

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON 2023 INSEASON GROUNDFISH HARVEST IN CALIFORNIA

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) provides the following informational report on initial harvest of select groundfish species of interest in 2023. Table 1 provides recreational and commercial catches to date relative to Annual Catch Limits (ACLs), Harvest Guidelines (HGs), sector allocations, and Annual Catch Targets (ACTs) for the 2023-24 biennium. Catch includes estimates of total mortality from the recreational sector, and landings from the commercial sector without discard mortality. Commercial landings are from the non-trawl fixed gear limited entry and open access sectors, except for blackgill rockfish landings which both include trawl and non-trawl landings.

Recreational Fishery

The boat-based recreational rockfish and lingcod fisheries off California opened April 1 in the Southern Management Area (all-depth), will open in the Central Management Area on May 1 (all-depth), and San Francisco (offshore-only), Mendocino (offshore-only) and Northern (all-depth) Management Areas on May 15. While some groundfish species other than rockfish and lingcod are open to boat-based anglers year-round, poor weather conditions during the winter months have resulted in few trips taken by anglers. As of the drafting of this report, monthly CRFS estimates are available through January 2023 and do not indicate significant mortality has occurred on any groundfish stocks. As more data become available throughout the year CDFW will provide updates at upcoming PFMC meetings.

Non-Trawl Commercial Fishery

Commercial landings data are from PacFIN and reflect activity across all management areas from January through March 27, 2023. Landings in the first three months of 2023 are higher for shelf rockfish north of 40°10' N. lat. (+ 0.2 mt), shelf rockfish south of 40°10' N lat. (+ 2.5 mt), and slope rockfish south of 40°10' N. lat. (+ 4.9 mt) than at this time in 2022 (see April 2023, CDFW Inseason Report 1 for 2022 numbers). Landings of nearshore species (i.e., black rockfish, nearshore rockfish complex, CA scorpionfish, cabezon, and kelp greenling), sablefish, thornyheads, and canary rockfish, are lower than the first three months of 2022. Quillback and copper rockfish landings continued to decline compared to 2022. The lower than usual landings could be attributed to the unfavorable fishing conditions (i.e., bad weather) which have dominated the first three months of the year. CDFW will provide additional catch updates throughout 2023 as the season progresses. Reported catches are subject to change as more data becomes available.

Table 1. Estimated take (mt) of select groundfish species in California for 2023 compared to the harvest limits for 2023.

| Stock/Stock Complex | Reference Point | Recreational Mortality (mt) | Commercial Landings (mt) | Total (mt) | Tracking Limits | Percent Attainment |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| YELLOWEYE ROCKFISH | ACT (CA rec) | 0.0 | N/A | 0.0 | 12.0 | 0.0% |
| CA Black rockfish | ACL | 0.0 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 334.0 | 0.1% |
| Canary rockfish | HG (rec) | 0.0 | N/A | 0.0 | 111.7 | 0.0% |
| Darkblotched rockfish | Non-Trawl Allocation | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 38.1 | 0.0% |
| Shortbelly rockfish | EC Species Threshold ^a | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2,000.0 | - |
| Splitnose rockfish | Non-Trawl Allocation | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 78.7 | 0.2% |
| Widow rockfish | Non-Trawl Allocation | 0.0 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 400.0 | 0.3% |
| Spiny dogfish | Fishery Harvest Guideline | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 1,241.0 | 0.0% |
| Dover sole | Non-Trawl Allocation | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 2,420.1 | 0.0% |
| English sole | Non-Trawl Allocation | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 437.9 | 0.0% |
| Petrale sole | Non-Trawl Allocation | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 30.0 | 0.4% |
| Starry flounder | Non-Trawl Allocation | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 171.9 | 0.0% |
| Other flatfish | Non-Trawl Allocation | 2.9 | 0.1 | 3.0 | 464.1 | 0.7% |
| CA Cabezon | ACL | 0.1 | 2.0 | 2.1 | 182.0 | 1.1% |
| CA Kelp greenling | ^b | 0.0 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 92.5 | 0.3% |
| Nearshore rockfish N. 42°-40°10' N. lat. ^c | HG (CA Share) ^d | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 39.6 | 0.0% |
| Copper rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat. | ACL Contribution to Complex | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.00 | 6.9 | 0.0% |
| Quillback rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat. | ACL Contribution to Complex | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.9 | 0.0% |
| Shelf rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat. | Non-Trawl Allocation | 0.0 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 482.4 | 0.2% |
| Yellowtail rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat. | Non-Trawl Allocation | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 556.6 | 0.0% |
| Slope rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat. | Non-Trawl Allocation | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 280.2 | 0.0% |
| Lingcod N. 40°10' N. lat. | Non-Trawl Allocation | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2,254.1 | 0.0% |
| Nearshore rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. | ACL | 0.2 | 6.2 | 6.4 | 886.0 | 0.7% |
| Copper rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. | ACL Contribution to Complex | 0.0 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 84.6 | 0.4% |
| Quillback rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. | ACL Contribution to Complex | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.9 | 10.1% |
| CA scorpionfish | ACL | 5.3 | 0.1 | 5.4 | 262.0 | 2.1% |

