



CCFRP

Volunteer Newsletter 2026

A Summary of the 2025 Sampling Season



Greetings CCFRP Volunteer Anglers!

With your help, Cal Poly CCFRP has completed the 2025 sampling season; this was our 19th season of data collection inside and outside of marine protected areas (MPAs) on the central California coast! In 2025, we completed 12 trips, fishing for a total of 326 person hours. In that time, we caught a total of 3,656 fishes comprised of 23 species; approximately 11 fishes per angler hour. Thank you for participating in this magnificent season – we couldn't have done it without you!

Angler Workshop 2026 Information

To celebrate all the hard work you did this season, we would like to invite you to our annual volunteer angler appreciation event and data workshop! All past, present, and future volunteer anglers are welcome! We will be discussing the data we collected in 2025 as well as updating you on continuing projects and introducing some new projects that are in the works. We would appreciate your attendance very much.

**Cal Poly Research Pier
Avila Beach, CA
Saturday, April 18, 2026, 11 am – 2 pm**

Please check your E-mail for more details about this appreciation event and data workshop. If you are able to attend, please RSVP to link in Erin's E-mail which will come from the address ccfrpslo@gmail.com so that we can plan accordingly. Lunch will be provided. Stay tune for more updates on this event through email and by liking CCFRP on Facebook – we look forward to seeing you there!



Join Us for the 2026 Sampling Season!



The success of every CCFRP sampling season is dependent on the efforts of our amazing volunteer anglers! Be sure to keep an eye on your email for details about the upcoming 2026 CCFRP season, including the 2026 sampling schedule.



When the schedule is released, please make sure to respond to the email promptly with your availability to secure your fishing spots! We are working hard behind the scenes to get those dates to you as soon as possible.





Tag Recaptures



Left: This Vermilion Rockfish (*Sebastes miniatus*) was first caught in the Piedras Blancas MPA on September 6th, 2016. At that time, it measured 43 cm. On July 23rd, 2025, it was recaptured by angler Paul H.! Having been at liberty nearly nine years, this fish was captured in the same cell and measured 44.9 cm!

Right: On the very same day, July 23rd, we also recaptured this Copper Rockfish (*Sebastes caurinus*)! This fish first met us around 4 years ago and came in at 45 cm. This time, it was reeled up out of the same cell by angler Don k., and measured 46.6 cm.



Left: This Copper Rockfish (*Sebastes caurinus*) was first caught on July 8th, 2025, by angler Whitney U. in the Piedras Blancas MPA. It missed us so much that it was caught again on August 6th, this time by Mark S.! This 44.2 cm beast fell for a lingcod bar the first time and an unbaited shrimp fly the second time.



Tag returns are a valuable way for us to learn about the movement and growth rate of fishes that are caught and released on our sampling trips. We rely on the fishing community for this priceless information. Remember that information from a tagged fish is worth \$20! If you catch a tagged fish, please record the species, length, depth and coordinates and contact: mlml-ccfrp@sjsu.edu

CCFRP Science Crew Updates

Our science crew members have been busy diving into new projects and making exciting plans since the sampling season ended! **Maddy Yang** has begun her senior project studying Pismo clams and is beginning subtidal collections! She is also exploring job opportunities all around the world for after her graduation this spring. **Karissa Guy** has been focusing on her statistics coursework, creating and co-teaching an Epifauna lab and looking into master's programs connected with the New Zealand Department of conservation. **Forest Powell** has been working as a recreational fisheries observer with CDFW and will soon begin a new position as a firefighter with the U.S. Forest Service in May. **Helen Lee** graduated in the spring and is pursuing graduate school, she is also traveling to South Korea in March! **Sasha Evans** has been busy with schoolwork, clam surveys for the Pismo Clam Project, working at the Cal Poly pier, and being president of the Marine Science Club. She is planning a graduation trip to Europe to celebrate! **Hunter Wooldridge** has continued working with CCFRP and pursuing his marine science degree, he plans to see where future opportunities take him and can't wait for the 2026 season. **Skylar Collings** has been focusing on her studies and hopes to attend graduate school to study marine chemistry. **Sophia Catania** is graduating this spring and hopes to attend graduate school studying the ecology of marine microbes. **Kelsi Taylor** plans to stay in fisheries research and has been working on writing a book (everyone stay tuned)! **Adam Perry** has been working to model the population density of Kellet's whelk and spends his free time fishing! Our incredible CCFRP statewide coordinator **Erin Johnston** continues to lead the troops and got married this Fall! She was a beautiful bride, but we all know she looks better in Grunden's.

