



Marine Resources

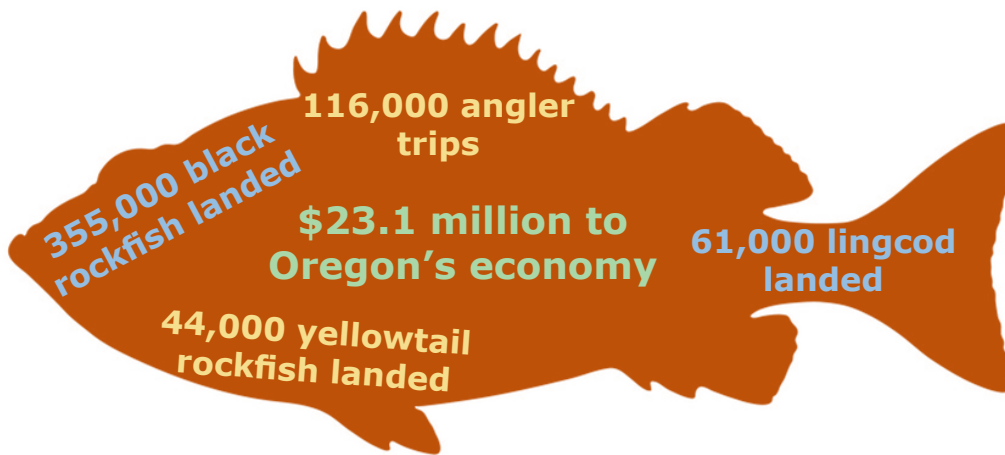
5th Annual Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Marine Resources Program Sport Bottomfish Review (2022)



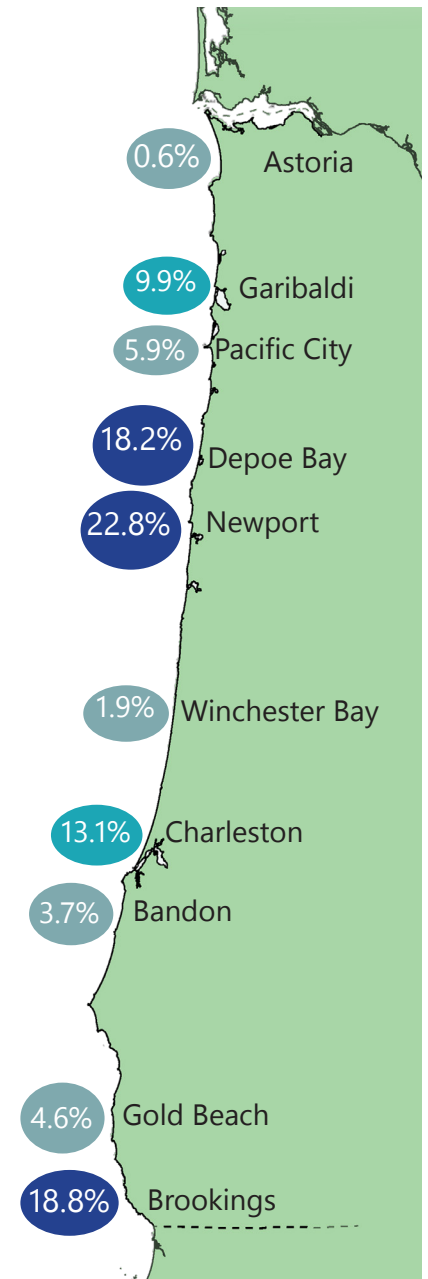
published December 2023

2022 was another extremely popular year for bottomfish fishing off the Oregon Coast with more than 116,000 angler trips, the highest number of angler trips ever reported. This newsletter provides a summary of Oregon's 2022 sport bottomfish fishery.

