



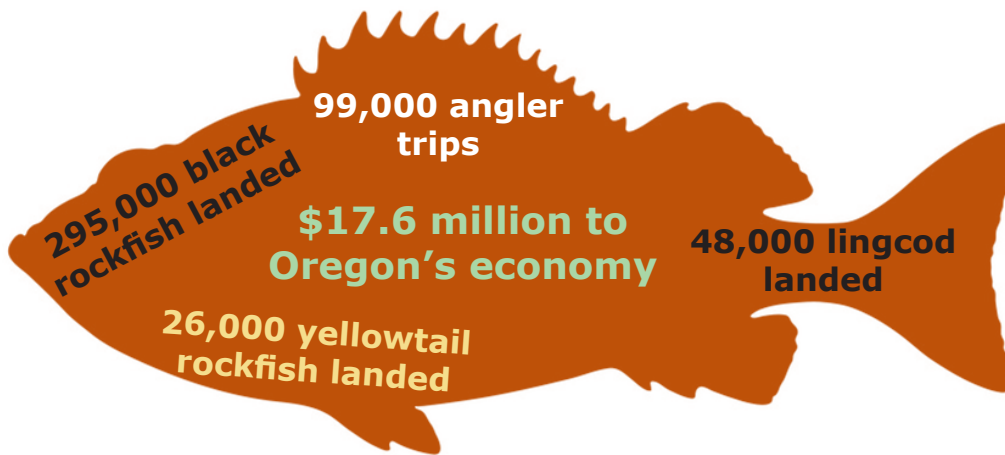
Marine Resources

# 4th Annual Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Marine Resources Program Sport Bottomfish Review (2021)

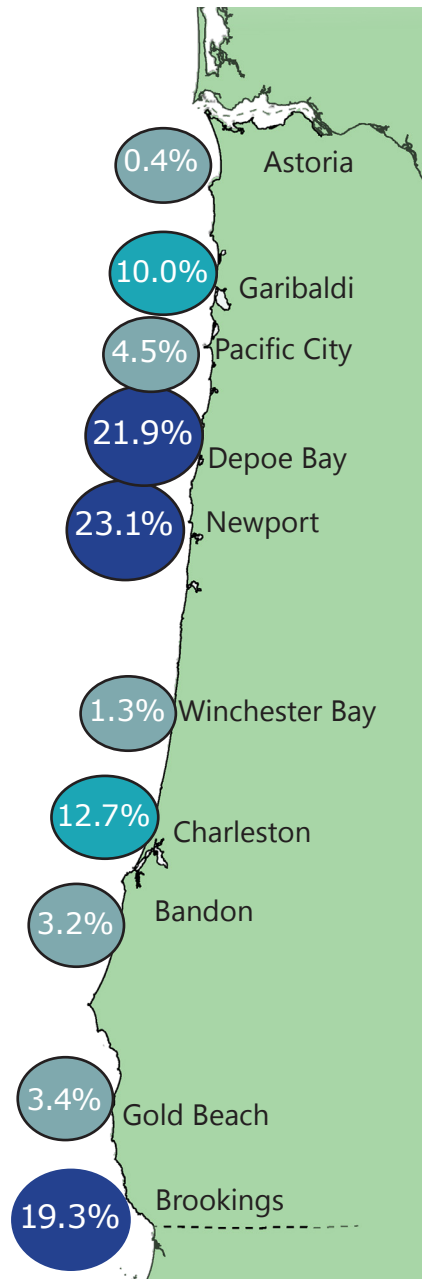


Bottomfishing off the Oregon Coast has become increasingly popular in recent years, which continued in 2021 with more than 99,000 angler trips reported. Here is a summary of Oregon's 2021 sport bottomfish fishery.

