effective date.

Yelloweye rockfish are a long-lived, slow-growing shelf rockfish species that were declared overfished in 2002 and cannot be retained in the recreational fishery. They are currently managed under a strict federal rebuilding plan to allow the population to recover, which has required significant cutbacks to west coast sport and commercial fisheries for more than a decade.

CDFW urges anglers to avoid fishing in areas where yelloweye rockfish are known to occur (e.g., rocky outcrops and pinnacles). If taken, yelloweye rockfish should be immediately returned to the water with a descending device to minimize injury and mortality. CDFW also encourages anglers who encounter them to change fishing locations to prevent catching additional yelloweye rockfish.

For more information regarding groundfish regulations, management, stock status information, fish identification tools and current catch trends, please visit the CDFW Marine Region Groundfish Central webpage at www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Groundfish.