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. Preliminary year-end totals for 2026 will be provided to the Council at the next meeting, when those data become available.

Recreational

In the California recreational sector, June-August are historically the highest-effort months for groundfish, with the season's peak harvest typically occurring in August. However, August 2026 saw significantly lower than expected mortality for several groundfish species, particularly for the area south of Point Conception. In August this year, there were 15 mt of vermilion/sunset rockfish mortality south of 40° 10' N. lat., with only 3 mt from the area south of Point Conception. By contrast, August 2025 saw 34 mt south of 40° 10' N. lat., with 25 mt from the area south of Point Conception. Furthermore, this pattern is not exclusive to vermilion/sunset rockfish; California scorpionfish mortality was also lower than expected in August, as was copper rockfish south of Point Conception (Table 1).

There are several factors likely contributing to this pattern in southern California: the arrival of El Niño conditions possibly diverting groundfish effort towards Highly Migratory Species, and potential changes in fleet behavior to actively take pressure off groundfish. At this time, no Harvest Guidelines are expected to be exceeded.

Commercial Non-Trawl

In the California commercial non-trawl sectors, total groundfish landings through October rose from 1,849 mt in 2025 to 2,228 mt in 2026, an increase of about 20 percent. Most of the increase came from target species. Sablefish landings increased the most, increasing from 971 mt to 1,223 mt north of 36° N. lat. and from 188 mt to 250 mt south of 36° N. lat. Additionally, Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) landings of vermilion/sunset rockfish south of 40°10′ N. lat. are slowing compared to earlier in the year.

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 August 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 October 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 August 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	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4					1.8
CA Quillback rockfish	-	-	-	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.4					1.1
CA Black rockfish	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	12.9	20.8	42.1	40.3					128.6
Canary rockfish	0.0	-	0.0	6.8	3.5	3.6	4.0	5.4					23.4
Bocaccio S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.2	0.0	-	32.4	22.1	24.5	17.6	11.4					108.1
Chilipepper S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.2	11.2	1.4	3.2	4.6					29.6
Cowcod S. 40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-	1.3	0.9	1.2	0.2	0.1					3.6
Widow rockfish	-	-	-	0.6	0.5	0.9	0.5	2.2					4.7
Yellowtail rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.9	1.6					3.0
Nearshore rockfish N. 42°-40°10' N. lat. [a]	0.0	-	0.0	2.0	1.1	2.0	6.0	5.6					16.6
Copper rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.8	1.2					3.1
Nearshore rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. [a]	0.4	0.2	0.2	35.1	34.4	50.0	58.6	47.2					226.0
Copper rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.1	0.1	0.1	8.0	4.3	5.1	6.9	4.2					28.8
Copper Rockfish S. 34°27' N. lat.	0.1	0.1	0.0	3.9	1.3	2.0	3.1	0.4					10.9
Shelf rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat. [b]	-	-	-	0.4	0.6	0.6	1.6	2.8					6.0
Vermilion/sunset rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.7	1.2					3.0
Shelf rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. [c]	0.5	0.3	0.1	71.1	62.2	55.3	44.8	33.0					267.4

Stock/Stock Complex	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Mexican Rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-	0.6	1.3	0.6	-	0.0					2.6
Squarespot Rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.0	0.0	-	1.0	2.6	3.4	1.6	0.2					8.8
Vermilion/sunset rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.4	0.3	0.1	47.2	32.3	27.6	23.6	14.8					146.3
Slope rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					0.0
Slope rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-	9.7	0.4	0.3	-	-					10.4
Blackgill rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	-	-	-	0.0	0.0	0.3	-	-					0.3
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	6.1	23.8	32.1	28.0	14.6					140.4
CA Cabezon	0.4	0.1	0.0	4.1	2.3	2.1	3.5	3.1					15.5
CA Kelp greenling	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5					2.1
Lingcod N. 40°10' N. lat.	0.0	-	0.3	5.6	3.8	4.4	12.1	16.3					42.4
Lingcod S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.1	0.1	-	40.2	19.5	24.7	26.5	29.5					140.6
Sablefish N. 36° N. lat.	0.1	-	-	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.1					0.8
Sablefish S. 36° N. lat.	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0					0.1
Dover sole	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					0.0
English sole	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					0.0
Petrale sole	0.0	0.3	-	2.3	1.4	3.0	2.4	2.9					12.3
Starry flounder	-	-	-	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1					0.3
Other flatfish	2.6	2.2	3.2	2.0	2.5	0.9	1.9	7.0					22.2
Spiny dogfish	0.1	-	-	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.1					0.9

