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 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, covering recreational mortality January through July 2023, and commercial mortality January through October 23, 2023. Following the inseason actions taken over the summer in response to high catches of quillback rockfish, CDFW is examining its California Recreational Fisheries Survey (CRFS) estimation procedures to ensure estimates of mortality for the newly prohibited quillback rockfish accurately reflect mortality in the fishery. The transition from allowing take or a species to prohibited retention may impact field data collections and available data used to generate estimates. Recreational catch estimates for August are therefore not reported here pending completion of the review.

All 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 Ouillback Rockfish

Available data indicates that inseason actions taken in August and September 2023, discussed in Agenda Item G.8.a Supplemental CDFW Inseason Report 1 September 2023 and CDFW Inseason Report 2, have been successful in reducing additional quillback rockfish encounters and resulting mortality in the fishery. Following implementation of inseason actions, preliminary information on the fishery from CRFS data reflect an increase in discarded quillback rockfish following statewide prohibited retention, and recreational encounters significantly decreased following action to close the nearshore fishery, shifting the fleet to greater than 50 fathoms (fm) for the remainder of the season.

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 October 22, 2023, incorporates monthly catch estimates from January through July, and weekly Anticipated Catch Value (ACV) data from August 1 through October 22. The best estimate of total recreational mortality is 3.30 mt for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat. and 32.27 mt for the area south of 40° 10' N. lat. Combined with commercial fishery estimates described below, mortality values to date are within the area-specific ACT values for copper rockfish (Table 3).

Yelloweye Rockfish

Yelloweye rockfish is a rebuilding rockfish species off the coast of California. In 2023, the California recreational harvest guideline for yelloweye rockfish is set at 15.3 mt, with an ACT of 12.0 mt. Through October 22, 2023, it is projected 6.88 mt of recreational yelloweye rockfish mortality has occurred. Thus far, the shift to offshore only fisheries at the end of the summer

months has not increased yelloweye rockfish encounters and mortality is expected to stay within 2023 ACT.

Non-Trawl Commercial Fishery Ouillback Rockfish

Commercial landings data are from PacFIN and reflect activity across all management areas from January through October 23, 2023. Landing totals are 0.3 mt (Table 2) for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat. and 0.3 mt (Table 2) for the area south of 40° 10' N. lat. As discussed in Agenda Item G.8.a. CDFW Inseason Report 1, September 2023 and Agenda Item G.8.a. Supplemental CDFW Inseason Report 2, September 2023, mortality of quillback rockfish has exceeded harvest limits in the areas north and south of 40° 10' N. lat. and retention of quillback rockfish was prohibited in the commercial fishery. Since the prohibition there have been no reported commercial landings of quillback rockfish. Reported landings are preliminary and subject to change as more data becomes available.

Copper Rockfish

Commercial landings data are from PacFIN and reflect activity across all management areas from January through October 23, 2023. Landing totals are 0.5 mt (Table 2) for the area between 42° - 40° 10' N. lat. and 1.8 mt (Table2) 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 3). 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.

Non-Trawl (Commercial/Recreational) Overages

Combined California quillback rockfish take to date for the area north of 40°10' N. lat. and the area south of 40°10' N. lat. have exceeded their respective OFL contributions. CDFW took inseason action to reduce quillback mortality as discussed in <u>Agenda Item G.8.a Supplemental CDFW Report 2</u> and <u>Agenda Item G.8.a Supplemental GMT Report 5</u> from September of this year.

Vermilion rockfish commercial data through October 23 and recreational estimates through July indicate 240.6 mt of vermilion have been taken south of 40°10' N. lat., or 86% of the ACL contribution. Given recreational estimates from August through December are expected to continue to add to the total mortality and growing potentially higher than recent years with the shift to offshore only fisheries beginning in September, it is projected that by the end of the year both the ACL contribution, and the OFL contribution will be exceeded. In September the Council took action to reduce the vermilion rockfish trip limits from 40° 10' N. lat. to 34° 27' N. lat. as discussed in <u>G.8.a Supplemental GMT Report 5</u>, September 2023. Additional reductions to the recreational bag limits and commercial trip limits may be needed in 2024 and beyond to reduce impacts of this species to stay within harvest limit contributions. Additionally, the outcome of the 2021 benchmark vermilion assessment off California shows a declining trajectory with regard to allowable yields into the future.

