

California Scorpionfish Fishery to Close Nov. 15

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The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) will close both the commercial and recreational fishery for California scorpionfish (*Scorpaena guttata*) on Sat., Nov. 15 at 12:01 a.m. The fishery will remain closed statewide through the end of the year.

Based on recent catch estimates from the sport fishery and landing receipt totals from the commercial fishery, CDFW projects that the 2014 annual catch limit (ACL) for California scorpionfish will be exceeded unless the fishery is closed.

The latest estimates indicate over 110 metric tons of California scorpionfish have been taken to date. The ACL specified in federal regulation for 2014 is 117 metric tons. Pursuant to the California Code of Regulations, Title 14, sections 27.20(e) and 52.09, CDFW has the authority to close the fishery at the time the total allowable catch is exceeded, or expected to be reached.

California scorpionfish is a nearshore species found primarily in Southern California. It is important to both commercial and recreational fisheries.

Although fishing for rockfish and other groundfish will remain open in Southern California through the end of the year, CDFW urges individuals to avoid fishing in areas where California scorpionfish are known to occur. If taken, scorpionfish should be immediately returned back to the water to minimize injury and mortality.

For more information regarding groundfish regulations, please visit the CDFW Marine Region Groundfish Central website at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/groundfishcentral>.