

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE REPORT ON THE STATUS OF 2025 FISHERIES

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is providing this report to inform the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) on how the 2025 Oregon recreational groundfish and commercial nearshore fisheries are progressing.

The substantial reduction (32.9 percent) in the annual catch limit (ACL) contribution for black rockfish (343.6 metric tons (mt)) to the Oregon black/ blue/ deacon rockfish (BBDR) complex ACL (423 mt; Table 1) necessitated changes to both commercial and recreational fisheries, and introduced some uncertainty in how those changes might affect behavior, effort, and catch levels. In December 2024, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (OFWC) set sector-specific harvest guidelines (HGs) for black rockfish, 76 percent to recreational and 24 percent to commercial (Table 2) of the ACL contribution of black rockfish to the BBDR complex ACL¹. This is the same sharing that has been in place since the early 2000s.

Table 1. 2024 and 2025 annual limits for black, blue/deacon (BBDR) complex, and canary rockfish along with the percentage decrease from 2024 to 2025

Complex/Species	2024 (mt)	2025 (mt)	% decrease
Oregon BBDR complex ACL	594	423	-28.8
OR black rockfish ACL contribution	512	343.6	-32.9
OR blue/deacon rockfish ACL contribution	81.9	79.6	-2.8
Coastwide canary rockfish ACL	1,296	571	-55.9
OR recreational share of coastwide canary ACL	62.9	26.0	-58.7

Table 2. 2025 black rockfish harvest guidelines for the commercial and recreational sectors as adopted by the OFWC in December 2024.

Black Rockfish Contribution (mt) to BBDR Complex ACL	Sector	Allocation %	2024 HG (mt)	2025 HG (mt)
343.6	Commercial	24.0%	122.9	82.4
	Recreational	76.0%	389.1	261.1

The coastwide canary rockfish ACL was reduced by 55.9 percent from 2024 (1,296 mt) to 2025 (571 mt; Table 1). The resulting Oregon recreational share was reduced from 62.9 mt to 26.0 mt from 2024 to 2025, a reduction of 58.7 percent (Table 1). There is no canary rockfish share for the Oregon commercial nearshore fishery, as that sector does not catch a high volume of them and any mortality is accounted for as part of the commercial nearshore sector in federal tracking.

¹ https://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2024/12_Dec/121324.asp

Recreational Fishery

ODFW monitors the Oregon recreational bottomfish (groundfish) fishery inseason via data collected by the [Ocean Recreational Boat Survey](#) (ORBS) program. Effort, catch, and discard data are available monthly, on a one-month lag; however, preliminary data may be available four to five days after the end of a statistical week (Monday through Sunday) to discern trends in effort and catch rates. Additionally, an end-of-year point estimate of total mortality for each species is generated by the Mortality of Oregon Recreational Groundfish (MORG) model, which is updated monthly with estimates provided by ORBS.

The recreational fishery HG for black rockfish in 2025 is 261.1 mt, down from 389.1 mt in 2024. At their December 2024 meeting, the OFWC adopted the ODFW staff recommendation to start the year out with a 4-fish general marine daily bag limit, increasing to five fish July 1. This seasonal structure was designed to reduce black rockfish impacts—given that the species comprises 70–80 percent of the recreational catch by number—while still maximizing angler opportunity. Many charter captains and recreational anglers who participated in ODFW’s public meetings throughout 2024 indicated a desire for higher bag limits during the popular summer months of July and August. This desire had to be balanced with trying to keep the season open year-round. The reduced bag limit during the first half of the year was intended to help strike that balance. During the December OFWC meeting, commissioners were informed that an inseason reduction, via temporary rules, may be necessary as MORG provided a year-end point estimate that was over the state-specific recreational harvest guideline.

To reduce canary rockfish impacts to stay within the lower share, a sub-bag limit of one fish per day was implemented for both the regular bottomfish fishery as well as the long-leader gear fishery. This has not been popular with anglers participating in the long-leader gear fishery, as they can often run into more than one canary rockfish on a single drift. They had concerns over how many canary rockfish they would end up having to release while pursuing yellowtail and widow rockfish. There was also potential that this could reduce the attractiveness of the long-leader gear fishery, putting more pressure on the traditional bottomfish fishery and species such as black rockfish.

ORBS data through June estimated the total mortality of black rockfish from recreational anglers at 98 mt, shown in Table 3. During the first three weeks of July, a preliminary estimate of 34 metric tons was harvested, bringing the total estimate to roughly half of the Oregon recreational black rockfish harvest quota on July 20 (data available on July 25). The following two weeks of July, leading into the first few days of August, coastal ports reported high fishing effort. The weather may have played a role in reducing effort and catches particularly in the early summer, which seemed to be unusually windy. However, starting the week of July 21, the winds and ocean settled down, with several weeks in a row of beautiful ocean conditions. With many other recreational ocean fishing opportunities also available, like coho salmon, Pacific halibut, albacore tuna, and Dungeness crab, there was high recreational private and charter effort and catches of bottomfish, particularly black rockfish, starting in mid-July.

Table 3. Estimated metric tons (mt) of black rockfish harvested by month in 2025.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Black Rockfish	5.1	1.6	4.6	19.3	31.7	35.7	80.1	52.7

Based on this data, ODFW contacted the Marine Sportfishing Advisory Committee (SAC) and Tribal co-managers on August 8. SAC is an informal group of private anglers, charter captains, port officials, and fishing-related business representatives along the Oregon coast who provide advice when there is insufficient time for a public meeting. Most SAC members recommended acting sooner rather than later to reduce the bag limit back to four fish, rather than waiting and risking a reduction to three fish or a complete season closure. Tribal co-managers that provided feedback also favored taking smaller action sooner rather than waiting and having to take more drastic action later. Following this input, ODFW used the state temporary rule processes to return the bag limit to four fish beginning on Monday, August 18².

