

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

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The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) provides the following informational report on initial harvest of select groundfish species of interest in 2023. A comprehensive reporting of groundfish mortality in California is found at the end of this report in Appendix I. All count values were rounded using standard rounding rules in each table for presentation purposes; for that reason, a sum of the rounded values over rows and columns within tables may not be equal to the total value.

Recreational Fishery

The boat-based recreational rockfish and lingcod fisheries off California opened April 1 in the Southern Management Area (all-depth), May 1 in the Central Management Area (all-depth), and May 15 in the San Francisco (offshore-only), Mendocino (offshore-only) and Northern (all-depth) Management Areas. Preliminary total mortality information through June 11, 2023 is included below.

Anecdotal information from CDFW field staff, conversations with anglers, and news media reports indicate significant utilization of the “offshore” fishing opportunities offered this year with many anglers choosing to fish in deeper offshore areas, even in management areas with all-depth opportunities. Port areas where the 50 fathom (fm) Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) line is closer to port, such as [Monterey, are seeing high rates of anglers choosing to fish in deeper waters.](#) It appears the intended goal of the all-depth fishery, to spread out angler effort so groundfish anglers do not solely focus on nearshore areas, may be having the desired effect on angler behavior. Additionally, some recreational anglers are targeting and retaining other groundfish species which have not historically been focal points, such as petrale sole and sablefish. The lack of a salmon season this year may also be generating more interest in other targets such as California halibut, groundfish and Pacific halibut, however the weather in the first part of the season has been rough, limiting overall fishing effort.

Copper Rockfish

Copper rockfish remain in the minor nearshore rockfish complex, north and south of 40°10’ N.

lat., with a shared commercial and recreational species-specific Annual Catch Target (ACT) of 6.9 mt for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat. and 84.6 mt for south of 40° 10' N. lat. The best estimate of total mortality for copper rockfish in the California recreational fishery through June 11, 2023 incorporates monthly catch estimates from January through April, and weekly Anticipated Catch Value (ACV) data from May 1 through June 11. The best estimate of total mortality and the OR/CA border is 0.43 mt (Table 1) for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat. and 9.45 mt (Table 2) for the area south of 40° 10' N. lat. These values are within the area-specific ACT values for copper rockfish.

Table 1. Recreational best estimate of total mortality for copper rockfish off California for the Northern Management Area (MA) between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat. by month. Data in the Estimate column below are monthly California Recreational Fishery Survey (CRFS) estimates. Data in the ACV column are Anticipated Catch Values (ACVs). As CRFS estimates become available the ACV value for that month is removed. All data are from CDFW/CRFS, are preliminary and subject to change.

Month	Northern MA Estimate	Northern MA ACV	Total
January	-	NA	-
February	-	NA	-
March	0.00	NA	-
April	0.00	NA	-
May		0.19	0.19
June (through June 11)		0.23	0.23
Total	0.00	0.43	0.43

Table 2. Recreational best estimate of total mortality for copper rockfish off California south of 40° 10' N. lat. by month and Management Area (MA). Data by Management Area are monthly CRFS estimates. ACV data are for the entire area S of 40 10. As CRFS estimates become available the ACV value for that month is removed. All data are from CDFW/CRFS, are preliminary and subject to change.

Month	Southern MA Estimate	Central MA Estimate	San Francisco MA Estimate	Mendocino MA Estimate	ACV (S 40 10)	Total
January	-	0.00	-	-	NA	0.00
February	0.00	-	-	-	NA	0.00
March	0.04	0.00	-	-	NA	0.04
April	4.04	0.01	-	-	NA	4.06
May					3.84	3.84
June (through June 11)					1.51	1.51
Total	4.09	0.01	0.00	0.00	5.35	9.45

Quillback Rockfish

Quillback rockfish remain in the minor nearshore complex north and south of 40°10' N. lat., with a shared commercial and recreational species-specific ACT of 0.87 mt for the area between 42° N. lat. and 40°10' N. lat. and 0.89 mt for south of 40°10' N. lat. The best estimate of total mortality for quillback rockfish in the California recreational fishery through June 11, 2023 incorporates monthly catch estimates from January through April, and weekly ACV data from May 1 through June 11. The best estimate of total mortality and the OR/CA border is 0.27 mt (Table 3) for the

area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat. and 0.19 mt (Table 4) for the area south of 40° 10' N. lat. These values are within the area specific ACT values for quillback rockfish.

Table 3. Recreational best estimate of total mortality for quillback rockfish off California for the Northern Management Area (MA) between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat. by month. Data in the Estimate column below are monthly California Recreational Fishery Survey (CRFS) estimates. Data in the ACV column are Anticipated Catch Values (ACVs). As CRFS estimates become available the ACV value for that month is removed. All data are from CDFW/CRFS, are preliminary and subject to change.