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 (does not include ACVs) 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 estimates are from RecFIN through July 2023 and reflect activity across all recreational management areas (Table 1). Commercial landings data are from PacFIN and reflect activity across all management areas from January through October 23, 2023 (Table 2). The 2023 combined recreational and commercial catches are compared to federally designated harvest specifications in Table 3.

Table 1. 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 ^a	-	-	-	-	0.6	1.8	1.5						3.9
CA Black rockfish ^a	-	0.0	0.1	0.2	10.4	24.9	46.7						82.3
Canary rockfish	1	-	0.0	0.2	3.8	8.5	13.6						26.2
Darkblotched rockfish	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						0.0
Shortbelly rockfish	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						0.0
Splitnose rockfish	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						0.0
Widow rockfish	-	-	-	0.4	0.4	1.5	1.6						3.8
Spiny dogfish	-	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.8						1.2
Dover sole	=	-	-	-	-	-	-						0.0
English sole	-	-	-	-	-	-	-						0.0
Petrale sole	-	0.1	0.3	0.3	1.7	4.0	5.9						12.3
Starry flounder	-	-	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	-						0.0
Other flatfish	2.9	1.3	1.0	1.4	1.5	4.5	4.6						17.2
CA Cabezon	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.7	1.2	3.2						5.3
CA Kelp greenling	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.5						1.2
Nearshore rockfish N. 42°-40°10' N. lat. ^b	-	-	0.0	0.0	1.0	2.4	5.9						9.4
Copper rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat. ^a	ı	-	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.9	1.8						3.0
Quillback rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat. ^a	ı	-	-	-	0.1	0.3	0.8						1.2
Shelf rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.°	-	-	-	-	0.2	0.9	1.0						2.2
Squarespot rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	ı	-	-	-	-	-	-						0.0
Vermilion rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	ı	-	-	-	0.2	0.9	1.0						2.1
Yellowtail rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	ı	-	-	-	0.4	0.5	0.6						1.5
Slope rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	ı	-	-	-	-	-	-						0.0
Lingcod N. 40°10' N. lat.	ı	-	0.1	0.4	3.2	5.8	14.6						24.1
Nearshore rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. ^b	0.2	0.1	0.0	8.2	19.8	21.7	53.2						103.1
Copper rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. ^a	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.1	3.6	4.9	7.5						20.0
Quillback rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. ^a	1	-	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.1						0.2
CA scorpionfish	5.3	3.5	4.7	9.1	7.9	17.7	29.3						77.4

Stock/Stock Complex	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Shelf rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.°	0.0	0.1	0.0	51.5	85.1	114.2	83.2						334.1
Squarespot Rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.0	-	0.0	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.8						2.2
Vermilion rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.0	0.1	0.0	30.8	37.7	49.9	38.9						157.3
Bocaccio S. 40°10' N. lat.	-	0.0	0.0	17.7	35.2	40.4	40.5						133.9
Chilipepper S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	16.7	35.0	52.9						106.6
Cowcod S. 40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-	0.0	0.0	0.1	1.6						1.7
Slope rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.d	-	-	-	2.2	4.1	2.6	0.2						9.1
Blackgill rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-	-	-	0.0	-						0.0
Lingcod S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1	15.5	18.1	26.9						63.6
Sablefish N. 36° N. lat.	-	0.0	0.3	0.0	1.0	5.6	1.3						8.3
Sablefish S. 36° N. lat.	-	-	0	0.0	-	0.3	0.4						0.7
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/ Totals for yelloweye rockfish, black rockfish, copper rockfish, and quillback rockfish are CRFS estimates
only and do not include ACV projections.

b/ Includes catch of copper rockfish and quillback rockfish.

c/ Includes catch of squarespot rockfish and vermilion rockfish.