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 (10/31/26), 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	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--			--
CA Quillback rockfish	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--			--
CA Black rockfish	0.2	0.1	1.0	4.5	2.9	4.5	7.5	5.5	4.6	4.7			35.5
Canary rockfish	2.2	2.2	3.8	2.2	2.5	3.1	2.0	4.1	3.2	4.0			29.3
Bocaccio S. 40°10' N. lat.	10.3	11.2	10.6	12.3	8.1	12.0	5.4	10.0	10.7	12.7			103.3
Chilipepper S. 40°10' N. lat.	8.6	4.4	9.7	7.0	4.1	7.0	6.7	4.4	5.9	7.8			65.6
Cowcod S. 40°10' N. lat.	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--			--
Widow rockfish	1.4	0.6	1.4	1.4	0.6	2.0	1.1	2.4	2.7	3.6			17.1
Yellowtail rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	2.1	0.8	0.9	2.5	0.7	2.0	1.8	1.6	0.5	2.1			15.0
Nearshore rockfish N. 42°-40°10' N. lat. [a]	0.4	0.2	0.8	0.5	0.4	0.7	1.4	0.9	0.6	1.3			7.0
Copper rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat.	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1			0.4
Nearshore rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. [a]	10.3	5.9	8.7	6.0	5.7	10.5	9.7	11.2	11.4	14.2			93.6
Copper rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3			2.4
Copper rockfish S. 34°27' N. lat.	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0			0.6
Shelf rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat. [b]	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3	1.3	0.7	2.2	0.8	0.1	0.3			6.1
Vermilion/sunset rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat.	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.1			1.0
Shelf rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. [c]	17.2	10.0	16.2	10.1	16.6	9.9	11.1	17.4	15.9	14.1			138.5
Mexican rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.9	0.7	0.9	0.3	0.6	1.2	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.1			5.5
Squarespot rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0			0.2
Vermilion/sunset rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	13.1	7.5	11.8	6.4	12.5	5.6	7.7	12.6	10.1	7.1			94.4
Slope rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	--	--	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.5	1.8	0.9	0.9	1.1			5.5
Slope rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. [d]	4.8	3.9	5.7	6.0	4.3	6.4	3.3	5.5	4.4	5.4			49.6
Blackgill rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	4.4	3.4	4.7	4.9	3.1	5.5	2.9	4.1	3.7	4.6			41.3
Darkblotched rockfish	0.0	0.2	--	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1			0.8
Shortbelly rockfish	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--			--
Splitnose rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0			0.1

Longspine thornyhead N. 34° 27' N. lat.	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3			1.9
Longspine thornyhead S. 34° 27' N. lat.	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.2			1.9
Shortspine thornyhead [e]	8.7	4.4	5.3	5.1	6.1	7.8	5.8	7.0	6.5	6.2			62.7
Shortspine thornyhead N. 34° 27' N. lat.	4.3	2.1	2.4	3.0	2.7	3.2	2.4	3.8	3.5	3.4			30.7
CA Scorpionfish	0.0	0.0	0.0	--	0.5	0.6	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0			1.4
CA Cabezon	2.7	1.1	2.8	2.2	1.7	2.3	2.0	3.1	2.1	3.1			23.2
CA Kelp greenling	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2			1.2
Lingcod N. 40°10' N. lat.	0.2	0.1	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.8	1.0	1.4	1.3	2.5			9.3
Lingcod S. 40°10' N. lat.	8.0	4.6	5.6	5.6	3.0	5.1	4.7	5.2	5.6	9.7			57.1
Sablefish N. 36° N. lat.	34.4	29.0	50.8	51.6	65.1	105.5	113.6	207.7	223.9	341.1			1,222.8
Sablefish S. 36° N. lat.	25.5	18.0	22.8	23.8	22.2	26.9	25.4	19.3	30.2	36.3			250.4
Dover sole	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0			0.7
English sole	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--			--
Petrale sole	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1			0.5
Starry flounder	--	--	0.1	0.0	--	0.0	0.0	0.0	--	--			0.1
Other flatfish	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0			1.8
Spiny dogfish	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	--	0.0	--	--	--	0.0			0.1

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 August 2026, commercial non-trawl landings are through 10/31/2026.