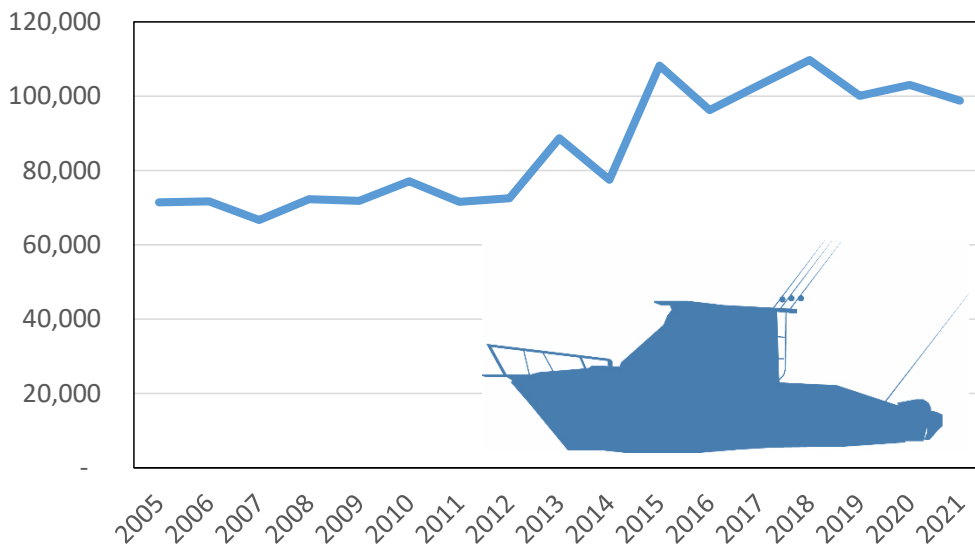
## 2021 Season Highlights



Percentage of bottomfish angler trips by port in 2021



Number of Bottomfish Angler Trips



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## Have a Question?

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Visit our website:

<https://myodfw.com/sport-bottomfish-seasons>

## What Are "Bottomfish"?

Bottomfish, or groundfish, refers to several groups of fish that are generally associated with the ocean bottom. Off Oregon, this includes about a dozen species of rockfish, half a dozen types of flatfish, lingcod, cabezon, greenlings, sablefish, skates and rays, along with three species of sharks. Test your identification skills with the "[Common Bottomfish](#)" online quiz.



## Bottomfish Identification: How and Why

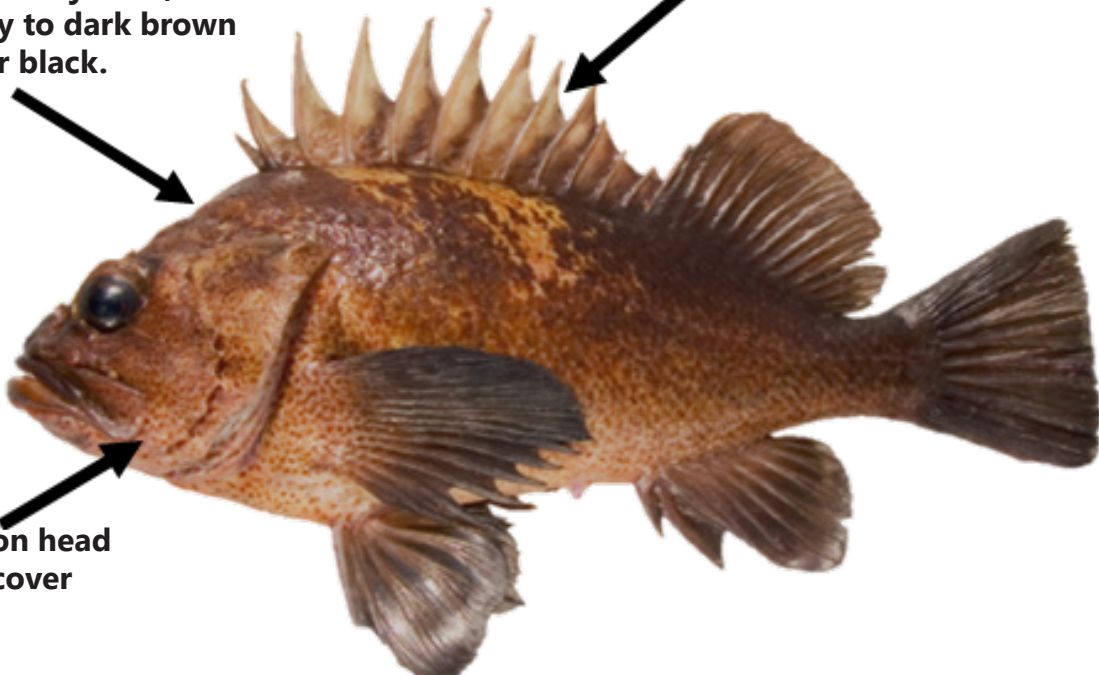
With all of those species of fish, it can be difficult to know what you have caught. The ODFW website has a variety of tools to help anglers with fish identification including: [rockfish identification tips](#), [rockfish species information](#), [flatfish species information](#), and "[what can I keep and how many?](#)". Additional fun resources available only online are the popular "[Common Groundfish Species](#)" and "[Yelloweye Rockfish or Not?](#)" quizzes that will test your identification skills.