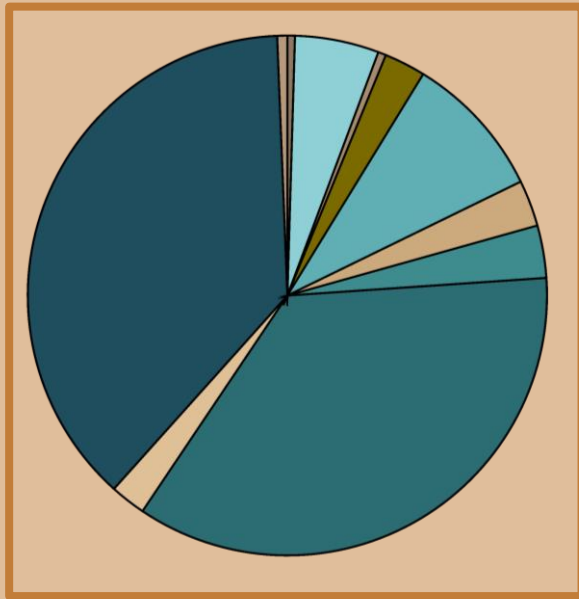


Dr. Benjamin Ruttenberg is our fantastic Cal Poly CCFRP PI! Ben runs the Marine Conservation Lab at Cal Poly and is the director of the Center for Coastal Marine Sciences. We are so lucky to have him as our PI.



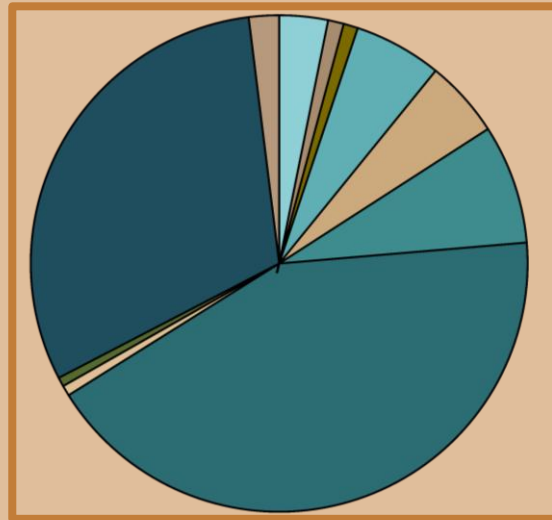
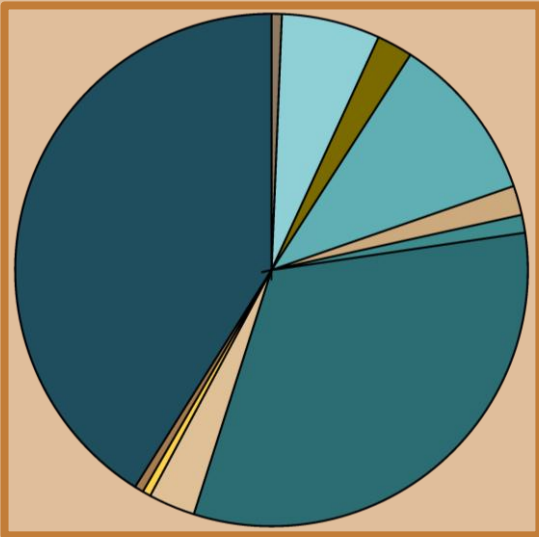
Dr. Dean Wendt co-founded CCFRP 19 years ago and has since become Dean of the Baily College of Science and Math at Cal Poly. While he may not make it out into the field as often as he once did, we will always seek his input and expertise!