Month	Northern MA Estimate	Northern MA ACV	Total
January	-	NA	-
February	-	NA	-
March	-	NA	-
April	-	NA	-
May		0.08	0.08
June (through June 11)		0.19	0.19
Total	0.00	0.27	0.27

Table 4. Recreational best estimate of total mortality for quillback rockfish off California south of 40° 10' N. lat. by month and Management Area (MA). Data by Management Area are monthly CRFS estimates. ACV data are for the entire area S of 40 10. As CRFS estimates become available the ACV value for that month is removed. All data are from CDFW/CRFS, are preliminary and subject to change.

Month	Southern MA Estimate	Central MA Estimate	San Francisco MA Estimate	Mendocino MA Estimate	ACV (S 40 10)	Total
January	-	-	-	-	NA	-
February	-	-	-	-	NA	-
March	-	-	-	-	NA	-
April	-	-	-	-	NA	-
May					0.11	0.11
June (through June 11)					0.08	0.08
Total	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.19	0.19

Yelloweye Rockfish

Yelloweye rockfish is the only remaining rebuilding rockfish species off the coast of California. A California recreational harvest guideline (HG) is set at 15.3 mt, with an ACT of 12.0 mt in 2023. CDFW tracks recreational mortality of yelloweye rockfish on a weekly basis using the established ACV process. Through June 11, 2023, it is projected 1.63 mt of yelloweye rockfish mortality has occurred. As the weather has improved and more offshore recreational fishing opportunity has opened in the northern part of the state, CDFW has seen an increase in the number of yelloweye rockfish being reported as released. This was anticipated and analyzed during the season setting process. CDFW will continue to track yelloweye numbers closely and report to the Council through CDFW inseason reports.

A recent spike in yelloweye rockfish reports has come from anglers fishing around Rittenberg

Bank, which is roughly 14 miles north of the Farallon Islands. When the San Francisco management area opens to all-depth fishing on July 16th and nearshore areas become available to anglers, less effort around Rittenberg Bank might be anticipated, since it is roughly 30 miles from the nearest port. CDFW will continue to closely monitor catch, angler reports, and effort from this location throughout the remainder of the season.

Non-Trawl Commercial Fishery

Copper Rockfish

Commercial landings data are from PacFIN and reflect activity across all management areas from January through May 31, 2023. Landing totals are 0.1 mt (Table 6) for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat. and 0.8 mt (Table 6) for the area south of 40° 10' N. lat. The combined commercial and recreational values are within the area-specific ACT values for copper rockfish (Table 7). Landings across California continued to track similar to 2022 suggesting the sub-trip limits are effectively minimizing harvest in the commercial fishery. Reported catches are preliminary and subject to change as more data becomes available.

Quillback Rockfish

Commercial landings data are from PacFIN and reflect activity across all management areas from January through May 31, 2023. Landing totals are 0.1 mt (Table 6) for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat. and 0.2 mt (Table 6) for the area south of 40° 10' N. lat. The combined commercial and recreational values are within the area specific ACT values for quillback rockfish (Table 7). Quillback rockfish landings across California are tracking similar to 2022, suggesting the sub-trip limits are effectively minimizing harvest in the commercial fishery. Reported catches are preliminary and subject to change as more data becomes available.

Appendix 1.

This appendix provides an update of the 2023 fishing season 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 include both trawl and non-trawl landings.

Monthly recreational catch data are from RecFIN through April 2023 and reflect activity across all recreational management areas (Table 5). Commercial landings data are from PacFIN and reflect activity across all management areas from January through May 31, 2023 (Table 6). Cumulative landings, thus far, in 2023 are similar to 2022 for most species. However, landings south of 40°10' N. lat. are higher for shelf rockfish (+ 15.4 mt), vermilion rockfish (+ 13.4 mt), bocaccio rockfish. (+ 5.4 mt), chilipepper rockfish (+ 6.1 mt), slope rockfish (+ 1.4 mt), and lingcod (+ 2.2 mt) than at this time in 2022. Additionally, CA scorpionfish landings are 0.2 mt higher than this time last year. Landings of nearshore species (i.e., black rockfish, nearshore rockfish complex, and kelp greenling), and canary/widow rockfish, are lower than this time in 2022. CDFW will provide additional catch updates throughout 2023 as seasons progress. Reported catches are preliminary and subject to change as more data becomes available. The 2023 combined recreational and commercial catches are compared to federally designated harvest specifications in Table 7.

Table 5. Estimated catch (mt) of select groundfish species in the California recreational sector by month in 2023. Data are from RecFIN, are preliminary and subject to change.