Correctly identifying fish is important for following species harvest and size regulations, and to accurately report species caught and released to the ODFW dockside sampler. It is also important to know your fish ID to avoid keeping an illegal fish. Beginning in 2022, **quillback rockfish are prohibited**, so it will be good to learn how to identify them. Some key characteristics are highlighted below.

**Front of body marked with light brown or yellow, rear half is gray to dark brown or black.**

**Dorsal membrane deeply notched**

**"Freckles" on head and gill cover**



# 2021 Season Summary

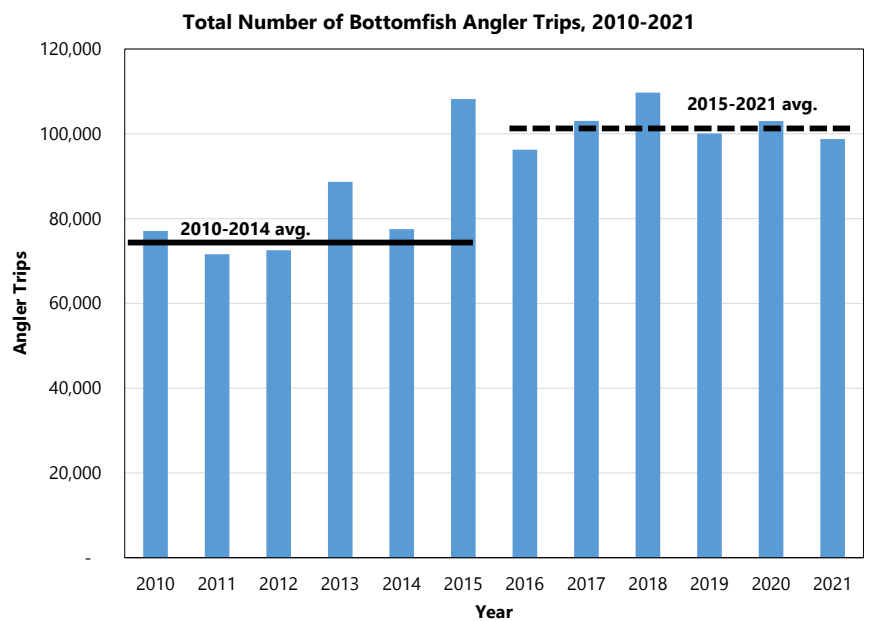
2021 was somewhat back to normal. Even with the ongoing pandemic, there were no closures of facilities, ports, or businesses which allowed the bottomfish fishery and other fisheries to happen as they normally do. Exceptional weather in April led to high effort and landings, prompting ODFW to reduce the daily bag limit from 6 to 5 fish. This was needed to keep catch within quotas and allow the fishery to remain open year-round. One of the best coho salmon seasons in recent years started in July off of much of the Oregon coast. This drew a lot of anglers away from bottomfish and onto salmon, reducing bottomfish effort and catches through mid-September.

## Bottomfish Effort in 2021

Prior to 2015, the average number of bottomfish trips was around 78,000 annually. The trend that began in 2015 of higher effort continued in 2021, with approximately 99,000 angler trips. The high April effort was offset by the lower effort in July and August.



