

Increased Bag Limits for Greenling

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:

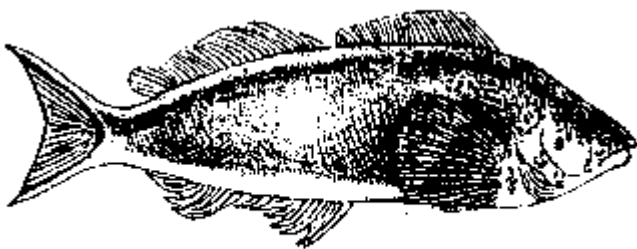
- Increase the recreational sub-bag limit for greenlings from two fish to ten fish.

- 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).

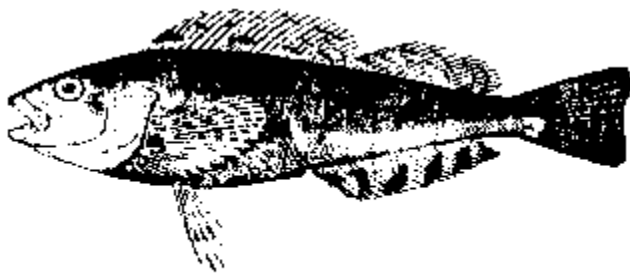
THE FISH GREENLING

While highly appropriate, the name "Greenling" is not itself a species of fish, but a family of fishes known scientifically as *Hexagrammidae*. Thus "greenling" does not apply to a unique species unless accompanied by a descriptive adjective. Common names of greenlings include the painted greenling, the ling cod (no relation to cod), the whitespotted greenling, the masked greenling, the rock greenling, the kelp greenling, Atka mackerel and two Japanese species, "Aburaco" and "Kujimi." All nine species qualify as "greenlings" as they are in the greenling family, but popular usage restricts greenlings to the five species with "greenling" in their name.



Kelp greenling
Hexagrammos decagrammus

Greenlings are generally small, brilliantly colorful fishes that inhabit the rocky shores of the North Pacific Ocean. Each species is highly distinctive. Males are usually more brilliantly colored than the females. Most are skillfully able to match the color of their surroundings. Specimens from regions of green algae will be colored green. Specimens from regions with red algae will be a brilliant red. An exception to this chameleon ability lies in the males of the kelp greenling. During breeding season, the head, forepart of the body and forward fins are covered with small, brilliant, electric blue spots that are surrounded by black spots to give the fish a very colorful appearance. Very few fishes in the world are so brilliantly marked.



Masked greenling
Hexagrammos octogrammus

Most species in the greenling family are medium sized, males slightly larger, maturing to a size of about one foot. The Japanese species and painted greenling are a little smaller; the ling cod is much larger and can reach a size of five feet and about one hundred pounds. The greenling is an elongated, fine scaled fish with a large mouth provided with small, but deadly, sharp teeth. Its cone shaped head, symmetrical body and well developed fins enable this predatory species to swim swiftly in pursuit of its prey. All greenlings lack air bladders, so all tend to be strongly negatively buoyant and must perch on the bottom or cruise about using their pectoral fins as planes. One of its most remarkable features is its elaborate sensory systems, five lateral lines on each side, three along the back, one between the pectoral and pelvic fin and one along the lower side. These structures are sensitive organs for feeling vibrations in the water and serve as a sonic system for detection and location of its enemies or prey.

Greenlings inhabit the shallow coastal waters, ranging from the surf zone to 100 meters or so. Although the family is distributed across the arc of the North Pacific from Japan to Baja Mexico, all but the Kujimi and Aburaco occur in American Territorial Waters, with various ranges between the Aleutians and California.



Sara Itogawa
SDRRC's Junior Angler of the Year, 2011



A happy notice to you Cookie Lovers

I will be at the February meeting selling Girl Scout cookies!

I will have the new Zesty Lemon cookie and all the other favorites, such as Thin Mints, Samoas, and Peanut butter cookies. I have been selected by Girl Scouts to go to Peru this summer on a trip deep into the Amazon jungle, studying the ecosystem. I even get to go up a platform above the jungle canopy. While in Peru, I will participate in a service project for the indigenous people who I live there. Part of my pre-assignment is that I must earn my own way, so a portion of my cookie sales will go toward funding the trip. If you don't want the cookies, you can always sponsor boxes to go to our soldiers overseas. So, bring your money and your sweet tooth! I'll see you there February 2nd!