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]	1.8	--	1.8	9.1	19.8%
CA Quillback rockfish	Fishery HG	1.1	--	1.1	1.4	76.2%
CA Black rockfish	Fishery HG	128.6	35.5	164.1	234.4	70.0%
Canary rockfish	CA Rec HG [a]	23.4	29.3	23.4	52.7	45.5%
Bocaccio S. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	108.1	103.3	211.5	1,012.1	20.9%
Chilipepper S. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	29.6	65.6	95.2	653.8	14.6%
Cowcod S. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	3.6	--	3.6	41.7	8.7%
Widow rockfish	Coastwide Non-Trawl Allocation	4.7	17.1	21.8	300.0	7.3%
Yellowtail rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	3.0	15.0	18.0	599.8	3.0%
Nearshore rockfish N. 42°-40°10' N. lat. [b]	Informal CA Share of Fishery HG [c]	16.6	7.0	23.7	37.6	62.9%
Copper rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat.	ACL Contribution to Complex	3.1	0.4	3.5	6.8	52.1%
Nearshore rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. [b]	Fishery HG	226.0	93.6	319.6	930.8	34.3%
Copper rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	ACL Contribution to Complex	28.8	2.4	31.2	126.3	24.7%
Copper rockfish S. 34°27' N. lat.	Rec ACT [a]	10.9	0.6	10.9	11.5	60.8%
Shelf rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat. [d]	Non-Trawl Allocation	6.0	6.1	12.1	497.7	2.4%
Vermilion/sunset rockfish 42°-40°10' N. lat.	ACL Contribution to Complex	3.0	1.0	4.0	6.2	64.1%
Shelf rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. [e]	Non-Trawl Allocation	267.4	138.5	406.0	1,254.0	32.4%
Mexican rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	ACL Contribution to Complex	2.6	5.5	8.1	3.9	206.7%
Squarespot rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	ACL Contribution to Complex	8.8	0.2	9.0	5.9	152.4%
Vermilion/sunset rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	ACL Contribution to Complex	146.3	94.4	240.7	271.5	88.6%
Slope rockfish N. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	5.5	5.5	266.4	2.1%
Slope rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat. [f]	Non-Trawl Allocation	10.4	49.6	60.0	144.9	41.4%
Blackgill rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Share	0.3	41.3	41.6	98.0	42.5%
Darkblotched rockfish	Coastwide Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	0.8	0.8	35.4	2.2%
Shortbelly rockfish [g]	EC Species Threshold	0.0	--	0.0	2,000.0	0.0%
Splitnose rockfish S. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	0.1	0.1	72.7	0.2%
Longspine thornyhead N. 34° 27' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	1.9	1.9	95.4	2.0%

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	1.9	1.9	616.5	0.3%
Shortspine thornyhead [h]	Coastwide Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	62.7	62.7	218.3	28.7%
Shortspine thornyhead N. 34° 27' N. lat.	Non-Trawl ACT	0.0	30.7	30.7	67.0	45.8%
CA Scorpionfish	Fishery HG	140.4	1.4	141.9	236.0	60.1%
CA Cabezon	Fishery HG	15.5	23.2	38.8	154.5	25.1%
CA Kelp greenling	ACL Contribution to Complex [i]	2.1	1.2	3.4	92.5	3.6%
Lingcod N. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	42.4	9.3	51.7	1,789.1	2.9%
Lingcod S. 40°10' N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation	140.6	57.1	197.7	456.9	43.3%
Sablefish N. 36° N. lat.	LEFG Share + OA Share + Rec Set-Aside	0.8	1222.8	1223.5	11,620.0	10.5%
Sablefish S. 36° N. lat.	Non-Trawl Allocation + Rec Set-Aside	0.1	250.4	250.5	4,321.1	5.8%
Dover sole	Coastwide Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	0.7	0.7	2,043.7	0.0%
English sole	Coastwide Non-Trawl Allocation	0.0	--	0.0	430.3	0.0%
Petrale sole	Coastwide Non-Trawl Allocation	12.3	0.5	12.8	30.0	42.5%
Starry flounder	Coastwide Non-Trawl Allocation	0.3	0.1	0.4	187.7	0.2%
Other flatfish	Coastwide Non-Trawl Allocation	22.2	1.8	24.1	697.3	3.5%
Spiny dogfish	Coastwide Fishery HG	0.9	0.1	1.0	994.2	0.1%

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