2022 Season Highlights



Percentage of bottomfish angler trips by port in 2022



Number of Bottomfish Angler Trips, 2005-2022

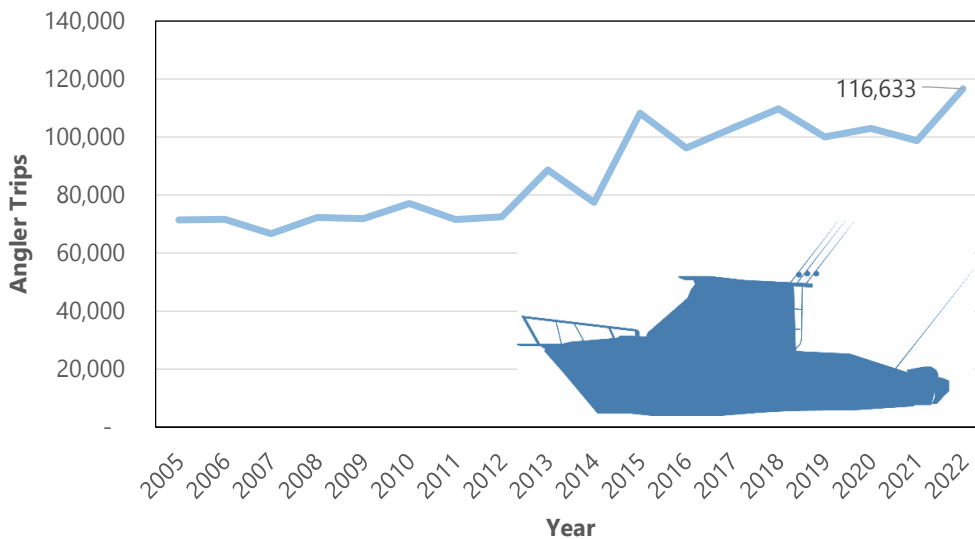


Table of Contents

Bottomfish Identification	2
Effort and Catch	3
Calculating Catch Estimates	4
Managing with Quotas	5
Economics & Enforcement	6
Rockfish Recompression & How to Get Involved	7

Have a Question?

Contact:

Christian Heath christian.t.heath@odfw.oregon.gov

Melanie Bukovec melanie.a.bukovec@odfw.oregon.gov

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 rockfish, 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 online are the popular "[Common Bottomfish Species](#)" and "[Yelloweye Rockfish or Not?](#)" quizzes that will test your identification skills.

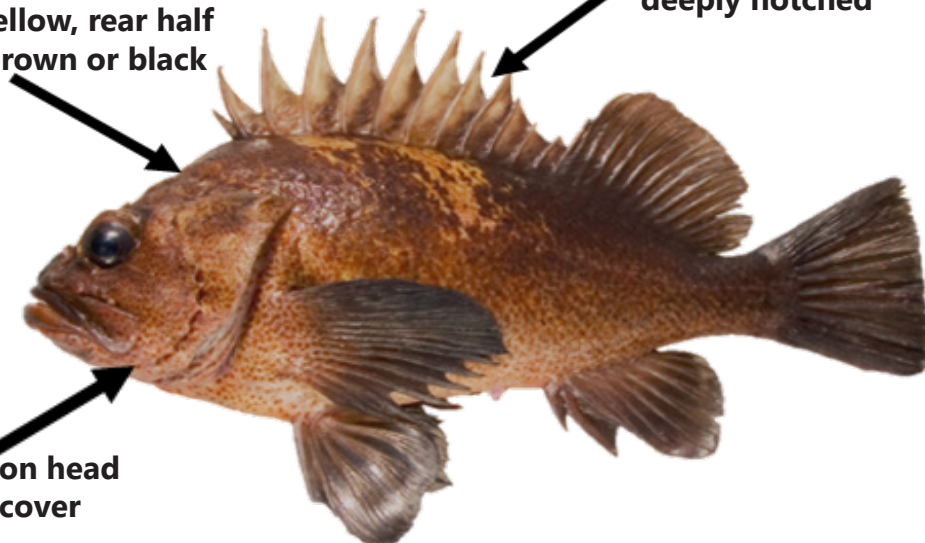
Correctly identifying fish is important for following species harvest and size regulations, and to accurately report species caught and released to the ODFW dockside sampler. It is also important to know your fish ID to avoid keeping an illegal fish. This year, and in 2023, **quillback rockfish are prohibited**, so it is good to learn how to identify them. Some key characteristics are highlighted below.