d/ 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 2. 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	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
YELLOWEYE ROCKFISH						0.0	0.0						0.0
CA Black rockfish	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.5	2.8	5.6	6.3	7.9	5.6	2.8			31.9
Canary rockfish	0.7	1.2	1.2	1.5	1.9	1.2	1.7	3.1	1.5	1.3			15.4
Darkblotched rockfish					0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1				0.3
Shortbelly rockfish													
Splitnose rockfish		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0			0.0				0.0
Widow rockfish	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.2	0.2			5.0
Spiny dogfish	0.1	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.0			0.9
Dover sole	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	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	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0			0.7
Starry flounder			0.0	0.0			0.0	0.0		0.0			0.0
Other flatfish	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0			1.8
CA Cabezon	0.5	1.0	0.9	3.1	3.8	2.5	2.6	2.9	2.4	1.4			21.1
CA Kelp greenling	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.0			1.3
Nearshore rockfish N. 42°-40°10' N. lat. ^a				0.2	0.6	0.5	1.1	1.1	1.6	1.5			6.5
Copper rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat.				0.1	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1			0.5
Quillback rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat.				0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0					0.3
Shelf rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat. ^b			0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.3			2.0
Squarespot Rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.													
Yellowtail rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.			0.1	0.4	0.5	0.5	1.0	0.4	0.0	0.2			3.1
Slope rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.				0.0	0.3	0.6	2.0	4.0	1.3	0.5			8.6
Lingcod N. 40°10' N. lat.			0.0	0.5	0.8	1.1	1.6	2.3	1.3	2.5			10.1
Nearshore rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. ^a	1.5	3.1	2.6	6.4	8.9	11.0	9.3	13.9	13.6	5.1			75.4
Copper rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.0			1.8
Quillback rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0					0.3
CA scorpionfish	0.1			0.1	0.6	1.0	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.2			3.0

Stock/Stock Complex	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Shelf rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.°	4.0	12.6	12.7	13.0	16.9	12.6	12.1	15.8	12.6	7.1			119.5
Squarespot Rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0			0.3
Vermilion rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	2.6	11.0	9.7	9.2	11.7	7.3	8.5	9.9	8.5	4.8			83.2
Bocaccio S. 40°10' N. lat.	3.0	3.3	3.9	6.8	7.8	7.5	7.2	7.6	4.8	4.0			55.7
Chilipepper S. 40°10' N. lat.	3.3	3.9	3.4	4.0	7.5	5.3	4.4	4.5	2.2	1.6			40.1
Cowcod S. 40°10' N. lat.		I											1
Slope rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. ^d	0.5	1.2	0.2	0.6	0.5	0.9	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.3			5.5
Blackgill rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. ^c	2.7	5.7	2.9	2.7	2.3	2.1	5.2	3.2	2.9	3.7			33.4
Lingcod S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.4	0.9	1.8	2.5	2.8	2.6	2.2	3.7	2.9	2.9			22.7
Sablefish N. 36° N. lat.	10.9	29.1	40.0	67.0	65.6	56.6	60.8	99.0	81.8	80.7			591.5
Sablefish S. 36° N. lat.	10.1	14.3	12.8	10.9	22.6	14.0	11.9	17.9	20.1	15.3			150.0
Longspine thornyhead N 34° 27' N. lat.	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4			2.2
Longspine thornyhead S 34° 27' N. lat.	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.3			4.7
Shortspine thornyhead N 34° 27' N. lat.	1.3	1.9	1.8	1.8	2.1	1.3	1.6	3.1	2.5	1.5			18.9
Shortspine thornyhead S 34° 27' N. lat.	2.4	1.8	2.3	2.2	3.7	2.0	2.2	1.5	2.5	2.0			22.7

Note: 0.0 indicates trace mortality. 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 squarespot rockfish

c/ Includes landings of vermilion rockfish and squarespot.