**Yelloweye rockfish (left) and canary rockfish (right).**  
Photo courtesy of Mark McCulloch.



## 2021 Total Landings of Lingcod, Rockfish, and Cabezon

2021 was another good year for anglers to catch a number of different species. Anglers landed just over 48,000 (144 metric tons (mt)) lingcod. Longleader gear allowed anglers to have good success catching mid-water rockfish species with more than 26,000 (24 mt) yellowtail rockfish, and 32,000 (36.9 mt) canary rockfish landed in the longleader gear and regular bottomfish fisheries combined.

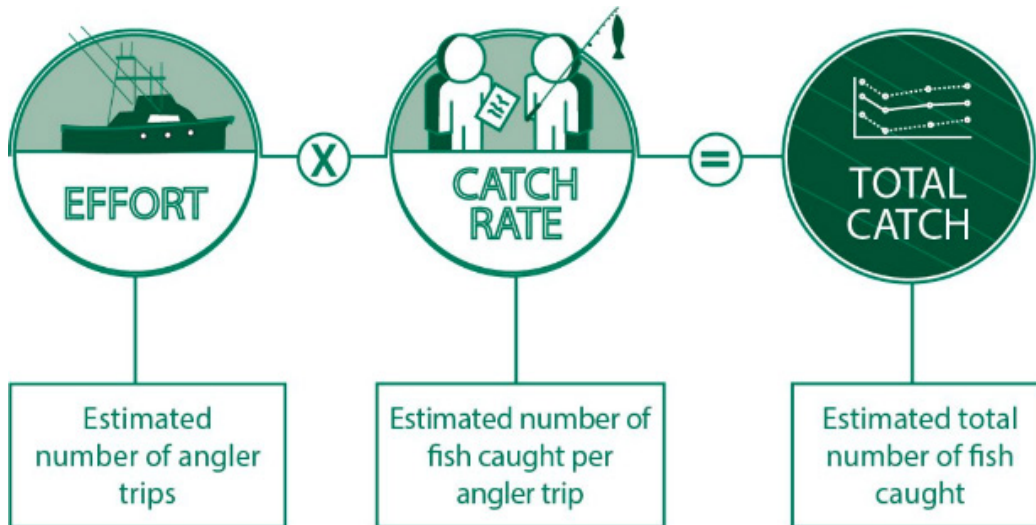
Catch of black, blue, and deacon rockfish was down slightly from 2020. There were approximately 295,000 (328 mt) black rockfish and 24,000 (17 mt) blue and deacon rockfish landed.

The catch of nearshore rockfish species (China, copper, and quillback rockfish) was projected to attain the quota by early June; therefore beginning June 1, retention of these species was prohibited for the remainder of 2021.

For the first time in several years, the cabezon quota was not reached, allowing cabezon to be open through the end of the year. This is likely due to a combination of lower bottomfish effort during the late summer and the large 2013-2014 year class of cabezon that are not contributing to the fishery as much as in previous years. More than 3,800 (11.8 mt) cabezon were still landed by anglers.

# Calculating Catch Estimates

To calculate total catches, two pieces of information are needed: (1) effort and (2) catch rate.



To measure effort, ODFW has video cameras in most ports to count boats leaving and returning across the bar. The total number of recreational fishing boats counted (and anglers onboard) equals total effort.

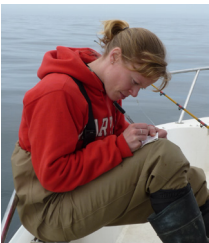
ODFW samplers collect catch rate information by interviewing a portion of boats returning to the docks. Samplers document number of anglers, species fished for, the number caught and released, and collect length/weight of fish kept. The total catch is estimated by multiplying the number of anglers by the catch rate.

Other calculations and expansions may be needed to estimate catch for unsampled ports and times, but that is generally how total catch estimates are calculated. Additionally, these calculations are done separately for private and charter vessels.