Stock/Stock Complex	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
YELLOWEYE ROCKFISH	-	-	-	-									0.0
CA Black rockfish	-	0.0	0.1	0.2									0.3
Canary rockfish	-	-	0.0	0.2									0.2
Darkblotched rockfish	-	-	-	-									0.0
Shortbelly rockfish	-	-	-	-									0.0
Splitnose rockfish	-	-	-	-									0.0
Widow rockfish	-	-	-	0.4									0.4
Spiny dogfish	-	-	0.0	0.0									0.0
Dover sole	-	-	-	-									0.0
English sole	-	-	-	-									0.0
Petrale sole	-	0.1	0.3	0.3									0.7
Starry flounder	-	-	0.0	-									0.0
Other flatfish	2.9	1.3	1.0	1.4									6.6
CA Cabezon	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1									0.2
CA Kelp greenling	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.3									0.5
Nearshore rockfish N. 42°-40°10' N. lat. ^a	-	-	0.0	0.0									0.0
Copper rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat.	-	-	0.0	0.0									0.0
Quillback rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-	-									0.0
Shelf rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-	-									0.0
Yellowtail rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-	-									0.0
Slope rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-	-									0.0
Lingcod N. 40°10' N. lat.	-	-	0.1	0.4									0.5
Nearshore rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. ^a	0.2	0.1	0.0	8.2									8.4
Copper rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.1									4.1
Quillback rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	-	-	0.0	-									0.0
CA scorpionfish	5.3	3.5	4.7	9.1									22.6
Shelf rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. ^b	0.0	0.1	0.0	51.5									51.6
Vermilion rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.0	0.1	0.0	30.8									30.9

Stock/Stock Complex	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Bocaccio S. 40°10' N. lat.	-	0.0	0.0	17.7									17.7
Chilipepper S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0									2.0
Cowcod S. 40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-	0.0									0.0
Slope rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. ^c	-	-	-	2.2									2.2
Blackgill rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-	-									0.0
Lingcod S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1									3.1
Sablefish N. 36° N. lat.	-	0.0	0.3	0.0									0.4
Sablefish S. 36° N. lat.	-	-	0	0.0									0.0
Longspine thornyhead N 34° 27' N. lat.	-	-	-	-									0.0
Longspine thornyhead S 34° 27' N. lat.	-	-	-	-									0.0
Shortspine thornyhead N 34° 27' N. lat.	-	-	-	-									0.0
Shortspine thornyhead S 34° 27' N. lat.	-	-	-	-									0.0

Note: 0.0 indicates trace mortality; a dash (-) indicates no mortality.

a/ Includes catch of copper rockfish and quillback rockfish.

b/ Includes catch of vermilion rockfish.

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

Table 6. Landings (mt) of select groundfish species in California commercial non-trawl fixed gear limited entry and open access sectors, except for blackgill rockfish landings which include trawl and non-trawl, by month in 2023. Data are from PacFIN, are preliminary and subject to change.

Stock/Stock Complex	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
YELLOWEYE ROCKFISH	--	--	--	--	--								--
CA Black rockfish	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.5	2.7								3.6
Canary rockfish	0.7	1.2	1.2	1.6	1.9								6.5
Darkblotched rockfish	--	--	--	--	0.0								0.0
Shortbelly rockfish	--	--	--	--	--								--
Splitnose rockfish	--	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0								0.0
Widow rockfish	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.5								2.3
Spiny dogfish	0.1	0.0	--	0.0	0.0								0.1
Dover sole	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0								0.2
English sole	--	--	--	--	--								--
Petrale sole	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1								0.2
Starry flounder	--	--	0.0	0.0	--								0.0
Other flatfish	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0								0.4
CA Cabezon	0.5	1.0	0.9	3.1	3.8								9.2
CA Kelp greenling	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2								0.6
Nearshore rockfish N. 42°-40°10' N. lat. ^a	--	--	--	0.2	0.6								0.8
Copper rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat.	--	--	--	0.1	0.1								0.1
Quillback rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat.	--	--	--	0.0	0.1								0.1
Shelf rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	--	--	0.2	0.1	0.2								0.4
Yellowtail rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	--	--	0.1	0.4	0.5								1.0
Slope rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	--	--	--	0.0	0.3								0.3
Lingcod N. 40°10' N. lat.	--	--	0.0	0.6	0.8								1.4
Nearshore rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. ^a	1.5	3.0	2.5	6.2	8.9								22.2
Copper rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3								0.8
Quillback rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1								0.2
CA scorpionfish	0.1	--	--	0.1	0.6								0.7
Shelf rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. ^b	4.0	12.6	12.7	12.6	16.6								58.5

