

Groundswell against Ground fish Ban growing

October 2, 2023



What started out as a group of four has quickly grown across Del Norte County. In an effort to end the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFWD) ban on retention of the quillback fish, the untitled Group is raising awareness of the impending economic disaster looming on the horizon.

Harry Adams, Steve Huber, Andrea Spahn and Chris Hegness met a few weeks back to discuss the August 21 directive banning Quillback retention from Mendocino to the Oregon border.

Adams is both a Harbor commissioner and a commercial charter vessel owner, Huber is a commercial charter vessel owner licensed in California, Spahn is a recreational boat owner who, with her husband, recently retired to Crescent City and Hegnes is the General Manager of Englund Marine in Crescent City. Here's the chronology of what has happened:

August 7 CDFW sent out a bulletin closing all Quillback Rockfish retention in the Nearshore Groundfish Fishery from Mendocino to the Oregon border.

August 21, CDFW determined the quota of approximately 2,000 pounds of Quillback had exceeded 130 percent, hence ordered a complete closure directive IMMEDIATELY. The vote to shut down ocean fishing was 7-6, with two abstentions. The balance of the fishing season was now declared over.

September 1 CDFW extends the closure to the Central Management Area south of Mendocino.

The ban extends from the shoreline to a depth of 50 fathoms or 300 feet. Fish are unattainable below the 300 foot depth, according to the Group.

The Fishermen Group questioned the model used to declare the ban. The Group asks for a review of data via a hook and line protocol, claiming the hook and line data is far more accurate.

The closure of ocean fishing will be an economic disaster for Crescent City and up and down the California coast, starting in May, 2024, according to the Fishing Group.

The group gathered and met at Englund Marine and pooled their personal money and necessary funds to send Adams to Seattle for the recent Pacific Fisheries Management Council meeting. PFMC makes recommendations to the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (DFWD) on California fishing regulations. Adams was allotted six minutes at the public dais. PFMC asked lots of questions. Adams spoke for 12 minutes and reportedly the PFMC was impressed.

Here's what's happening now:

The Group of Four organized last Thursday's Lake Earl Grange meeting to discuss and implement the strategy to persuade the Pacific Fisheries Management Council to change its rules on the Quillback, effective May, 2024. There were 40 members of the public attended.

The Group said Letters of Support are needed to persuade Pacific Fisheries to amend its recommendations to DFWD.

The Council meets again in Garden Grove, November 1-8. The Fishermen Group plans to pool their personal funds to send a representative to that meeting. The Board of Supervisors will also discuss sending a representative to the November 3 meeting.

Visitors come to Del Norte to enjoy the beaches and Redwoods and of course, to fish. Visitors brings lots money to support motels, restaurants, merchants and gaming and just enjoy the benefits of Crescent City. The Group hopes you will send your email praising the benefits of our magnificent geography. Tell the Fishery Council YOUR story. Here's the link:

Public Comments (**pfmc.org**). Scroll down to **E5** and make your comment for Groundfish and your love, passion and appreciation for Crescent City and Del Norte County. Continue scrolling to **G1**. Share your letter of support to increase the fishing quota for Halibut. Currently Halibut quota is just 4 percent in Northern Management Zone. The Group asks you to be respectful, proactive, not reactive.

The **deadline** for your comment is **October 23**.

The more folks who comment, the more PFMC will listen. The Group asks you to spread this message to anyone and everyone you know.

Please submit your comments about the Dept of Fish and Wildlife ban on Ocean fishing. Here's the link: Submit Comments (**pfmc.org**). Scroll down to comments **E5** and **G1**