

**TITLE 14. Fish and Game Commission
Notice of Proposed Changes in Regulations**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Fish and Game Commission (Commission), pursuant to the authority vested by sections 200, 202, 205, 215, 220, 702, 7071, and 8587.1 of the Fish and Game Code and to implement, interpret or make specific sections 200, 202, 205, 206, 215, 220, 1802, 5508, 5509, 7071, 8585.5, 8586, of the Fish and Game Code, 50 CFR Part 660, Subpart G; 50 CFR 660.384; and Title 14 CCR 27.20, proposes to amend sections 27.25, 27.30, 27.35, 27.45, 27.50, 27.65, 28.26, 28.27, 28.28, 28.29, 28.49, 28.54, 28.55, 28.56, and 28.58, Title 14, California Code of Regulations, relating to recreational fishing regulations for federal groundfish and associated species for consistency with federal rules for 2013 and 2014

Informative Digest/Policy Statement Overview

Under California law (California Fish and Game Code sections 200 and 205), the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) adopts regulations for recreational groundfish fishing in state waters zero to three miles from shore. The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) recommends management measures for jointly managed fisheries operating in federal waters three to 200 miles from shore. These measures are then implemented into federal law. For consistency the Commission routinely adopts regulations to bring state law into conformance with federal law for groundfish and other federally-managed species, a regular process which occurs biennially.

Existing law authorizes the recreational take of groundfish with a sport license subject to regulations set forth by federal and state authorities. Current regulations establish season lengths, depth constraints, methods of take, and size and bag limits within the six groundfish management areas for all federal groundfish and associated species.

At its June 2012 meeting in San Mateo, the Council recommended regulatory changes for recreational groundfish fishing in California in 2013 and 2014. These changes were intended to provide additional opportunities where appropriate or constrain catches to keep within allowable limits.

Proposed Amendments to Season Length and Depth Constraints

The proposed changes to seasons for 2013-2014 (Table 1) will reduce regulatory complexity in the Northern and Mendocino Management Areas by providing consistent opening dates in each year. The Mendocino Management Area will also receive increased opportunities from a longer season that extends through Labor Day, based on a small increase in the allowable take level for yelloweye rockfish.

The proposed regulation modifies the Southern Management Area depth constraint from 60 fathoms to 50 fathoms.

Table 1. Season structure and depth constraints for the California recreational groundfish fishery proposed for 2013 and 2014, as recommended by the Council in June 2012.

Management Area	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Northern	Closed				May 15 – Oct 31, <20fm						Closed		
Mendocino	Closed				May 15 – Sep 2, <20fm ¹			May 15 – Sep 1, < 20fm ²					Closed
San Francisco	Closed				Jun 1 – Dec 31, <30fm								
Central	Closed				May 1 – Dec 31, <40fm								
Southern	Closed		Mar 1 – Dec 31, <50fm										
CCA	Closed		Mar 1 – Dec 31, <20fm										

¹ Fishing is allowed from May 15 Through September 2, 2013, in the Mendocino Management Area.

² Fishing is allowed from May 15 Through September 1, 2014, in the Mendocino Management Area.

Bocaccio Recreational Size Limit, Fillet Length Limit and Bag Limit

Bocaccio are the only rockfish in the recreational fishery with a minimum size limit, which is ten inches [subsection 28.55 (c), Title 14, California Code of Regulations (CCR)]. The proposed regulation will repeal the bocaccio minimum size limit and the corresponding fillet length limit.

The proposed regulation will increase the bocaccio sub-bag limit increase from two fish to three fish within the 10-fish Rockfish, Cabezon, Greenling (RCG) complex bag limit.

Species or Species Groups which may be Taken or Possessed in Cowcod Conservations Areas (CCAs)

Currently all shelf rockfish [as defined in, subsection 1.91(a)(3), Title 14, CCR] taken in the CCA must be discarded. The proposed regulation will authorize take and possession of shelf rockfish in the CCA during the open season for groundfish in depths shallower than 20 fathoms. Retention of bronzedspotted rockfish, canary rockfish, cowcod, and yelloweye rockfish will remain prohibited in the CCA, as they are in all areas of the state.

Summary of Proposed Amendments

1. Season structure and depth constraints will be amended as outlined in Table 1.
2. Regulations regarding bocaccio minimum size limit and fillet length limit would be repealed.
3. Regulation regarding the bocaccio sub-bag limit within the RGC complex will be amended to allow for a three fish sub-bag limit.
4. Regulations regarding take and possession of species and/or species groups in the Cowcod Conservation Area will be amended to allow take and possession of shelf rockfish. Take and possession of bronzedspotted rockfish, canary rockfish, cowcod, and yelloweye rockfish will remain prohibited.

The Commission anticipates benefits to the environment by the sustainable management of California's groundfish resources.

The Commission anticipates benefits to the health and welfare of California residents. Providing opportunities to participate in sport fisheries fosters conservation through education and appreciation of California's wildlife.

The Commission does not anticipate any non-monetary benefits to worker safety, the prevention of discrimination, the promotion of fairness or social equity, or the increase in openness and transparency in business and government.

The proposed regulations are neither inconsistent nor incompatible with existing State regulations. No other State agency has the authority to promulgate sport fishing regulations.

NOTICE IS GIVEN that any person interested may present statements, orally or in writing, relevant to this action at a hearing to be held at the Radisson Hotel-LAX, 6225 West Century Blvd., Los Angeles, California, on Wednesday, November 7, 2012, at 8:30 a.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard.