Stock/Stock Complex	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Vermilion rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	2.6	10.9	9.7	9.0	11.6								43.7
Bocaccio S. 40°10' N. lat.	3.0	3.2	3.9	6.7	7.6								24.3
Chilipepper S. 40°10' N. lat.	3.3	3.9	3.4	4.0	7.3								21.9
Cowcod S. 40°10' N. lat.	--	--	--	--	--								--
Slope rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. ^c	0.5	1.2	0.2	0.6	0.5								3.0
Blackgill rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. ^d	1.4	2.5	1.1	2.3	1.1								8.3
Lingcod S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.4	0.9	1.7	2.3	2.8								8.2
Sablefish N. 36° N. lat.	10.9	29.0	59.5	77.1	76.6								253.1
Sablefish S. 36° N. lat.	13.5	20.8	25.2	18.9	27.0								105.5
Longspine thornyhead N 34° 27' N. lat.	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3								0.7
Longspine thornyhead S 34° 27' N. lat.	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.6								2.5
Shortspine thornyhead N 34° 27' N. lat.	1.3	1.9	1.8	1.8	2.1								8.9
Shortspine thornyhead S 34° 27' N. lat.	2.4	1.8	2.3	2.2	3.3								12.0

Landing estimates do not include discard mortality. 0.0 indicates trace landings; a dash (-) indicates no landings.

a/ Includes landings of copper rockfish and quillback rockfish.

b/ Includes landings of vermilion rockfish.

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

d/ Blackgill rockfish south of 40°10' N. lat. landings include both trawl and non-trawl sectors.

Table 7. 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	0.3	3.6	3.9	334.0	1.2%
Canary rockfish	HG (rec)	0.2	N/A	0.2	111.7	0.2%
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	0.0%
Splitnose rockfish	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	0.0	0.0	78.7	0.0%
Widow rockfish	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.4	2.3	2.7	400.0	0.7%
Spiny dogfish	Fishery Harvest Guideline	0.0	0.1	0.1	1,241.0	0.0%
Dover sole	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	0.2	0.2	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	0.7	0.2	0.9	30.0	3.0%
Starry flounder	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	0.0	0.0	171.9	0.0%
Other flatfish	Non-Trawl Allocation	6.6	0.4	6.9	464.1	1.5%
CA Cabezon	ACL	0.2	9.2	9.4	182.0	5.2%
CA Kelp greenling	^b	0.5	0.6	1.1	92.5	1.2%
Nearshore rockfish N. 42°-40°10' N. lat. ^c	HG (CA Share) ^d	0.0	0.8	0.8	39.6	1.9%
Copper rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat.	ACL Contribution to Complex	0.0	0.1	0.14	6.9	2.0%
Quillback rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat.	ACL Contribution to Complex	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.9	13.7%
Shelf rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	0.4	0.4	482.4	0.1%
Yellowtail rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	1.0	1.0	556.6	0.2%
Slope rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	0.3	0.3	280.2	0.1%
Lingcod N. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.5	1.4	1.9	2,254.1	0.1%
Nearshore rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	ACL	8.4	22.2	30.6	886.0	3.5%
Copper rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	ACL Contribution to Complex	4.1	0.8	4.9	84.6	5.8%
Quillback rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	ACL Contribution to Complex	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.9	19.3%
CA scorpionfish	ACL	22.6	0.7	23.3	262.0	8.9%
Shelf rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. ^c	Non-Trawl Allocation	51.6	58.5	110.1	1,173.2	9.4%

Stock/Stock Complex	Reference Point	Recreational Mortality (mt)	Commercial Landings (mt)	Total (mt)	Tracking Limits	Percent Attainment
Vermilion rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	ACL Contribution to Complex	30.9	43.7	74.6	281.3	26.5%
Bocaccio S. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	17.7	24.3	42.1	1,093.5	3.8%
Chilipepper S. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	2.0	21.9	23.9	521.3	4.6%
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	2.2	3.0	5.2	245.0	2.1%
Blackgill rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. ^g	HG	0.0	8.3	8.3	172.4	4.8%
Lingcod S. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	3.1	8.2	11.3	426.3	2.6%
Sablefish N. 36° N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.4	253.1	253.4	6,885.0	3.7%
Sablefish S. 36° N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	105.5	105.5	1,340.0	7.9%
Longspine thornyhead N 34° 27' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	0.7	0.7	112.1	0.6%
Longspine thornyhead S 34° 27' N. lat.	ACL	0.0	2.5	2.5	725.0	0.3%
Shortspine thornyhead N 34° 27' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	8.9	8.9	64.0	13.8%
Shortspine thornyhead S 34° 27' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	12.0	12.0	662.3	1.8%

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