



## California Recreational Groundfish Size and Bag Limit Regulation Summary 1999-2024

### Size Limits

Table 1. Recreational minimum size limits (inches) for select groundfish in California from 1999-2024. If no size limit was specified in regulation “-” is used. Unless otherwise specified, size limits are for the total length (TL) of the fish, which is defined as the longest straight-line distance from the tip of the head to the end of the longest lobe of the tail. Inseason changes to size limits are denoted by two values in a cell with an arrow between them.

Year	Bocaccio	Lingcod	California Scorpionfish	Cabazon	Greenlings	Leopard Shark
1999	10	24	-	-	-	36
2000	10	26	10	14	12	36
2001	10	26	10	15	12	36
2002	10	24	10	15	12	36
2003	10	24	10	15	12	36
2004	10	24 → 30 <sup>1</sup>	10	15	12	36
2005	10	24	10	15	12	36
2006	10	24	10	15	12	36
2007	10	24	10	15	12	36
2008	10	24	10	15	12	36
2009	10	24	10	15	12	36
2010	10	24	10	15	12	36
2011	10	22 <sup>2</sup>	10	15	12	36
2012	10	22	10	15	12	36
2013	-	22	10	15	12	36
2014	-	22	10	15	12	36
2015	-	22	10	15	12	36
2016	-	22	10	15	12	36
2017	-	22	10	15	12	36
2018	-	22	10	15	12	36
2019	-	22	10	15	12	36
2020	-	22	10	15	12	36
2021	-	22	10	15	12	36
2022	-	22	10	15	12	36
2023	-	22	10	15	12	36
2024	-	22	10	15	12	36

#### Footnotes

1 - Effective April 1st, 2004; Lingcod size limit was increased from 24 inches to 30 inches to comply with new federal recreational fishing regulations.

2 – Minimum size limit for lingcod was reduced from 24 inches 22 inches effective June 11th, 2011 as part of biennial specification changes. Implementation of federal biennial specifications for 2011-2012 cycle were delayed to mid-June.



## Bag Limits

The default finfish bag limit in California is 20 fish per day, no more than 10 of which may be of a single species unless otherwise specified. "No limit" indicates that the species was exempt from the default bag limit. A bag limit of zero indicates retention of the species is prohibited.

### RCG Species

The Rockfish Cabezon Greenling (RCG) complex has an aggregate bag limit, meaning that each angler's catch may contain any combination of rockfish, cabezon, or greenling, as long as total catch remains at or below the complex limit. However, sub-bag limits are also implemented when harvest guidelines can't accommodate the complex limit being composed of a single species.

Table 2. Recreational daily bag and possession limit for the RCG complex, and sub-bag limits for species or species groups within the RCG complex from 1999-2024. If no bag or sub-bag limit was specified in regulation a "-" is used. Values outside parentheses or brackets apply statewide, values inside parentheses apply only between the OR/CA border and 40°10' N. lat., and values inside brackets apply only between 40°10' N. lat. and the US/Mexico border. When two values are listed in a year with an arrow (→) between them, it indicates a change to the bag or sub-bag limit through an inseason regulation change. Effective dates of inseason changes, or other relevant information are provided in footnotes.

Year	RCG Complex	Cowcod	Yelloweye	Canary	Quillback	Nearshore Rockfish	Boccacio	Copper	Black	Vermilion	Cabezon	Greenling
1999	15	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	10	10
2000	10	1	-	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	10	10
2001	10	0	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	10	10
2002	10	0	1 <sup>1</sup>	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	10	10
2003	10	0	(1), [0] <sup>1</sup>	(1), [0]	-	(0), [2]	(2), [0]	-	-	-	(10), [3]	(10), [2]
2004	10	0	0	0	-	(10), [2→10]	(2), [1]	-	-	-	(10→3), [3]	2
2005	10	0	0	0	-	-	(2), [1]	-	-	-	1	1
2006	10	0	0	0	-	-	(2), [1]	-	-	-	1	1
2007	10	0	0	0	-	-	(2), [1]	-	-	-	1	1 → 2 <sup>2</sup>
2008	10	0	0	0	-	-	(2), [1]	-	-	-	2	2
2009	10	0	0	0	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	2
2010	10	0	0	0	-	-	2	-	-	-	3	2
2011	10	0	0	0	-	-	2	-	-	-	3	2
2012	10	0	0	0	-	-	2	-	-	-	3	2 → - <sup>3</sup>
2013	10	0	0	0	-	-	3	-	-	-	3	-
2014	10	0	0	0	-	-	3	-	-	-	3	-
2015	10	0	0	0	-	-	3	-	5 <sup>4</sup>	-	3	-
2016	10	0	0	0	-	-	3	-	5	-	3	-
2017	10	0	0	1	-	-	-	-	3 <sup>5</sup>	-	3	-
2018	10	0	0	1 → 2 <sup>6</sup>	-	-	-	-	3	-	3	-
2019	10	0	0	2 → 3 <sup>7</sup>	-	-	-	-	3 → 4 <sup>7</sup>	-	3	-
2020	10	0	0	3	-	-	-	-	4	-	3	-
2021	10	0	0	- <sup>8</sup>	-	-	-	-	- <sup>8</sup>	5	- <sup>8</sup>	-
2022	10	0	0	-	1 <sup>9</sup>	-	-	1 <sup>9</sup>	-	4 <sup>9</sup>	-	-
2023	10	0	0	-	1 → 0 <sup>10</sup>	-	-	1	-	4	-	-
2024	10	0	0	-	0	-	-	1	-	(4), [4→2] <sup>11</sup>	-	-