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

Table 3. 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 ^a	ACT (CA rec)	3.9	0.0	3.9	12.0	32.4%
CA Black rockfish ^a	ACL	82.3	31.9	114.2	334.0	34.2%
Canary rockfish	HG (rec)	26.2	15.4	41.6	111.7	37.2%
Darkblotched rockfish	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	0.3	0.3	38.1	0.8%
Shortbelly rockfish	EC Species Threshold b	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	3.8	5.0	8.8	400.0	2.2%
Spiny dogfish	Fishery Harvest Guideline	1.2	0.9	2.1	1,241.0	0.2%
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	437.9	0.0%
Petrale sole	Non-Trawl Allocation	12.3	0.7	13.0	30.0	43.2%
Starry flounder	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	0.0	0.0	171.9	0.0%
Other flatfish	Non-Trawl Allocation	17.2	1.8	19.0	464.1	4.1%
CA Cabezon	ACL	5.3	21.1	26.4	182.0	14.5%
CA Kelp greenling	c	1.2	1.3	2.5	92.5	2.7%
Nearshore rockfish N. 42°-40°10' N. lat. d	HG (CA Share) ^e	9.4	6.5	15.9	39.6	40.1%
Copper rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat. ^a	ACL Contribution to Complex	3.0	0.5	3.48	6.9	50.2%
Quillback rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat. ^a	ACL Contribution to Complex	1.2	0.3	1.5	0.9	168.5%
Shelf rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.f	Non-Trawl Allocation	2.2	2.0	4.2	482.4	0.9%
Squarespot Rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	g	-	-	0.0	-	0.0%
Vermilion rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	ACL Contribution to Complex	1.1	-	1.1	6.5	16.8%
Yellowtail rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	1.5	3.1	4.6	556.6	0.8%
Slope rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	8.6	8.6	280.2	3.1%
Lingcod N. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	24.1	10.1	34.2	2,254.1	1.5%
Nearshore rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. ^d	ACL	103.1	75.4	178.5	886.0	20.1%
Copper rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. ^a	ACL Contribution to Complex	20.0	1.8	21.8	84.6	25.8%
Quillback rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. ^a	ACL Contribution to Complex	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.9	52.3%

Stock/Stock Complex	Reference Point	Recreational Mortality (mt)	Commercial Landings (mt)	Total (mt)	Tracking Limits	Percent Attainment
CA scorpionfish	ACL	77.4	3.0	80.4	262.0	30.7%
Shelf rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. h	Non-Trawl Allocation	334.1	119.5	453.6	1,173.2	38.7%
Squarespot Rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	ACL Contribution to Complex	1.4	0.3	1.7	9.7	17.5%
Vermilion rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	ACL Contribution to Complex	157.3	83.2	240.5	281.3	85.5%
Bocaccio S. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	133.9	55.7	189.6	1,093.5	17.3%
Chilipepper S. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	106.6	40.1	146.7	521.3	28.1%
Cowcod S. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	1.7		1.7	44.1	3.8%
Slope rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. i	Non-Trawl Allocation	9.1	5.5	14.6	245.0	6.0%
Blackgill rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. j	HG	0.0	33.4	33.4	172.4	19.4%
Lingcod S. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	63.6	22.7	86.3	426.3	20.2%
Sablefish N. 36° N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	8.3	591.5	599.8	6,885.0	8.7%
Sablefish S. 36° N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.7	150.0	150.7	1,340.0	11.2%
Longspine thornyhead N 34° 27' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	2.2	2.2	112.1	2.0%
Longspine thornyhead S 34° 27' N. lat.	ACL	0.0	4.7	4.7	725.0	0.6%
Shortspine thornyhead N 34° 27' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	18.9	18.9	64.0	29.5%
Shortspine thornyhead S 34° 27' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	22.7	22.7	662.3	3.4%

a/ Recreational totals for yelloweye rockfish, black rockfish, copper rockfish, and quillback rockfish are CRFS estimates only and do not include ACV projections.

- b/ Shortbelly rockfish is an ecosystem component species and has a threshold of 2,000 lb as per FMP Amendment 30
- c/ Reference point denotes the CA kelp greenling contribution to the Other Fish complex ACL.
- d/ Includes catch of copper rockfish and quillback rockfish
- e/ The nearshore complex north of 40°10' N lat. HG is 89.7 mt. The CA share of the HG is 39.6 mt.
- f/ Includes catch of squarespot rockfish and vermilion rockfish
- g/ Squarespot rockfish north of 40°10′ N. lat. has no species-specific contribution within the
- Shelf Rockfish Complex north of 40°10' N. lat.
- h/ Includes catch of vermilion rockfish and squarespot rockfish
- i/ 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.
- j/Blackgill rockfish south of 40°10' N. lat. commercial landings include both trawl and non-trawl sector