



# BOATER ADVISORY

## California Fish & Wildlife Changes to Recreational Tuna Regulations Now in Effect



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### Changes to Recreational Tuna Regulations Now in Effect

*This news release corrects and clarifies the headline of an earlier version. Although some regulation changes affect only waters south of Point Conception, the bag limit change is statewide.*

The California Fish and Game Commission recently adopted changes to recreational tuna regulations. The new regulations are effective as of today, July 30, 2015.

The changes include a statewide two-fish recreational daily bag limit for Pacific bluefin tuna (*Thunnus orientalis*), which applies to all bluefin tuna possessed in California waters, regardless of where they were taken. Additionally, there are new requirements for filleting sport-caught tuna on vessels south of Point Conception.

Changes to fillet rules for all tuna species south of Point Conception were needed to allow for identification of species by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) law enforcement. The regulations now require all filleted tuna to have the skin intact and be cut into six pieces as follows:

- Four loins (two upper and two lower)
- Belly fillet including the pelvic fins and urogenital vent

Collar with pectoral fins attached

Each fish must be placed in its own bag and clearly labeled with the species name. Tunas may also be kept whole, or in a manner that retains these identifying characteristics.

The new regulations address concerns over the population decline of Pacific bluefin tuna. Based on an international stock assessment, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries declared Pacific bluefin tuna overfished because the spawning biomass is at an historic low. An international rebuilding effort is underway, which requires reducing fishing impacts across the north Pacific. The goal of the effort is to bring the stock back to healthy levels and ensure sustainability of future harvests.

"The two-fish limit strikes a balance," said Marci Yaremko, CDFW's program manager for tuna and the department's representative to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC). "From the fishermen's perspective, the loss of opportunity going from a 10-fish daily bag limit to a two-fish limit is severe. Yet from a conservation perspective, given the dire status of the stock, allowing two fish per day is expected to generate a 30 percent reduction in the catch, which some view as not enough."

The new bag limit and fillet requirements were developed through the combined efforts of agencies, scientists, conservation interests, the sport fishing industry and the public.

"We appreciate the hard work that NOAA and CDFW have put into working with the community on the bag limit and fillet regulations," said Ken Franke, president of the Sportfishing Association of California. "This is the end result of a complicated and collaborative process that will protect the resource while also ensuring recreational access is maintained."

Pacific bluefin tuna migrate great distances across the north Pacific throughout their life cycle and are managed under an international treaty with member countries from across the Pacific region. In the United States, federal and state fishery managers implemented catch reductions in accordance with recommendations made by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), with the intention of reducing Pacific bluefin tuna catch by 20 to 45 percent across the north Pacific.

CDFW participated in the development of the policy recommendations as a member of the U.S. Delegation to the IATTC, as well as the development of the new domestic measures for both sport and commercial bluefin tuna fishing through its representatives to the PFMC and the Commission.

For more information about Pacific Bluefin tuna recreational fishing regulations, please visit the CDFW Marine Region Website at [www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/cpshms/tunas.asp](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/cpshms/tunas.asp).

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