#### Footnotes

1 - A boat limit of not more than 2 fish per boat also applied.

2 - Greenlings bag limit changed to 2 fish beginning in 2007.

3 - Greenlings bag limit increased from 2 to 10 fish within the 10 fish daily bag limit (i.e., removed sub-bag limit within RCG complex) effective June 2012.

4 - A sub-bag limit of 5 black rockfish was implemented through SPEX process effective March 10, 2015.

5 - A sub-bag limit of 3 black rockfish was implemented through SPEX process in 2017.

6 - Canary sub-bag limit was increased from 1 to 2 fish via inseason change effective April 14, 2018.

7 - Inseason changes effective June 1, 2019: canary sub-bag limit increased from 2 to 3 fish (statewide), and black rockfish sub-bag increased from 3 to 4 fish (statewide).



8 - Sub-bag limits for canary, black, and cabezon within the 10-fish RCG daily bag limit removed (i.e., daily limit for these species is the default 10) and implemented new sub-bag limit for vermilion of 5-fish through SPEX process in 2021.

9 - Inseason changes effective Jan 1, 2022 in federal regs, and Jan 6, 2022 in state regs reduced vermilion sub-bag limit from 5-fish to 4-fish, and implemented new sub-bag limits of 1-fish each for copper and quillback rockfishes.

10 - Inseason change effective Aug 7, 2023 decreased quillback rockfish bag limit from 1 to 0 (prohibited status), statewide.

11 - Inseason change to vermilion rockfish sub-bag limit for area south of 40°10' N. lat. from 4 to 2 fish effective April 1, 2024 for federal waters and April 19, 2024 for state waters.

### Non-RCG Groundfish

Regulations establish bag limits for several non-RCG groundfish species intended to keep catch of those species within harvest limits. Pacific sanddab has no daily bag or possession limit and is exempt from the default finfish daily bag and possession limit as early as 1999.

Table 3. Recreational daily bag and possession limit for select groundfish species which are not included in the RCG complex from 1999-2024. If no bag or sub-bag limit beyond the default finfish bag limit was specified in regulation a “-” is used. When two values are listed in a year with an arrow (→) between them, it indicates a change to the bag or sub-bag limit through an inseason regulation change. Effective dates of inseason changes, or other relevant information are provided in footnotes and/or the preceding narrative, when available.

Year	Lingcod	California Scorpionfish	Pacific Sanddab	Petrale Sole	Starry Flounder	Leopard Shark	Soupin Shark
1999	2	10	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2000	2	10	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2001	2	10	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2002	2	10	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2003	2	5	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2004	2 → 1 <sup>1</sup>	5	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2005	2	5	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2006	2	5	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2007	2	5	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2008	2	5	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2009	2	5	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2010	2	5	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2011	2	5	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2012	2	5	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2013	2	5	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2014	2	5	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2015	3 <sup>2</sup>	5	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2016	3	5	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2017	2	5	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2018	2	5	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2019	2 and 1→2 <sup>3</sup>	5	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2020	2	5	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2021	2	5	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1



2022	2	5	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2023	2	5	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1
2024	2	5	No limit	No limit	No limit	3	1

Footnotes

1 - Effective April 1st, 2004, the lingcod bag limit was reduced from 2 fish to 1 to comply with new federal recreational fishing regulations.

2 - Lingcod bag limit increased from 2 to 3 fish through SPEX process effective March 10, 2015.

3 – Inseason action increased lingcod bag limit for area south of 40°10' N. lat. increased from 1 fish to 2 fish effective June 1, 2019, making statewide bag limit for lingcod 2 fish.