CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON 2026 GROUNDFISH HARVEST IN CALIFORNIA

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) provides the following report on harvest of select groundfish stocks of interest in 2026. A comprehensive reporting of groundfish mortality in California is found at the end of this report in Appendix 1. All values were rounded using standard rounding rules in each table for presentation purposes; for that reason, a sum of the values over rows or columns within tables may not equal the total value.

CDFW will continue to monitor fishery mortality across species and sectors over the coming months and will provide the next update to the Council in September.

Non-Trawl Commercial

Inseason changes to reopen closed areas due to quillback rockfish off California became effective in state waters in late August 2025 and in federal waters on September 18, 2025 (Agenda Item G.7.a, Supplemental CDFW Report 1, September 2025). The reopening of access for the commercial non-trawl fishery provided increased fishing opportunities for black, blue, brown, canary, widow, and yellowtail rockfishes, as well as lingcod indicated by increased harvest north of 37° 07′ N. lat. Harvest to-date for these species has approximately doubled compared to the same period last year with catch projections indicating potential to reach, but not exceed, the harvest limits. In addition, vermilion/sunset rockfish landings south of 40°10′ N. lat. are 10.4 mt higher than at this time last year. This increase is driven primarily by increased participation in the limited entry sector south of 34°27′ N. lat. As vermilion/sunset rockfish is a highly attained species across all sectors, inseason requests that may increase mortality on this stock complex should be considered with caution.

Recreational

As of early June 2026, California Recreational Fisheries Survey (CRFS) estimates are available through March 2026, whereas the boat-based rockfish, cabezon, greenling, and lingcod season opened on April 1. However, boat-based fishing for some groundfish species, such as California scorpionfish, is open year-round.

Recreational California scorpionfish mortality in 2025 increased compared to prior years (see Agenda Item D.5.a, Supplemental CDFW Report 1, March 2026) and amounted to 91% of the fishery Harvest Guideline (HG) for that year. The recreational fishery comprised 99% of all (recreational and non-trawl commercial) harvest for this species. Recreational mortality for 2026 continues to trend higher than typical with Jan-Mar catch at 35.8 mt, or 15% of the 2026 HG (see Appendix 1, Table 1), which is higher than the recreational catch compared to Jan-Mar 2025 (29.7 mt). If high mortality continues, the Annual Catch Limit, as well as the Overfishing Limit, may potentially be reached or exceeded before the year's end. While only three months of estimates are available to date, recreational fishery participants and representatives from southern California should take note of the 2025 uptick, and might consider shifting effort to other targets when and where possible.

Appendix 1.
This appendix provides the most current California harvest information for the 2026 fishing season relative to Annual Catch Limits (ACLs), Harvest Guidelines (HGs), sector allocations, and Annual Catch Targets (ACTs) for 2026. 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.

Monthly recreational catch estimates are from the California Recreational Fisheries Survey (CRFS) and RecFIN through March 31, 2026 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 May 31, 2026 (Table 2). The 2026 combined recreational and commercial catches are compared to federally designated harvest specifications and management measures in Table 3.

Table 1. Estimated mortality (mt) of select groundfish species in the California recreational sector by month through March 2026. Data are from CRFS and RecFIN, are preliminary and subject to change. Note: 0.0 indicates trace mortality; a dash (-) indicates no mortality.

Stock/Stock Complex	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Yelloweye rockfish	-	-	0.0										0.0
CA Quillback rockfish	-	-	-										0.0
CA Black rockfish	0.0	0.0	0.0										0.1
Canary rockfish	0.0	-	0.0										0.0
Bocaccio S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.2	0.0	-										0.2
Chilipepper S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.0	0.0	0.0										0.0
Cowcod S. 40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-										0.0
Widow rockfish	-	-	-										0.0
Yellowtail rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-										0.0
Nearshore rockfish N. 42°-40°10' N. lat. [a]	0.0	-	0.0										0.1
Copper rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-										0.0
Nearshore rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. [a]	0.4	0.2	0.2										0.8
Copper rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.1	0.1	0.1										0.2
Copper Rockfish S. 34°27' N. lat.	0.1	0.1	0.0										0.2
Shelf rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat. [b]	-	-	-										0.0
Vermilion/sunset rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-										0.0
Shelf rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. [c]	0.5	0.3	0.1										1.0