**ODFW sampler on the dock conducting an interview with a just returned vessel.**

**Reminder:** **IMMEDIATELY** upon landing and keeping a Pacific halibut or salmon, you need to **record the fish on your Combined Angling Tag**



### **Immediately means:**

- Prior to rebaiting and putting the rod back out to fish
- Before taking a snack or drink break
- Not 5, 10, or 15 minutes later
- Do not wait until you are on the way back to the dock



If using electronic tagging, make sure to download the app and log in before you leave the dock: <https://myodfw.com/ELS>

- If having trouble getting the app to open while offshore, try putting the phone in "airplane" mode
- Once the app is open, you can record your fish
- When you get back into cell service take off "airplane" mode, and it will upload tagged fish to the system



# Managing Fisheries with Quotas

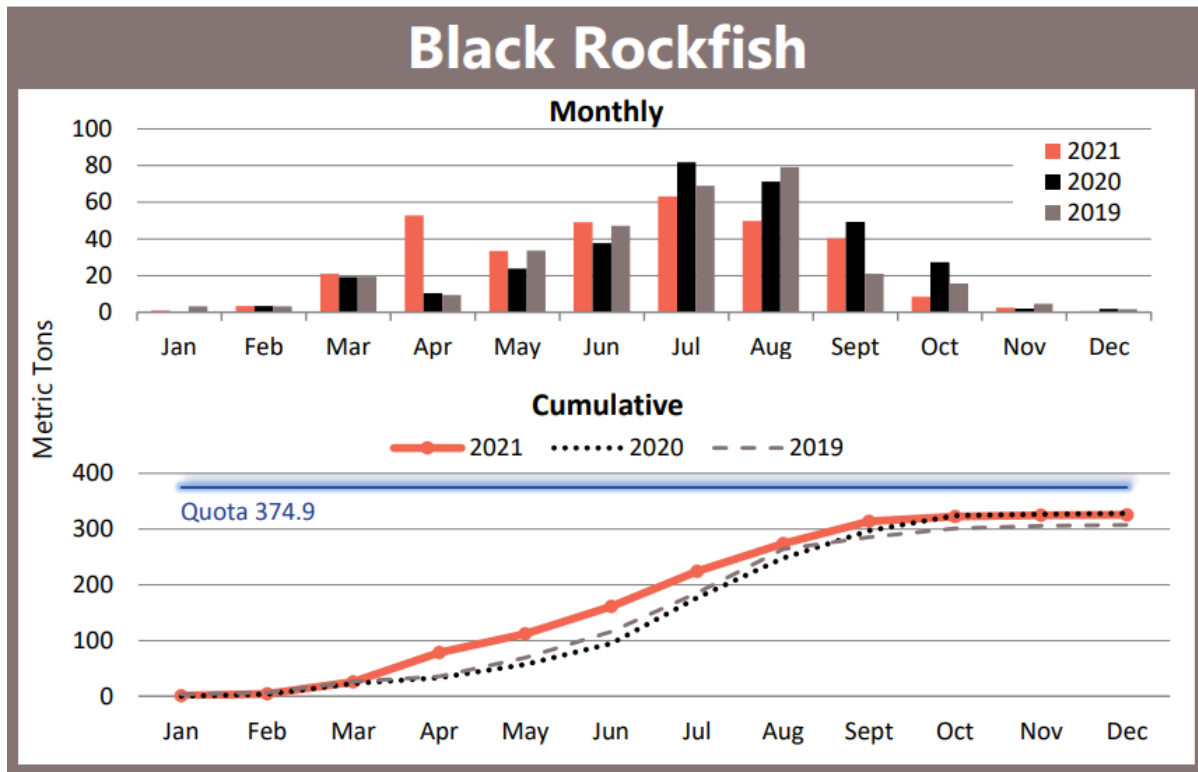
For most recreationally important species, there is a federal or state annual quota (there are separate quotas for commercial fisheries). This is the amount of fish ODFW has to work with in setting season structures and bag limits. Exceeding quotas could lead to overfishing, or have an impact on other fisheries. Note that lingcod does not currently have a quota in Oregon’s recreational fishery because all fisheries combined (commercial, recreational, tribal) are taking far less than the total allowable amount for the West Coast north of Cape Mendocino, CA due to restrictions (e.g., seasonal depth restriction) necessary to minimize yelloweye rockfish bycatch.

The 2021 black rockfish quota was the same as last year. Until there is a new federal stock assessment (likely in 2023), the quota will likely remain similar to 2021 or decrease slightly each year.