NO RETENTION ALLOWED

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



2022 Season Summary

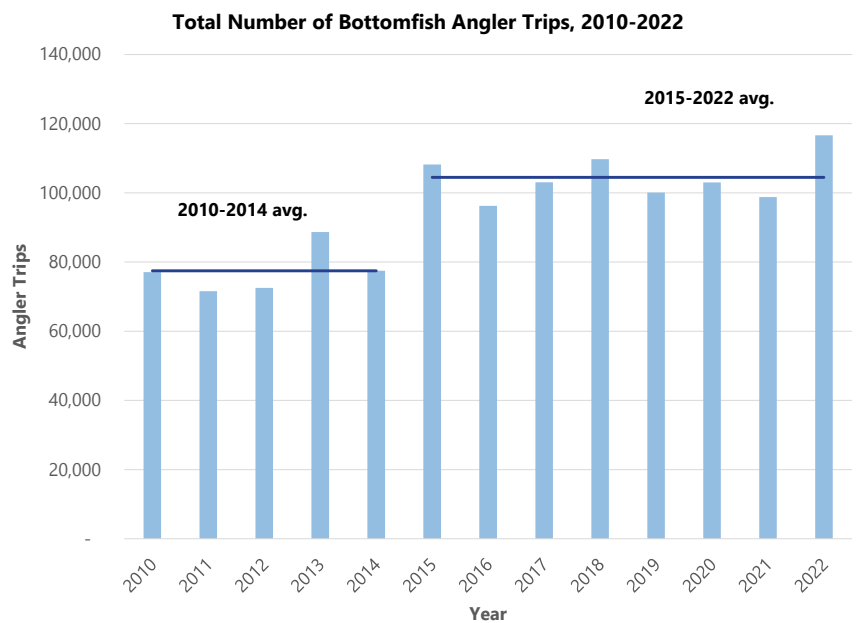
2022 was a very popular year for the bottomfish fishery. High effort and landings throughout the summer prompted ODFW to reduce the general marine fish daily bag limit from five to four fish in September. This was needed to keep catch within quotas and allow the fishery to remain open year-round. Another good coho salmon season off much of the Oregon coast drew a lot of anglers away from bottomfish, reducing bottomfish effort and catches starting in July and continuing through mid-September.

Bottomfish Effort in 2022

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 2022, with over 116,000 angler trips, the highest number of bottomfish angler trips ever recorded.



China rockfish
Photo courtesy of Gary Kish



2022 Total Landings of Lingcod, Rockfish, and Cabezon

2022 was another good year for anglers to catch a number of different species. Anglers landed about 61,000 or 189 metric tons (mt) lingcod. Longleader gear allowed anglers to have good success catching mid-water rockfish species with over 43,000 (48 mt) yellowtail rockfish, and about 41,000 (53 mt) canary rockfish landed in the longleader gear and regular bottomfish fisheries combined.

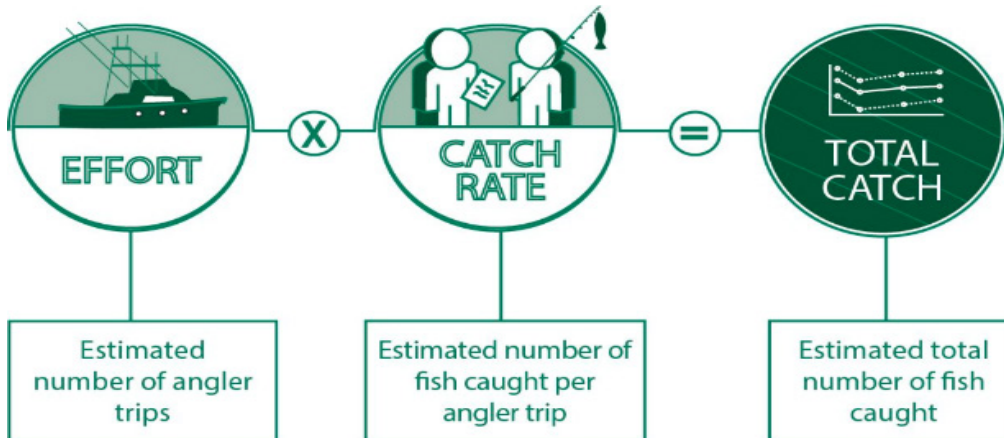
Catch of black, blue and deacon rockfishes was up from 2021. There were approximately 355,000 (397 mt) black rockfish and 28,000 (23 mt) blue and deacon rockfishes landed.

