

## CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON INITIAL HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR 2027-2028

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) provides these initial potential changes to management measures for commercial and recreational fisheries for 2027-28.

### Rockfish Conservation Area Waypoint Modification

The Harvest Specification and Management Measure process is utilized to make minor waypoint modifications to Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) boundary lines used for both recreational and commercial non-trawl fishery area management.

CDFW would appreciate any additional suggestions that would better align RCA boundary lines with the depth contours, improve enforceability or reduce angler confusion. CDFW requests that any additional proposals to modify waypoints be provided to CDFW by the advanced briefing book deadline for the November meeting.

### Cowcod Retention

Cowcod are highly valued by both recreational and commercial fishers due to their large size. However, following significant fishing pressure and the results of the 1999 stock assessment, NMFS declared cowcod overfished in January 2000. In response, retention of cowcod was prohibited, and Cowcod Conservation Areas (CCAs) were established to reduce mortality. These management measures successfully facilitated the rebuilding of the cowcod stock, leading NMFS to declare the stock rebuilt in September 2019.

Since that time, management has proceeded cautiously, implementing a stepwise approach to gradually increase fishing access for other target species in areas and depths where cowcod reside. In 2024, the CCAs were removed, and CDFW now proposes further progress by analyzing retention in both the recreational and commercial sectors. Specifically, CDFW requests the Council support evaluating recreational sub-bag limits, seasons and commercial trip limits to offer some small harvest and retention opportunities while ensuring mortality remains below limits. Historically, the allocation of cowcod was evenly split between commercial and recreational sectors, and this scheme should be considered in the analysis.