

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON 2021-2022  
EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS

In response to the direction provided by the Council at the November 2019 meeting to incorporate recommendations from the Groundfish Management Team (GMT), the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) provides the following update on its preliminary 2021-2022 Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) application ([Agenda Item H.5, Attachment 3, November 2019](#)).

CDFW proposes to collect a maximum of 750 cowcod per year, for a total of 1,500 cowcod during the two-year permit period. The limit would be geographically stratified each year at Point Conception, such that not more than 500 fish would be retained from waters in the south, and not more than 250 fish from the north. CDFW will be tabulating retained cowcod inseason, and will establish communication protocols with participants to cease collection activities for the year if limits are attained. The recommended limits were developed in consultation with the lead scientist of the 2019 cowcod stock assessment, Dr. E. J. Dick of the Southwest Fisheries Science Center [pers. comm.]. If these collection maximums are attained, the specimens are expected to provide sufficient fishery-dependent data to better inform both the full assessment used for management south of Pt. Conception, and the data-poor assessment used for west coast waters north of Pt. Conception.

If determining a weight for the proposed maximum limit of 1,500 cowcod retained in EFP activities is necessary, CDFW offers that the average weight of a cowcod sampled by CDFW recreational fishery samplers in 2019 was 3.04 kg. This might be a reasonable average weight to be expected for fish retained in 2021-2022 EFP collection activities.

Efforts will be made to obtain a diverse sample of cowcod distributed among fishing areas and ports from San Diego to Bodega Bay. The project intends to collect lengths, weights, otoliths, indices of sexual maturity, genetic tissue samples, and ovaries from individual fish.

CDFW and the Coastal Conservation Association of California (CCA-Cal) are in discussions to determine if CCA-Cal is able to serve as a co-applicant and industry collaborator on the EFP, assisting with CPFV recruitment, communications, on-board protocol development, logistics, and fish storage.

CDFW will provide an updated application reflecting the above-mentioned additions for final action, which is scheduled for the June 2020 Council meeting.