Stock/Stock Complex	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Mexican Rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-										0.0
Squarespot Rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.0	0.0	-										0.0
Vermilion/sunset rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.4	0.3	0.1										0.8
Slope rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-										0.0
Slope rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-										0.0
Blackgill rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-										0.0
Darkblotched rockfish	-	-	-										0.0
Shortbelly rockfish	-	-	-										0.0
Splitnose rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-										0.0
Longspine thornyhead N. 34° 27' N. lat.	-	-	-										0.0
Longspine thornyhead S. 34° 27' N. lat.	-	-	-										0.0
Shortspine thornyhead [d]	-	-	-										0.0
Shortspine thornyhead N. 34° 27' N. lat.	-	-	-										0.0
CA Scorpionfish	11.6	7.5	16.6										35.8
CA Cabezon	0.4	0.1	0.0										0.5
CA Kelp greenling	0.2	0.0	0.1										0.3
Lingcod N. 40°10' N. lat.	0.0	-	0.3										0.3
Lingcod S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.1	0.1	-										0.2
Sablefish N. 36° N. lat.	0.1	-	-										0.1
Sablefish S. 36° N. lat.	0.0	0.0	-										0.0
Dover sole	-	-	-										0.0
English sole	-	-	-										0.0
Petrale sole	0.0	0.3	-										0.3
Starry flounder	-	-	-										0.0
Other flatfish	2.6	2.2	3.2										7.9
Spiny dogfish	0.1	-	-										0.1

a/ Includes catch of copper rockfish. Does not include catch of California black rockfish.
b/ Includes catch of vermilion/sunset rockfish only from the area between 42° and 40°10’ N. lat.
c/ Includes catch of squarespot rockfish, vermilion/sunset rockfish, and Mexican rockfish South of 40°10’ N. lat.
d/ Includes catch of shortspine thornyhead from all areas off California; however, a sub-total is also provided due to an area-specific ACT.

Table 2. Landings (mt) of select groundfish species in California commercial non-trawl fixed gear limited entry and open access sectors by month in 2026. Data are from PacFIN (05/31/26), are preliminary and subject to change. Note: Landing estimates do not include discard mortality. 0.0 indicates trace landings; a dash (--) indicates no landings.

Stock/Stock Complex	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Yelloweye rockfish	--	--	--	--	--								0.0
CA Quillback rockfish	--	--	--	--	--								0.0
CA Black rockfish	0.2	0.2	1.0	4.5	2.9								8.8
Canary rockfish	2.2	2.2	3.8	2.2	2.5								12.9
Bocaccio S. 40°10' N. lat.	10.3	11.2	10.6	12.5	7.9								52.5
Chilipepper S. 40°10' N. lat.	8.6	4.4	9.7	7.2	3.8								33.7
Cowcod S. 40°10' N. lat.	--	--	--	--	--								0.0
Widow rockfish	1.4	0.6	1.4	1.4	0.6								5.4
Yellowtail rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	2.1	0.8	0.9	2.5	0.7								7.0
Nearshore rockfish N. 42°-40°10' N. lat. [a]	0.4	0.2	0.8	0.5	0.4								2.3
Copper rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat.	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1								0.2
Nearshore rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. [a]	10.3	5.9	8.6	6.0	5.6								36.4
Copper rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2								1.0
Copper rockfish S. 34°27' N. lat.	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1								0.4
Shelf rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat. [b]	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3	1.5								2.3
Vermilion/sunset rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat.	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.1								0.5
Shelf rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. [c]	17.4	10.2	16.8	10.1	16.7								71.2
Mexican rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.9	0.7	0.9	0.3	0.6								3.4
Squarespot rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0								0.0
Vermilion/sunset rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	13.1	7.5	11.8	6.3	12.4								51.1
Slope rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	--	--	0.1	0.1	0.1								0.3
Slope rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. [d]	0.4	0.5	1.0	1.1	1.2								4.2
Blackgill rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	4.4	3.4	4.7	4.9	3.1								20.5
Darkblotched rockfish	0.0	0.2		0.1	0.1								0.4
Shortbelly rockfish	--	--	--	--	--								0.0
Splitnose rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0								0.0
Longspine thornyhead N. 34° 27' N. lat.	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3								0.9

