

**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, 702, 7071, 8587.1 and 8588 of the Fish and Game Code and to implement, interpret or make specific sections 97, 200, 202, 205, 1802, 7056, 7071, 8585.5, 8586, 8587, 8587.1, and 8588, Fish and Game Code; 50 CFR Part 660, Subpart G; 50 CFR 660.384; and 14 CCR 27.20, proposes to amend sections 28.29, 52.10, and 150.16, Title 14, California Code of Regulations, relating to Greenling Total Allowable Catch, Recreational Sub-bag Limits, and Cumulative Trip Limits.

Informative Digest/Policy Statement Overview

Current state regulations provide for: a statewide total allowable catch (TAC) for greenlings of the genus *Hexagrammos*, allocation of the TAC for greenlings between the recreational and commercial fisheries, and establishment of commercial trip limits and recreational sub-bag limits for greenlings.

The Marine Life Management Act of 1998 establishes the Legislature's concern for the status of nearshore fish stocks off California, particularly nearshore rockfish, California scorpionfish, cabezon, greenlings, and California sheephead which are targeted by recreational and commercial fisheries in the state. Sections 7071 and 8587.1 of the Fish and Game Code authorize the Commission to adopt regulations based on the advice and recommendations of the Department to regulate nearshore fish stocks and fisheries. However, regulatory authority is shared jointly between state and federal governments in the case of species which are also included in the Federal Groundfish Fishery Management Plan – including kelp greenling. As a result, the state's regulatory and management actions must not allow catches of these species to exceed these federally established levels, nor can they conflict with other federal regulations such as fishing seasons, trip limits and bag limits. The state may however, impose additional and/or more restrictive requirements as it sees fit. As a result, while kelp greenling is also managed at the federal level using ACLs, the state may regulate the resource more actively—setting TACs, sector allocations and commercial trip limits.

Past stock status determination methodologies, used on both the federal and state side, only used historical catch data in determining future harvest levels. At the federal level, a new methodology was approved for use in determining allowable harvest amounts for data poor stocks (which includes kelp greenling). The new methodology resulted in a higher, sustainable federal harvest level, and the Department is proposing to increase the state TAC in conformance with the new, higher federal ACL level. In conjunction with the higher TAC, modifications to the recreational sector allocation, the recreational sub-bag limits and commercial bi-monthly trip limits are also proposed.

Proposed Management Changes

The Department proposes the following modifications to Sections 28.29, 52.10, and 150.16, Title 14, CCR:

- Increase the recreational sub-bag limit for greenlings from two fish to ten fish.

- Increase the statewide TAC for greenlings from 37,600 pounds (approximately 17 metric tons) to 121,900 pounds (55.3 metric tons) consistent with the federally adopted kelp greenling ACL contribution to the federal “Other Fish” complex. This will provide an increase to the TAC that is more than three times the current TAC.
- Modify allocation to recreational sector to highest recent catch and manage the commercial sector such that yearly harvest will not exceed the remainder of the TAC.
- Increase the commercial bimonthly trip limits from the current 25 pounds per two months, to a value between zero and 300 pounds per two months.

The proposed management actions would relax recreational fishing regulations for greenlings statewide, and may have positive impacts to some businesses in California. Sport fishing business owners, boat owners, tackle store owners, boat manufacturers, vendors of food, bait, fuel and lodging, and others that provide goods or services to those that recreationally pursue greenlings off California may be positively affected to some degree from increases to business relative to previous management cycles. Likewise, commercial fishing industry businesses and coastal communities may realize positive benefits from increased bimonthly trip limits and catches, a decrease to regulatory discarding, and the possibility of a longer open season for greenlings (and thus a more consistent product for markets).

The proposed regulations are neither inconsistent nor incompatible with existing state regulations.

NOTICE IS GIVEN that any person interested may present statements, orally or in writing, on all options relevant to this action at a hearing to be held at the Natural Resources Building Auditorium, 1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento, California, on Thursday, February 2, 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, on all actions relevant to this action at a hearing to be held at The Mission Inn, 3649 Mission Inn Avenue, Riverside, California, on Wednesday, March 7, 2012 at 8:30 a.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard. It is requested, but not required, that written comments be submitted on or before February 29, 2012, 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 March 5, 2012. All comments must be received no later than March 7, 2012, at the hearing in Riverside, 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 Sheri Tiemann at the preceding address or phone number. **Marijia Vojkovich, Regional**

Manager, Marine Region, Department of Fish and Game, phone (805) 568-1246, 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

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 Businesses, 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 management actions would relax recreational fishing regulations for greenlings statewide, and may have positive impacts to some businesses in California. Sport fishing business owners, boat owners, tackle store owners, boat manufacturers, vendors of food, bait, fuel and lodging, and others that provide goods or services to those that recreationally pursue greenlings off California may be positively affected to some degree from increases to business relative to previous management cycles. Likewise, commercial fishing industry businesses and coastal communities may realize positive benefits from increased bimonthly trip limits and catches, a decrease to regulatory discarding, and the possibility of a longer open season for greenlings (and thus a more consistent product for markets). However, anticipated impacts are speculative and would vary considerably by geographic location and by the nature and extent of the regulatory action taken.

(b) Economic Impact Analysis Assessment pursuant to Gov. Code sec. 11346.3(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:

The proposed regulatory action could produce some impact on the creation or elimination of jobs or businesses that rely on recreational or commercial fishing for greenlings. However, the degree of impact is highly speculative in nature and cannot be quantified. See response to VI(a) above.

Benefits of the Regulation to the Health and Welfare of California Residents, Worker Safety, and the State's Environment:

The proposed management actions would relax recreational fishing regulations for greenlings statewide, and may have positive impacts to some businesses in California. Sport fishing business owners, boat owners, tackle store owners, boat manufacturers, vendors of food, bait, fuel and lodging, and others that provide goods or services to those that recreationally pursue greenlings off California may be positively affected to some degree from increases to business relative to previous management cycles. Likewise, commercial fishing industry businesses and coastal communities may realize positive benefits from increased bimonthly trip limits and catches, a decrease to regulatory discarding, and the possibility of a longer open season for greenlings (and thus a more consistent product for markets).

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

The agency 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.

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 or would be as effective and less burdensome to affected private persons or would be more cost-effective to affected private persons and equally effective in implementing the statutory policy or other provision of law than the proposal described in this Notice.

FISH AND GAME COMMISSION

Dated: December 27, 2011

Sonke Mastrup
Executive Director