

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON PRELIMINARY
PREFERRED MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES FOR 2025-2026 FISHERIES

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) offers recommendations for Council and advisory body consideration as the preliminary preferred alternative(s) (PPA) for the following 2025-2026 biennium management measures.

Rockfish Conservation Area Modifications

At the September 2023 Council meeting, CDFW submitted a report under the 2025-2026 Initial Harvest Specifications and Management Measures agenda item ([Agenda Item G.6.a, Supplemental CDFW Report 1, September 2023](#)) summarizing industry requested modifications to the 50-fathom Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) boundary line near Bodega Bay, CA. At that time, a request was made for additional RCA boundary line modifications proposals to be submitted to CDFW by the November advanced briefing book deadline. CDFW did not receive any additional RCA modification requests.

The industry requested modifications near Bodega Bay, CA were made to improve alignment of the 50-fathom waypoints with the depth contour. Upon review of the proposed modifications along this section of the coast, the current 50-fathom RCA boundary line was found to generally have poor alignment with the depth contour and in some areas overlays the 60-fathom boundary line due, in part, to the bathymetry. In crafting the proposed modifications provided below (Figure 1 and Table 1), CDFW referenced adjacent RCA boundary lines to ensure crossovers were not created and, upon consultation with CDFW enforcement, limited those modifications such that the proposed 50-fathom RCA boundary line would not create enforcement complexity or potential for regulatory confusion

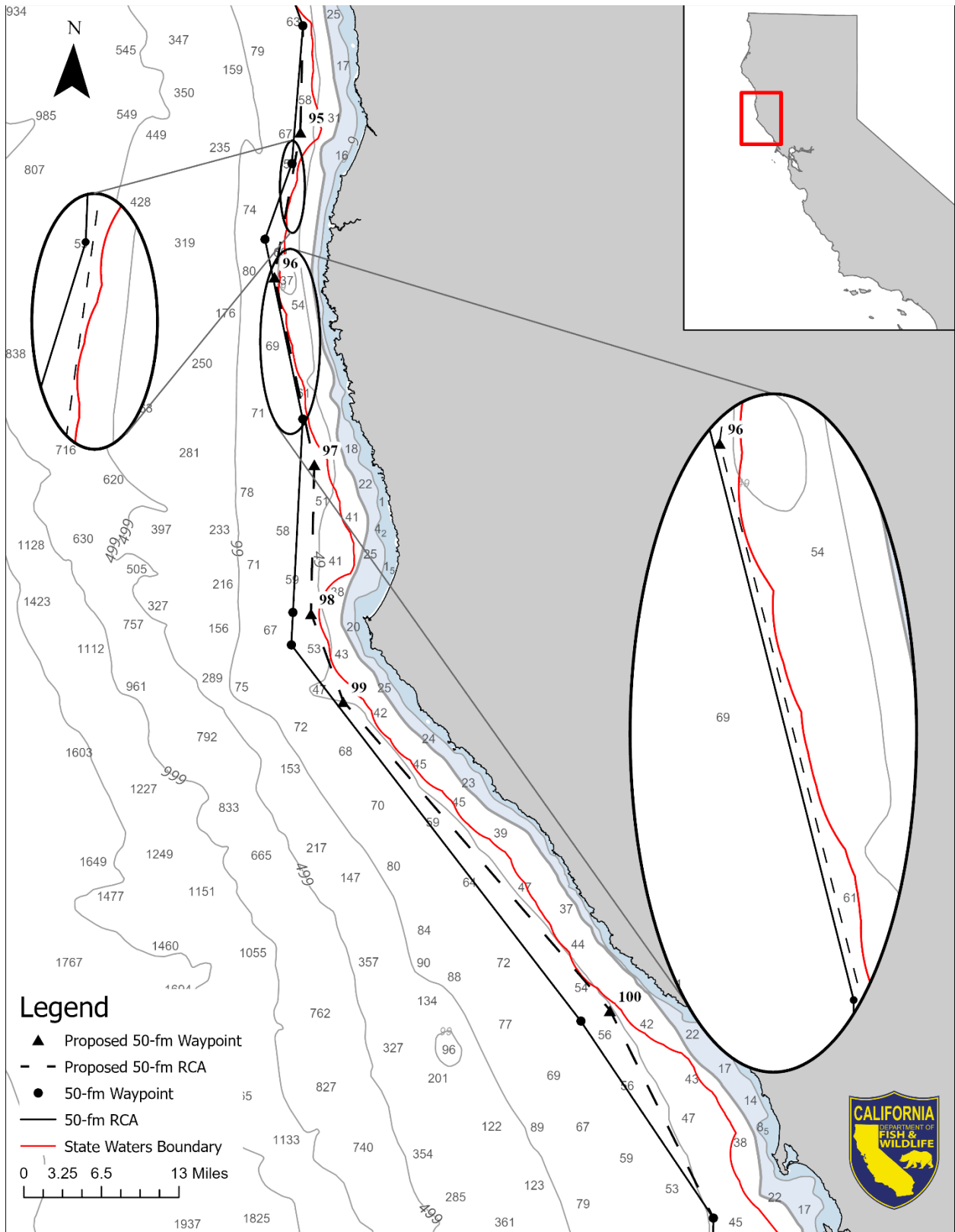


Figure 1. Map of proposed modifications to the 50-fathom waypoints for better alignment of the 50-fathom boundary line with the depth contour, near Bodega Bay, CA.