Cal Poly 2025 Species Composition



MPA Sites Species Composition

Reference Sites Species Composition



These pie charts show Cal Poly CCFRP's **species composition for the 2025 sampling season (top) and by site (bottom)**. The 2025 sampling season had a **total of 3,656 fish caught** with Blue (1377 caught) and Gopher (1296 caught) Rockfish being the most frequently caught species. In total, **Blue and Gopher Rockfish** consisted of **73.2%** of the catch in 2025, consistent with long term trends. When breaking up the data by site, Blue rockfish make up 41% of the fish caught in the MPAs while Gopher rockfish make up 42% of the fish caught in the reference sites. Other species that were caught 100+ times during the season were Lingcod (105), Kelp Rockfish (119), Vermilion Rockfish (191), and Olive Rockfish (329).

****Note:** 23 different species of fish were caught in 2025. Only the top ten species are shown for both pie charts with the remaining 13 species included in the 'other' category.

Largest and Smallest Catches from 2025



Blue Rockfish

Minimum: 98 mm (3.86 in)
Maximum: 395 mm (15.55 in)



Copper Rockfish

Minimum: 192 mm (7.56 in)
Maximum: 510 mm (20.08 in)



Gopher Rockfish

Minimum: 150 mm (5.91 in)
Maximum: 444 mm (17.48 in)



Kelp Rockfish

Minimum: 220 mm (8.66 in)
Maximum: 363 mm (14.29 in)



Lingcod

Minimum: 203 mm (7.99 in)
Maximum: 910 mm (35.83 in)



Olive Rockfish

Minimum: 150 mm (5.91 in)
Maximum: 508 mm (20.00 in)



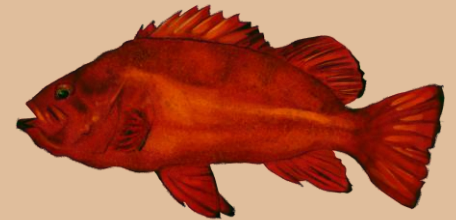
Rosy Rockfish

Minimum: 177 mm (6.97 in)
Maximum: 245 mm (9.65 in)



Treefish

Minimum: 268 mm (10.55 in)
Maximum: 335 mm (13.19 in)



Vermilion Rockfish

Minimum: 190 mm (7.48 in)
Maximum: 540 mm (21.26 in)



Yellowtail Rockfish

Minimum: 115 mm (4.53 in)
Maximum: 338 mm (13.31 in)

Largest Catches of All Time



Blue Rockfish 2016

Angler: Ralph B.
Length: 450 mm (17.7 in)
Area: Point Buchon MPA
Bait: Shrimp Fly



Copper Rockfish 2014

Angler: Phil E.
Length: 540 mm (21.3 in)
Area: Piedras Blancas MPA
Bait: Shrimp Fly with Squid



Gopher Rockfish 2019

Angler: Don M.
Length: 420 mm (16.5 in)
Area: Piedras Blancas MPA
Bait: Shrimp Fly with Squid



Kelp Rockfish 2013

Angler: Bob S.
Length: 410 mm (16.1 in)
Area: Point Buchon MPA
Bait: Shrimp Fly



Lingcod 2015

Angler: Tim D.
Length: 970 mm (38.2 in)
Area: Point Buchon MPA
Bait: Metal Jig



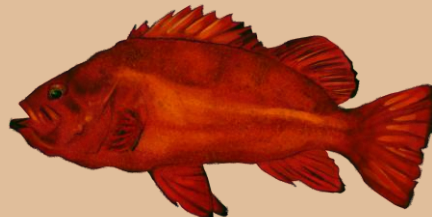
Olive Rockfish 2023

Angler: Lillian F.
Length: 520 mm (20.5 in)
Area: Point Buchon MPA
Bait: Shrimp Fly



Yellowtail Rockfish 2020

Angler: David K.
Length: 450 mm (17.7 in)
Area: Point Buchon MPA
Bait: Shrimp Fly with Squid



Vermilion Rockfish 2015

Angler: Richard D.
Length: 550 mm (21.7 in)
Area: Point Buchon MPA
Bait: Shrimp Fly



Black Rockfish 2009

Angler: Marcy D.
Length: 430 mm (16.9 in)
Area: Point Buchon REF
Bait: Shrimp Fly



Canary Rockfish 2010

Angler: Jeff G.
Length: 440 mm (17.3 in)
Area: Point Buchon MPA
Bait: Shrimp Fly with Squid



FISH ON!