The yelloweye rockfish bycatch quota is similar for 2021 and 2022. The yelloweye rockfish stock size has improved, though not enough to allow anglers to retain them. However, with their current level, some regulations that were designed to avoid yelloweye rockfish can be relaxed, such as fewer months with the 40-fathom depth restriction.

Species	2021 Quota (mt)	2022 Quota (mt)
Black Rockfish	389.1	389.1
Blue/Deacon Rockfish	73.7	71.2
Cabezon	19.4	18.6
Canary Rockfish	65.2	63.6
Greenlings	35.8	34.4
Lingcod	No Quota	
Nearshore Rockfish Complex	10.8	10.5
Yelloweye Rockfish	6.9	7.0

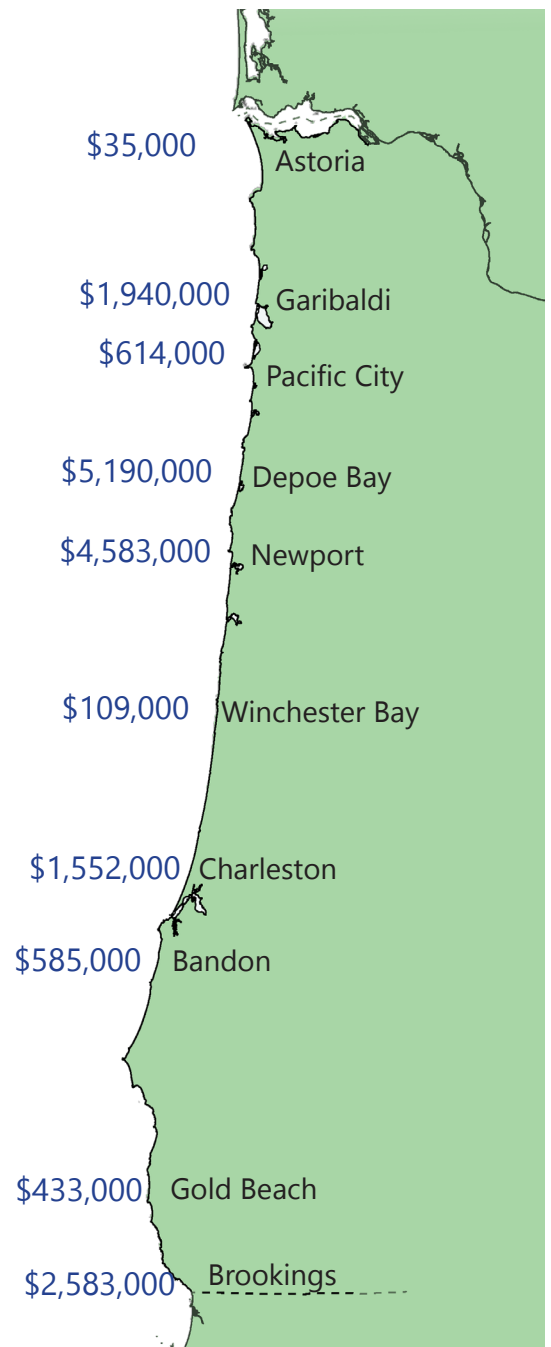
Example of inseason tracking for black rockfish found on ODFW’s [Sport Groundfish Estimates](#) webpage



