

9/14/2014

California Fish and Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Subject: Rockfish Line to 60 Fathoms, Ling Cod Limit Increase to Three (3)

Oceanside Senior Anglers (OSA) is a 501 (c) (7) Fishing Club, located in Oceanside, California. Our club has over 600 members including spouses who regularly fish Southern California inshore and offshore waters. As a club we are writing this letter in support of the proposed change in rockfish depth limit from 50 to 60 fathoms and increasing Ling Cod limits to 3.

Our fishing club is involved in several science based Scripts-NOAA projects, including use of descending devices to reduce Barotrauma and bio-mass, migration tagging projects of Calico bass and Yellowtail.

In December 2013, OSA was invited by SAC and NOAA to participate in testing several different descending tools. Members of the club conducted testing of five devices on three separate ½ day trips. We have adopted the SeaQualizer device as a standard for our club. Each chartermaster bags now contain several of the devices and we have a designated "Barotrauma" rod set up for the release rockfish.

On our first Rockcod trip in 2014, we used the SeaQualizer to release over 100 undersized rockfish. In the past, these fish would have become red floaters and a wasted resource. With a little training and education from SAC and NOAA our members not only support the program, many have purchased the SeaQualizer for personal use. It's not just a good feeling thing; our members understand the need, actively participate in the release and fully support the science behind the devices.

Not to be outdone, our second rock cod trip of 2014 released another 100 rockfish. Many of these were undersized Baccaccio or Baccaccio that anglers already had caught full limits. Our club takes 5-6 rock cod trips during the year. Based on 2014 results, it is feasible we will release 500-600 rockfish on these trips.

Please visit the Conservation page of the OSA website for details on our efforts to contribute to better fishing through conservation. <http://www.osanglers.org/Conservation.php>

The following information recaps the clubs initial involvement in re-compression testing.

OSA Supports Re-compression Field Studies

December 2013

Five members of our club supported the Sport fishing Association of California (SAC) and NOAA Southwest Fisheries Division on three, half day trips testing five descending devices used for recompressing rockfish. (See video on websites conservation page to gain info on recompression)

OSA was invited by Ken Franke, President of SAC to participate in the field study conducted south of La Jolla in depths up to 300 ft. Ken Franke's sport boat, the Outer Limits was used during the field tests. Supporting the efforts were Fisheries Scientists from NOAA, a photographer documenting the release and several support staff from SAC.

All fish caught were released back into the ocean using the descending devices. Depth of release varied between 100-150 feet or the bottom using the different descending devices. OSA members completed a survey that will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the devices, ease of use and ability to purchase devices based on price.

The test results (Time to release, type of fish, size of fish etc.) will be compiled by NOAA and presented to the club in a few months. Conservation of our ground fish is on most anglers minds. How does an angler effectively release small rock fish or fish that exceed ones limits safely? NOAA and SAC are actively engaged in block studies that show tagged fish are surviving if recompressed at the proper depth. Not only does it make sense to save our resource, but the data suggests the released fish have a small mortality rate <3% once back on the bottom.

During the 2013 rockfish season club members utilized one such descending tool while fishing from local sport boats with varied results. Our situation is not uncommon for most sport boats as the freeboard can exceed 3 ft. This height presents challenges with some of the devices. The devices must be easy to use and not present a safety issue during the release or storage. Members of the test teams were given a free release device (SeaQualizer) , which will be incorporated into the 2014 chartermaster kit used on all rock cod and shallow water inshore trips. Our hope is to have enough feedback to standardize on a safe and easy release method by the end of the 2014 season.

Note: We standardized on the SeaQualizer descending device.

In Summation:

The descending tools on the market today work and NOAA's studies have confirmed that properly rockfish released have a high survival rate.

Oceanside Senior Anglers request the DFG Commission approve the increase of rockfish fishing depths from 50 fathoms to 60 fathoms and also approve the Ling Cod limit to 3 fish.

Oceanside Senior Anglers 501 (c) (7)
Oceanside, California

It is also our hope that NOAA, DFG Commission and SAC will continue to support and educate anglers on the ease and benefit of using the tools.

Our membership is committed to ocean stewardship and we will continue to educate our members on the issues and solutions required to maintain healthy fish stocks in Southern California.

Thank You and Regards

Thomas "Bo" Bolender
Vice President and Conservation Chair
Oceanside Senior Anglers
Oceanside, California