

Increased bag limit offers Oregon anglers more opportunities

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

NEWPORT, Ore. — Starting May 1, saltwater sport fishers will be able to put one more groundfish in the marine fish daily bag — the highest bag limit since summer of 2005.

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission last week approved a change to increase the bag limit from six marine fish to seven effective May 1. The marine fish bag includes rockfish and other species such as greenling and cabezon. The increased bag limit is based on a favorable stock assessment for black rockfish, the dominant species in the nearshore groundfish fishery.

Not included in the marine bag limit are groundfish species such as lingcod, which has its own limit of two per day, and flatfish, like sole, flounder and sanddabs, which have a 25-fish daily limit. Pacific halibut are not considered groundfish and have a separate bag limit and season.

Several groundfish species in Oregon waters are managed using state and federal harvest caps including black rockfish, yelloweye rockfish and canary rockfish. Black rockfish make up the majority of an angler's marine bag, so a favorable stock assessment means more opportunity for anglers.

Anglers must still avoid and not retain yelloweye rockfish and canary rockfish, but they generally live in deeper waters than black rockfish. The two species are considered depleted by the National Marine Fisheries Service. This time of year through Sept. 30 fishers going after groundfish are constrained from fishing outside of 40 fathoms to reduce the number of yelloweye and canary rockfish caught incidentally.

More details on sport groundfish regulations can be found on the ODFW Web Site, which includes the waypoints for the 40-fathom line. General regulations can be found in the 2009 Oregon Sport Fishing Regulations booklet.

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