The catch of nearshore rockfish species (China and copper rockfishes) was projected to attain the quota by early September; therefore beginning September 6, retention of these species was prohibited for the remainder of 2022. Total landings were just over 6,000 (9 mt) China and copper rockfishes.

The catch of cabezon was also projected to attain the quota by early September; therefore, beginning September 6, retention was prohibited by boats for the remainder of 2022. About 5,600 (17 mt) cabezon were landed by anglers this year.

Calculating Catch Estimates

To calculate total catch, 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.

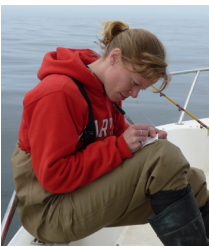
ODFW samplers collect catch rate information by interviewing a portion of boats returning to the docks. Samplers document the number of anglers, species fished for, the number caught and released, and collect length and weight of fish kept. The total catch is estimated by multiplying the number of anglers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



ODFW sampler on the dock conducting an interview with a returning 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 MyODFW app and log in before you leave the dock: <https://myodfw.com/ELS>

- If you are in an area with poor cell service, toggle the app to offline mode (under Settings) or put your phone in Airplane mode
- Once the app is open, you can record your fish
- When you get back into cell service, toggle back to online mode in the app, 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, and tribal) are taking far less than the total allowable amount for the West Coast north of Cape Mendocino, CA due to restrictions necessary to minimize yelloweye rockfish bycatch.

The 2022 black rockfish quota was the same as the previous year.

The yelloweye rockfish bycatch quota is similar for 2022 and 2023. 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 the removal of the 40-fathom depth restriction during summer months.

Species	2022 Quota (mt)	2023 Quota (mt)
Black Rockfish	389.1	389.1
Blue/Deacon Rockfish	71.2	68.8
Cabazon	18.6	18.0
Canary Rockfish	63.6	65.1
Greenlings	34.4	33.4
Lingcod	No Quota	
Nearshore Rockfish Complex	10.5	15.8
Quillback Rockfish	1.7	1.7
Yelloweye Rockfish	7.1	7.0

For inseason tracking visit ODFW's Sport Groundfish Estimates webpage:
https://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/finfish/groundfish_sport/estimates.asp