Longspine thornyhead S. 34° 27' N. lat.	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1								0.7
Shortspine thornyhead [e]	8.7	4.4	5.3	5.1	5.7								29.2
Shortspine thornyhead N. 34° 27' N. lat.	4.3	2.1	2.4	3.0	2.5								14.3
CA Scorpionfish	0.0	0.0	0.0	--	0.5								0.5
CA Cabezon	2.7	1.1	2.8	2.2	1.7								10.5
CA Kelp greenling	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1								0.7
Lingcod N. 40°10' N. lat.	0.2	0.1	0.8	0.7	0.5								2.3
Lingcod S. 40°10' N. lat.	8.0	4.6	5.6	5.6	2.9								26.7
Sablefish N. 36° N. lat.	34.4	29.0	50.8	51.6	63.4								229.2
Sablefish S. 36° N. lat.	25.5	18.0	22.8	23.8	21.9								112.0
Dover sole	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1								0.1
English sole	--	--	--	--	--								0.0
Petrale sole	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0								0.3
Starry flounder	--	--	--	0.0	--								0.0
Other flatfish	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.4								1.3
Spiny dogfish	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	--								0.0

a/ Includes landings of copper rockfish. Does not include landings of California black rockfish.
b/ Includes landings of vermilion/sunset rockfish only from the area between 42° and 40°10' N. lat.
c/ Includes landings of Mexican rockfish, vermilion/sunset rockfish, and squarespot rockfish.
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/ Includes landings of shortspine thornyhead from all areas off California; a sub-total is also provided due to an area-specific ACT.

Table 3. Estimated mortality (mt) of select groundfish species in California for 2026 compared to the harvest limits for 2026. Recreational mortality estimates are through March 2026, commercial non-trawl landings are through 05/31/2026.

Stock/Stock Complex	Reference Point	Recreational Mortality (mt)	Commercial non-trawl Landings (mt)	Total (mt)	Tracking Limits (mt)	Percent Attainment
Yelloweye rockfish	CA Rec ACT [a]	0.0	0.0	0.0 [a]	9.1	0.0%
CA Quillback rockfish	Fishery HG	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0%
CA Black rockfish	Fishery HG	0.1	8.8	8.9	234.4	3.8%
Canary rockfish	CA Rec HG [a]	0.0	12.9	0.0 [a]	51.4	0.0%
Bocaccio S. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.2	52.5	52.7	1,012.1	5.2%
Chilipepper S. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	33.7	33.7	653.8	5.2%
Cowcod S. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	0.0	0.0	41.7	0.0%
Widow rockfish	Coastwide Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	5.4	5.4	300.0	1.8%
Yellowtail rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	7.0	7.0	599.8	1.2%
Nearshore rockfish N. 42°-40°10' N. lat. [b]	Informal CA Share of Fishery HG [c]	0.1	2.3	2.4	37.6	6.3%
Copper rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat.	ACL Contribution to Complex	0.0	0.2	0.2	6.8	2.9%
Nearshore rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. [b]	Fishery HG	0.8	36.4	37.2	930.8	4.0%
Copper rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	ACL Contribution to Complex	0.2	1.0	1.2	126.3	1.0%
Copper rockfish S. 34°27' N. lat.	Rec ACT [a]	0.2	0.4	0.2 [a]	18.0	0.9%
Shelf rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat. [d]	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	2.3	2.3	497.7	0.5%
Vermilion/sunset rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat.	ACL Contribution to Complex	0.0	0.5	0.5	6.2	8.1%
Shelf rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. [e]	Non-Trawl Allocation	1.0	71.2	72.2	1,254.0	5.8%
Mexican rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	ACL Contribution to Complex	0.0	3.4	3.4	3.9	86.5%
Squarespot rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	ACL Contribution to Complex	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.9	0.2%
Vermilion/sunset rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	ACL Contribution to Complex	0.8	51.1	51.9	271.5	19.1%
Slope rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	0.3	0.3	266.4	0.1%
Slope rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. [f]	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	4.2	4.2	144.9	2.9%
Blackgill rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Share	0.0	20.5	20.5	98.0	20.9%
Darkblotched rockfish	Coastwide Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	0.4	0.4	35.4	1.1%
Shortbelly rockfish [g]	EC Species Threshold	0.0	0.0	0.0	2,000.0	0.0%
Splitnose rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	0.0	0.0	72.7	0.0%
Longspine thornyhead N. 34° 27' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	0.9	0.9	95.4	0.9%

