

California MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team
Consideration of Barred Surfperch for the
List of Species Likely to Benefit from Marine Protected Areas
Revised March 25, 2008

Barred surfperch (*Amphistichus argenteus*) is currently not listed under the species most likely to benefit from marine protected areas (MPAs) in the MLPA North Central Coast Study Region (NCCSR).

Barred surfperch are found from Washington to northern Baja California and live primarily along sandy coasts in less than 20 feet of water, where they feed primarily on sand crabs¹. Like other surfperch species, barred surfperch give birth to relatively low numbers of live young, which could make it difficult for the species to recover from significant population decreases due to anthropogenic impacts.

Female barred surfperch are targeted by anglers because they are larger than males, and most of the recreational take occurs when spawning aggregations are present². Tagging experiments in southern California showed “a low rate of mixing between barred surfperch inhabiting nonadjacent areas,” but recovery numbers were low and some fish were recaptured 15 or more miles from their release site³.

Barred surfperch are reportedly the most common fish taken by surf fishermen in central and southern California, and statewide account for approximately 33% of the recreational surfperch catch. A commercial surf fishery exists along the central coast, centered in Morro Bay. In the 1990s, barred surfperch accounted for approximately 40% of the commercial catch in California, though only 67% of commercial landing receipts divided surfperch by species². Though overall take of this species is highest south of Santa Cruz, it remains an important target of recreational anglers in the NCCSR.

The attached table summarizes recreational catch data from the California Recreational Fisheries Survey (CRFS) website for the NCCSR for surfperch species listed as most likely to benefit from MPAs, including barred surfperch. The numbers in the table represent catches from all modes of fishing based on angler interviews from 2000 to 2006, and do not represent an estimate of the total number of fish taken from the region; these numbers illustrate the relative catch among the species identified.

¹ Love, M. 1996. *Probably More Than You Want to Know About the Fishes of the Pacific Coast*. Really Big Press, Santa Barbara: 257-260.

² Ryan, C., P. Collier et al. 2003. Surfperches. In: Annual Status of the Fisheries Report through 2003: http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/asfr_2003.pdf.

³ Carlisle, J.G., J.W. Schott, and N.J. Abramson. 1960. The barred surfperch (*Amphistichus argenteus* Agassiz) in southern California. California. Dept Fish and Game Bull. 109: 7-79.

CRFS* recreational catch data for selected surfperch species

Common Name	Species	Number of Fish
Barred surfperch	<i>Amphistichus argenteus</i>	825
Black surfperch	<i>Embiotoca jacksoni</i>	713
Calico surfperch	<i>Amphistichus koelzi</i>	100
Pile surfperch	<i>Damalichthys vacca</i>	173
Rainbow surfperch	<i>Hypsurus caryi</i>	178
Redtail surfperch	<i>Amphistichus rhodoterus</i>	457
Rubberlip surfperch	<i>Phacochilus toxotes</i>	210
Shiner surfperch	<i>Cymatogaster aggregate</i>	2044
Striped surfperch	<i>Embiotoca lateralis</i>	863
Walleye surfperch	<i>Hyperprosopon argenteum</i>	876
White surfperch	<i>Phanerodon furcatus</i>	226

* CRFS data includes sampled catches for the years 2000-2006 for all fishing modes