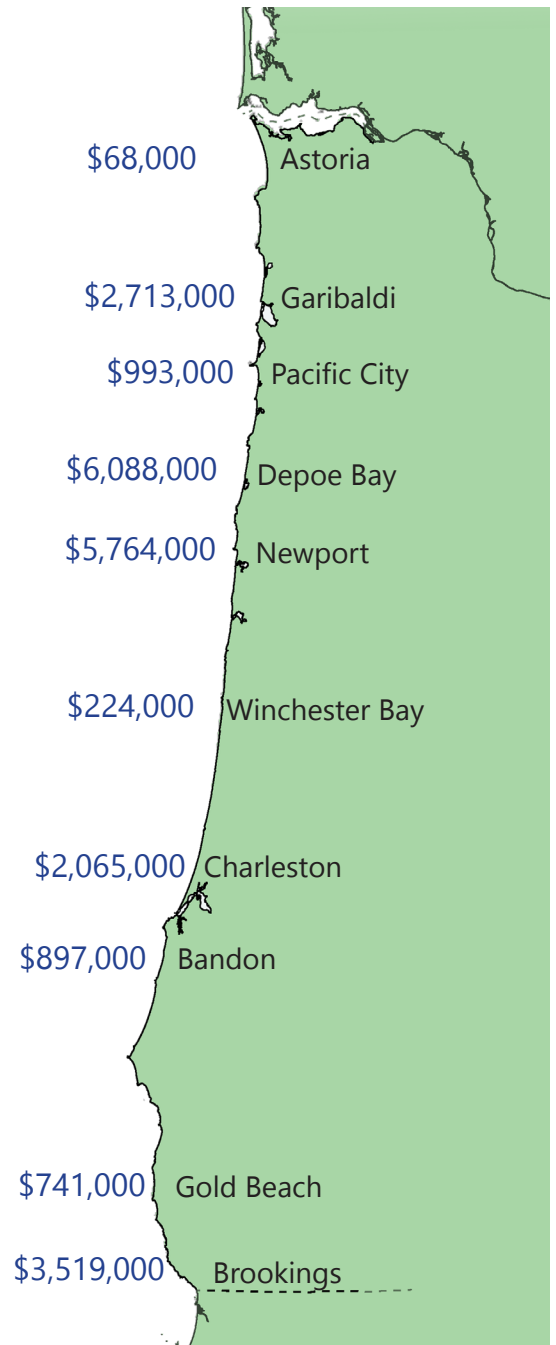


A 22.8 inch black rockfish.

Bottomfish Fishing is Good for the Oregon Economy

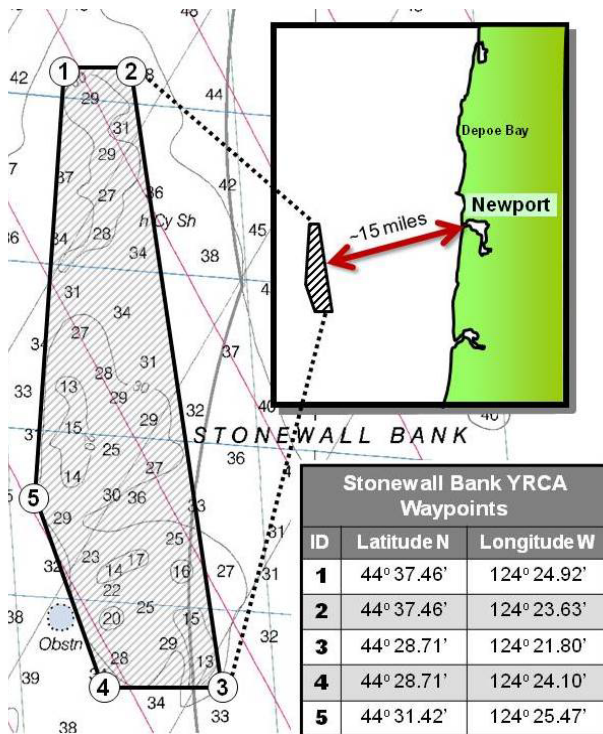
The continued high number of bottomfish angler trips in 2022 has been good for the economy of Oregon. Bottomfish charter and private trips combined contributed approximately \$23.1 million to the Oregon economy through fishing related expenditures such as gas, bait, gear, moorage, restaurants, and hotels. This translates to approximately the equivalent of 402 full-time jobs. Anglers fishing out of Newport and Depoe Bay had the most effort and highest economic contribution, with about \$5.8 and \$6.1 million, respectively. Anglers fishing out of Brookings and Garibaldi contributed about \$3.5 and \$2.7 million, respectively. 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, quillback rockfish) or undersized fish (e.g., lingcod, 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 and stomach, 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.

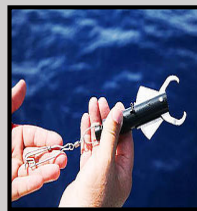


Research has shown that rockfish released near the depth of capture have a higher survival rate than those released at the surface. The Pacific Fishery Management Council incorporates this into management for rockfish species. For yelloweye rockfish, releasing at depth has helped prevent additional fishery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

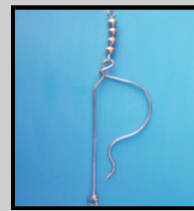
Types of Descending Devices

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

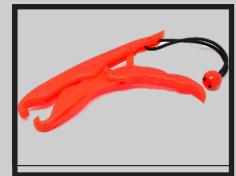
The three most common are:



[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](#) finalized the 2023 sport bottomfish season at its meeting in December 2022 and will be setting the 2024 season in December 2023. See the [Sport Bottomfish Webpage](#) for more information.

The [Pacific Fishery Management Council](#) process to set up allocations and fishery regulations for 2023-2024 concluded in June 2022, and the Council finalized 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/>



**Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Marine Resources Program
2040 SE Marine Science Drive
Newport, OR 97365
(541) 867-4741**

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