Table 1. Proposed 50-fathom waypoints for better alignment of the 50-fathom boundary line with the depth contour, near Bodega Bay, CA. Directions of latitude and longitude coordinates provided below are North and West, respectively.

Waypoint Number	Action	Old Lat Deg	Old Lat Min	Old Long Deg	Old Long Min	New Lat Deg	New Lat Min	New Long Deg	New Long Min
95	Move	39	30.12	123	52.92	39	32.47	123	52.25
96	Move	39	24.53	123	55.16	39	21.86	123	54.13
97	Move	39	11.58	123	50.93	39	8.35	123	49.67
98	Move	38	57.50	123	51.10	38	57.50	123	49.42
99	Move	38	55.13	123	51.14	38	51.20	123	46.09
100	Move	38	28.58	123	22.84	38	29.47	123	20.19

Recreational Fishery

CDFW supports the preliminary season structure and associated depth limits as shown in Table 2 below and outlined in Alternative 1 Option 4 in the California Recreational Section of the Draft 2025-26 Management Measure Analytical Document ([Agenda Item F.5, Attachment 2, April 2024](#)), and is the same season structure adopted for the 2024 season through inseason action (mid-biennium).

The 2024 season structure was developed with engagement from interested stakeholders and GAP members to stay within reduced quillback rockfish, vermilion rockfish and copper rockfish harvest limits by rotating periods of offshore and inshore access in the different management areas. Continuing the same season structure into 2025-2026 as that in place for the 2024 season provides the most consistent/stable season structures across years while avoiding interactions with quillback rockfish and minimizing mortality for copper rockfish and vermilion rockfish. Before making additional modifications to the season structure, CDFW supports allowing the fishery to operate as scheduled to gather data and determine if further management measure modifications are necessary or appropriate.

Table 2. Proposed CA recreational season structure and RCA depth boundaries by Management Area and month.

Management Area	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Northern	Closed		>50 fm	May 1 – Sep 30 < 20 fm					>50 fm	<20 fm	>50 fm	
Mendocino	Closed		>50 fm	May 1 – Sep 30 < 20 fm					>50 fm	<20 fm	>50 fm	
San Francisco	Closed		>50 fm	May 1 – Sep 30 < 20 fm					>50 fm	<20 fm	>50 fm	
Central – N °36	Closed		>50 fm	May 1 – Sep 30 < 20 fm					>50 fm	<20 fm	>50 fm	
Central – S °36	Closed		All Depth			Jul 1 - Sep 30 < 50 fm			Oct 1 - Dec 31 > 50 fm			
Southern	Closed		All Depth			Jul 1 - Sep 30 < 50 fm			Oct 1 - Dec 31 > 50 fm			

Size Limits

CDFW supports the removal of size limits for cabezon, greenling, and California scorpionfish and the minimum fillet length for California Scorpionfish. These stocks currently have a healthy

population status and there are no conservation concerns with removing the associated size requirements for these species. Minimal increases to fishery impacts are expected and removing these requirements will decrease unnecessary regulatory complexity.

Sub-Bag Limits

CDFW supports continuing the vermilion 2 fish sub-bag limit south of 40°10' N. Lat. Catch of these species would continue to be included within the aggregate Rockfish, Greenling, Cabezon 10-fish daily bag limit. These recommendations are expected to reduce mortality of vermilion rockfish south of 40°10' N Lat. to stay within harvest limits while providing access to other healthy rockfish species.

New Management Measures – Descending Devices

CDFW supports the requirement that recreational vessels (private and charter) targeting groundfish in federal waters off Washington, Oregon, and California have a descending device onboard. In April California state regulations went into effect requiring a descending device be onboard when fishing for or retaining federal groundfish. The new measure would create consistency between federal and California state regulations and will contribute to reduced groundfish mortality associated with depth-dependent mortality rates already approved by the Council for management use.

New Management Measures – Continuous Transit Provision

CDFW supports modifying federal regulations that allow recreational vessels to transit, anchor overnight and/or stop to fish for non-groundfish species inside areas that are otherwise closed to recreational groundfish fishing. This management measure would better align with existing state regulations and provide flexibility to business operations and economic benefit to anglers to continue with popular invertebrate/ rockfish combination trips and multi-day trips.

Regulation Clarification

CDFW supports removing and/or modifying the incorrect language in Federal regulations referencing a California state Law that does not exist (referenced in [Agenda Item G.6.a. Supplemental CDFW Report 1, September 2023](#)). This measure has been identified as administrative clean up in nature and no further analysis has been provided.