On September 11, 2025, ODFW staff received the preliminary estimates for August as well as some preliminary data for the first week of September. Even with the return to a 4-fish bag limit, catches of black rockfish were higher than projected, with an estimated 53 mt of black rockfish caught during the month of August. Weather and ocean conditions continued to be very nice through early September. There were also opportunities for albacore tuna and coho salmon, drawing additional anglers to the ocean and resulting in high fishing effort. On September 12, ODFW again contacted SAC and tribal co-managers to let them know of the high catches and solicit input on how to proceed for the remainder of the season. Some were in favor of keeping the 4-fish bag limit and closing the season if the black/ blue/deacon rockfish complex ACL was approached. Others preferred further reducing the bag limit, down to 3 fish, to keep at least some opportunity open for as long as possible, particularly as this would also allow for lingcod fishing to continue. Based on feedback received, on September 16, ODFW again used the state temporary rule process and announced that the general marine bag limit would be reduced to three fish beginning on Thursday, September 18³.

Staff will continue monitoring effort and impacts closely and will take further action if needed. ODFW is not requesting concurrent federal action at this time as the state process is more timely and flexible for reacting to the fishery inseason.

Commercial Nearshore Fishery

The commercial nearshore fishery HG for black rockfish is 82.4 mt for 2025, down from 122.9 mt in 2024. ODFW staff held meetings on April 2 and June 5, 2024 with the Commercial Nearshore Advisory Panel (CNAP) to get their input on how to structure the season given the lower black rockfish limit. ODFW staff hosted two public meetings in the fall of 2024 to get additional input from fishery participants on reductions for the 2025 season. The majority of fishery participants who provided feedback wanted to continue to have opportunity throughout the year, while others preferred to keep limits as high as possible and risk reduced limits or closure before the end of the year. This would be accomplished by reducing the bi-monthly trip limits, maintaining higher limits

² <https://myodfw.com/news/general-marine-species-bag-limit-decreases-beginning-aug-18>

³ <https://myodfw.com/news/general-marine-species-bag-limit-reduced-lower-risk-early-season-closure>

during Periods 3 and 4 (Table 4), when there are more visitors to the Oregon coast and higher demand for fresh local seafood. The OFWC adopted staff's recommendation to reduce trip limits proportionally to the harvest guideline reduction, or about 33 percent, in an effort to balance competing desires for trip limits to remain as high as possible while providing for at least some opportunity year-round. Projections at the time indicated these limits would likely achieve the harvest guideline before the end of the year, and commissioners were informed that inseason reductions would probably be necessary.

Through June, the fishery was tracking close to the pre-season projected catches, with fluctuations from week to week, as the weather plays a large role in effort and landings in this small boat fishery. On June 30, 2025, ODFW staff reached out to the CNAP to discuss the progress of the fishery to date, any potential changes for the remainder of the year, and their risk tolerance for much lower black rockfish limits later in the year. With the year-end projected impacts still estimated to be right around the commercial HG for black rockfish, CNAP members recommended making no changes to the bi-monthly trip limits for black rockfish, with the caveat that if black rockfish catches in late July and August increased, larger trip limit reductions could be necessary later in the year. Currently, year-end projected black rockfish impacts remain near the commercial HG and industry feedback at public meetings held on September 9 and 11, 2025 favored keeping bi-monthly limits at their current levels to allow opportunity to achieve the HG.

Table 4. OFWC adopted bi-monthly trip limits for black rockfish, in pounds, for the commercial nearshore fishery in 2025, with 2024 limits for reference.

Period	Black Rockfish Bi-Monthly Periods	2024 Initial Trip Limit (and after inseason adj.) in Pounds		2025 Trip Limit in Pounds
1	Jan - Feb	1,800		1,200
2	Mar – Apr	2,100		1,200
3	May – Jun	2,400		1,600
4	Jul – Aug	2,400	(2,700)	1,600
5	Sep – Oct	2,100	(2,700)	1,200
6	Nov – Dec	1,800	(2,700)	1,200

Planning for 2026

This fall ODFW staff will be hosting public meetings for the recreational bottomfish fishery (early October) to get feedback on how the 2025 season went and gather input on possible changes for 2026. At the commercial nearshore fishery public meetings held in early September, fishers indicated that they would like bi-monthly limits to remain status quo for the 2026 season to allow for opportunity throughout the year and maintain their markets. The OFWC will finalize the 2026 sector-specific harvest guidelines, based on federal 2026 ACLs, or ACL contributions, as well as recreational (e.g. bag limits) and commercial (e.g. bi-monthly trip limits) regulations at their December 12, 2025, meeting in Salem, OR. There is the opportunity for public comment to the OFWC in writing prior to the meeting, or in person or online during the meeting.

Nearshore Visual-Acoustic Survey

ODFW was able to secure funding to conduct a second nearshore visual-acoustic survey this summer, focusing on rockfish. As of September 17, the survey is 91 percent complete, with 33 sea days, 275 video drops, and fourteen scientists contributing to data collection. Data from this survey should be available to help inform 2027 stock assessments. During the 2025 session, the Oregon Legislature approved a new recreational ocean endorsement that will be required for all anglers fishing the ocean for anything other than shellfish, salmon, and steelhead beginning January 1, 2026. The funds generated from this endorsement will be utilized to support future marine surveys and other research to inform marine fisheries management.