NOTICE IS ALSO GIVEN that any person interested may present statements, orally or in writing, relevant to this action at a hearing to be held at the Hilton San Diego-Mission Valley, 901 Camino del Rio South, San Diego, California, on Wednesday, December 12, 2012 at 8:30 a.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard. Written comments may be submitted at the address given below, or by fax at (916) 653-5040, or by e-mail to FGC@fgc.ca.gov. **Written comments mailed, faxed or e-mailed to the Commission office, must be received before 5:00 p.m. on December 7, 2012.** All comments must be received no later than December 12, 2012, at the hearing in San Diego, CA. If you would like copies of any modifications to this proposal, please include your name and mailing address.

The regulations as proposed in ~~strikeout~~-underline format, as well as an initial statement of reasons, including environmental considerations and all information upon which the proposal is based (rulemaking file), are on file and available for public review from the agency representative, Sonke Mastrup, Executive Director, Fish and Game Commission, 1416 Ninth Street, Box 944209, Sacramento, California 94244-2090, phone (916) 653-4899. Please direct requests for the above mentioned documents and inquiries concerning the regulatory process to Sonke Mastrup or Sherrie Fonbuena at the preceding address or phone number. **Paul Hamdorf, Marine Region, Department of Fish and Game, phone (562) 342-7210, has been designated to respond to questions on the substance of the proposed regulations.** Copies of the Initial Statement of Reasons, including the regulatory language, may be obtained from the address above. Notice of the proposed action shall be posted on the Fish and Game Commission website at <http://www.fgc.ca.gov>.

Availability of Modified Text

If the regulations adopted by the Commission differ from but are sufficiently related to the action proposed, they will be available to the public for at least 15 days prior to the date of adoption. Circumstances beyond the control of the Commission (e.g., timing of Federal regulation adoption, timing of resource data collection, timelines do not allow, etc.) or changes made to be responsive to public recommendation and comments during the regulatory process may preclude full compliance with the 15-day comment period, and the Commission will exercise its powers under Section 202 of the Fish and Game Code. Regulations adopted pursuant to this section are not subject to the time periods for adoption, amendment or repeal of regulations prescribed in Sections 11343.4, 11346.4 and 11346.8 of the Government Code. Any person

interested may obtain a copy of said regulations prior to the date of adoption by contacting the agency representative named herein.

If the regulatory proposal is adopted, the final statement of reasons may be obtained from the address above when it has been received from the agency program staff.

Impact of Regulatory Action/Results of the Economic Impact Analysis

The potential for significant statewide adverse economic impacts that might result from the proposed regulatory action has been assessed, and the following initial determinations relative to the required statutory categories have been made:

- (a) Significant Statewide Adverse Economic Impact Directly Affecting Business, Including the Ability of California Businesses to Compete with Businesses in Other States:

The proposed action will not have a significant statewide adverse economic impact directly affecting business, including the ability of California businesses to compete with businesses in other states. The proposed changes are consistent with the continued preservation of the resource and therefore should prevent adverse economic impacts.

- (b) Impact on the Creation or Elimination of Jobs within the State, the Creation of New Businesses or the Elimination of Existing Businesses, or the Expansion of Businesses in California; Benefits of the Regulation to the Health and Welfare of California Residents, Worker Safety, and the State's Environment::

The Commission does not anticipate any significant impacts on the creation or elimination of jobs, the creation of new business, the elimination of existing businesses or the expansion of businesses in California. The impacted businesses are generally small businesses employing few individuals and, like all small businesses, are subject to failure for a variety of causes which may or may not include changes to fishing regulations. Additionally, the long-term intent of the proposed action is to provide for increased opportunity for sustainable harvest of fishable stocks and, subsequently, the promotion and long-term viability of these same small businesses.

The Commission anticipates benefits to the health and welfare of California residents. Providing opportunities to participate in sport fisheries fosters conservation through education and appreciation of California's wildlife.

The Commission does not anticipate any non-monetary benefits to worker safety.

The Commission anticipates benefits to the environment by the sustainable management of California's sport fishing resources.

- (c) Cost Impacts on a Representative Private Person or Business:

The Commission is not aware of any cost impacts that a representative private person or business would necessarily incur in reasonable compliance with the proposed action.

- (d) Costs or Savings to State Agencies or Costs/Savings in Federal Funding to the State: None.

- (e) Nondiscretionary Costs/Savings to Local Agencies: None.
- (f) Programs Mandated on Local Agencies or School Districts: None.
- (g) Costs Imposed on any Local Agency or School District that is Required to be Reimbursed Under Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4, Government Code: None.
- (h) Effect on Housing Costs: None.

Effect on Small Business

It has been determined that the adoption of these regulations may affect small business. The Commission has drafted the regulations in Plain English pursuant to Government Code sections 11342.580 and 11346.2(a)(1).

Consideration of Alternatives

The Commission must determine that no reasonable alternative considered by the Commission, or that has otherwise been identified and brought to the attention of the Commission, would be more effective in carrying out the purpose for which the action is proposed, would be as effective and less burdensome to affected private persons than the proposed action, or would be more cost-effective to affected private persons and equally effective in implementing the statutory policy or other provision of law.

FISH AND GAME COMMISSION

Dated: October 5, 2012

Sonke Mastrup
Executive Director