| Stock/Stock Complex | Reference Point | Recreational Mortality (mt) | Commercial Landings (mt) | Total (mt) | Tracking Limits | Percent Attainment |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Shelf rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. ^c | Non-Trawl Allocation | 0.0 | 27.3 | 27.3 | 1,173.2 | 2.3% |
| Vermilion rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. | ACL Contribution to Complex | 0.0 | 22.0 | 22.0 | 281.3 | 7.8% |
| Bocaccio S. 40°10' N. lat. | Non-Trawl Allocation | 0.0 | 8.5 | 8.5 | 1,093.5 | 0.8% |
| Chilipepper S. 40°10' N. lat. | Non-Trawl Allocation | 0.0 | 9.4 | 9.4 | 521.3 | 1.8% |
| Cowcod S. 40°10' N. lat. | Non-Trawl Allocation | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 44.1 | 0.0% |
| Slope rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. ^f | Non-Trawl Allocation | 0.0 | 6.1 | 6.1 | 245.0 | 2.5% |
| Blackgill rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. ^g | HG | 0.0 | 4.6 | 4.6 | 172.4 | 2.7% |
| Lingcod S. 40°10' N. lat. | Non-Trawl Allocation | 0.0 | 2.4 | 2.4 | 426.3 | 0.6% |
| Sablefish N. 36° N. lat. | Non-Trawl Allocation | 0.0 | 84.0 | 84.0 | 6,885.0 | 1.2% |
| Sablefish S. 36° N. lat. | Non-Trawl Allocation | 0.0 | 54.5 | 54.5 | 1,340.0 | 4.1% |
| Longspine thornyhead N 34° 27' N. lat. | Non-Trawl Allocation | 0.0 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 112.1 | 0.3% |
| Longspine thornyhead S 34° 27' N. lat. | ACL | 0.0 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 725.0 | 0.2% |
| Shortspine thornyhead N 34° 27' N. lat. | Non-Trawl Allocation | 0.0 | 4.8 | 4.8 | 64.0 | 7.4% |
| Shortspine thornyhead S 34° 27' N. lat. | Non-Trawl Allocation | 0.0 | 6.1 | 6.1 | 662.3 | 0.9% |

a/ Shortbelly rockfish is an ecosystem component species and has a threshold of 2,000lb as per FMP Amendment 30

b/ Reference point denotes the CA kelp greenling contribution to the Other Fish complex ACL.

c/ Includes catch of copper rockfish and quillback rockfish

d/ The nearshore complex north of 40°10' N lat. HG is 89.7 mt. The CA share of the HG is 39.6 mt.

e/ Includes catch of vermilion rockfish

f/ Does not include blackgill rockfish landings south of 40°10' N. lat. due to a separate harvest limit from the slope rockfish complex south of 40°10' N. lat.

g/ Blackgill rockfish south of 40°10' N. lat. commercial landings include both trawl and non-trawl sector