# Bottomfishing is Good for the Oregon Economy

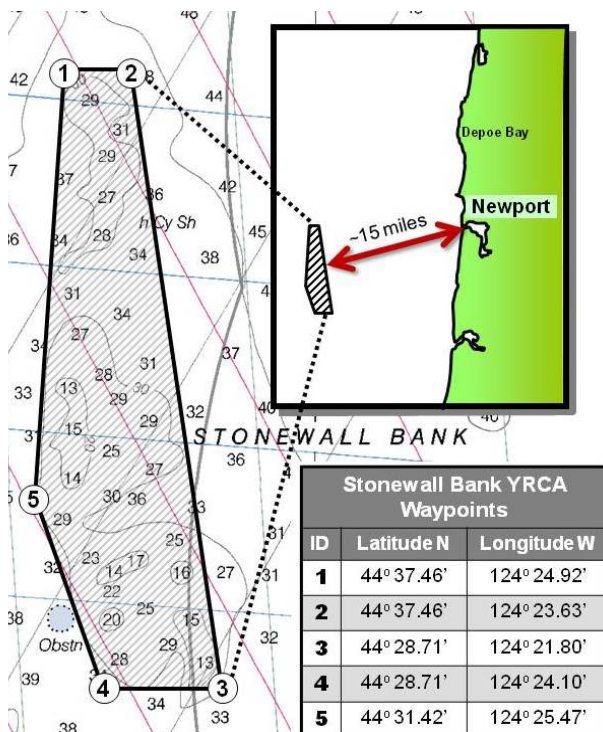
The continued high number of bottomfish trips in 2021 has been good for the economy of Oregon. Bottomfish charter and private trips combined contributed approximately \$17.6 million to the Oregon economy through fishing related expenditures such as gas, bait, gear, moorage, restaurants, and hotels. This translates to approximately the equivalent of 378 full-time jobs. Anglers fishing out of Newport and Depoe Bay had the most effort and highest economic contribution, with about \$5.2 and \$4.6 million, respectively. Anglers fishing out of Brookings and Garibaldi contributed between \$2 and \$2.5 million from each port. Even in smaller ports with lower absolute economic contribution numbers, the contributions can be large relative to other local economic activity, and are very important to coastal communities.

**Contribution to the Oregon economy by bottomfish anglers fishing out of each port.**



## Enforcement

The Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division's Marine Fisheries Team helps ODFW by enforcing fishing regulations. They patrol both on land and at sea to ensure that fishing regulations are followed. Regulations are in place to keep fisheries sustainable, and enforcing regulations is a key piece to the overall management. Common issues encountered are: fishing without a license, exceeding the bag limit, retaining prohibited species (e.g., yelloweye rockfish) or undersized fish (e.g., lingcod or cabezon), and fishing in closed areas (e.g., Stonewall Bank Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area).



Stonewall Bank Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Area, about 15 miles from Newport.

**For information on Marine Reserves**



<https://oregonmarinereserves.com/>

## Rockfish Recompression: Help the Fish, Help the Fishery

Rockfish have a swim bladder which is a gas-filled organ that helps regulate buoyancy. The gas in the swim bladder expands rapidly when a fish is brought up to the surface, resulting in barotrauma. Signs of barotrauma include swollen body, stomach and/or esophagus extending out the mouth, and/or bulging eyes. Because of the extra buoyancy from the expanded gas, some rockfish may not be able to swim down from the surface on their own.

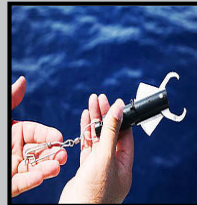


Research has shown that rockfish released near the depth of capture have a higher survival rate than those released at the surface. The Pacific Fishery Management Council incorporates this into management for some species. For yelloweye rockfish, releasing at depth has helped prevent additional fishery restrictions and reduced the chance of a recreational fishery closure due to bycatch.

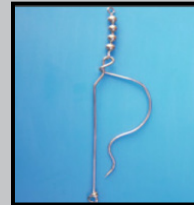
### Types of Descending Devices

A variety of commercially available and homemade devices are used. Find what works for your vessel and set up.

The three most common are:



[Seaqualizer](#)



[Shelton](#)



[Fish Gripper](#)

For additional information, see ODFW's Rockfish Recompression webpage:

<https://myodfw.com/articles/rockfish-recompression>

## Looking Ahead and How to Get Involved

The [Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission](#) will finalize the 2023 sport bottomfish season at its meeting in December 2022. ODFW will be asking for your input on the 2023 season at an online meeting in late July or early August (date and location to be determined). See the [Sport Bottomfish Webpage](#) for more information.

The [Pacific Fishery Management Council](#) process to set up allocations and fishery regulations for 2023-2024 began in 2021 and conclude in June 2022. At its June 2022 meeting, the Council will finalize all of the allocations, season structures, and regulations for 2023 and 2024.



At each Council meeting, there is an opportunity for public input. Information on how to provide input to the Council can be found on the Council's website: <https://www.pcouncil.org/>

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<https://myodfw.com/sport-bottomfish-seasons>