Stock/Stock Complex	Reference Point	Recreational Mortality (mt)	Commercial non-trawl Landings (mt)	Total (mt)	Tracking Limits (mt)	Percent Attainment
Longspine thornyhead S. 34° 27' N. lat.	Fishery HG	0.0	0.7	0.7	616.5	0.1%
Shortspine thornyhead [h]	Coastwide Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	29.2	29.2	218.3	13.4%
Shortspine thornyhead N. 34° 27' N. lat.	Non-Trawl ACT	0.0	14.3	14.3	67.0	21.3%
CA Scorpionfish	Fishery HG	35.8	0.5	36.3	236.0	15.4%
CA Cabezon	Fishery HG	0.5	10.5	11.0	154.5	7.1%
CA Kelp greenling	ACL Contribution to Complex [i]	0.3	0.7	1.0	92.5	1.1%
Lingcod N. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.3	2.3	2.6	1,789.1	0.1%
Lingcod S. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.2	26.7	26.9	456.9	5.9%
Sablefish N. 36° N. lat.	LEFG Share + OA Share + Rec Set-Aside	0.1	229.2	229.3	11,620.0	2.0%
Sablefish S. 36° N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation + Rec Set-Aside	0.0	112.0	112.0	4,321.1	2.6%
Dover sole	Coastwide Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	0.1	0.1	2,043.7	0.0%
English sole	Coastwide Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	0.0	0.0	430.3	0.0%
Petrale sole	Coastwide Non-Trawl Allocation	0.3	0.3	0.6	30.0	2.1%
Starry flounder	Coastwide Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	0.0	0.0	187.7	0.0%
Other flatfish	Coastwide Non-Trawl Allocation	7.9	1.3	9.2	697.3	1.3%
Spiny dogfish	Coastwide Fishery HG	0.1	0.0	0.1	994.2	0.0%

a/ These totals only include recreational mortality as the tracking limit is specific to the California recreational sector. There is no state-specific HG or ACT for commercial non-trawl.

b/ Includes catch and landings of copper rockfish. Does not include catch or landings of California black rockfish.

c/ The fishery HG for the nearshore rockfish complex north of 40º10’ N. lat. is 82.9 mt. The informal CA share of the HG is 37.6 mt, and is shared between sectors.

d/ Includes catch and landings of vermilion/sunset rockfish only for the area between 42° and 40°10’ N. lat.

e/ Includes catch and landings of vermilion/sunset rockfish, Mexican rockfish, and squarespot 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/ Shortbelly rockfish is an ecosystem component species and has a threshold of 2,000 mt as per FMP Amendment 30

h/ Includes catch and landings of shortspine thornyhead from all areas off California; a sub-total is also provided due to an area-specific ACT.

i/ The tracking limit is the CA kelp greenling ACL contribution to the “other fish” complex