LOOKING AT FISH SPECIES BY GEAR TYPE

Baited Shrimp Fly

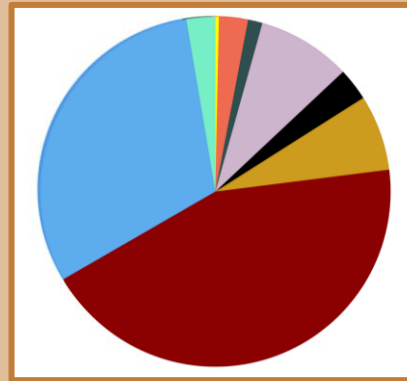
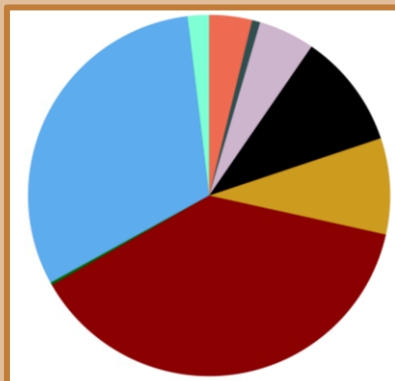
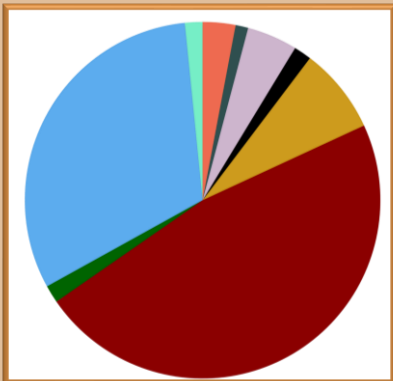
Lingcod Bar

Unbaited Shrimp Fly

REF

REF

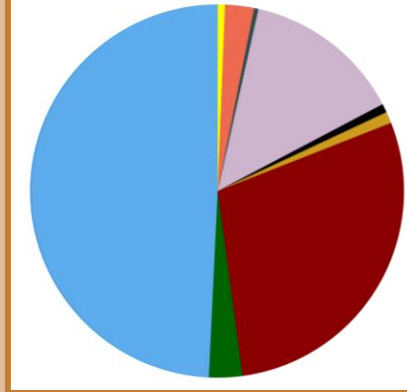
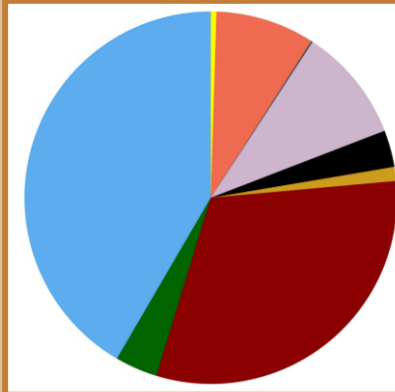
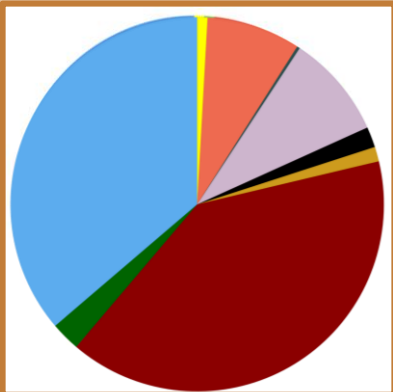
REF



Species

- Black Rockfish
- Blue Rockfish
- Copper Rockfish
- Gopher Rockfish
- Kelp Rockfish
- Lingcod
- Olive Rockfish
- Tree Fish
- Vermillion Rockfish
- Yellow Tail Rockfish

Species Filtered By Top 10



MPA

MPA

MPA

We Vermilions LOVE the MPA!

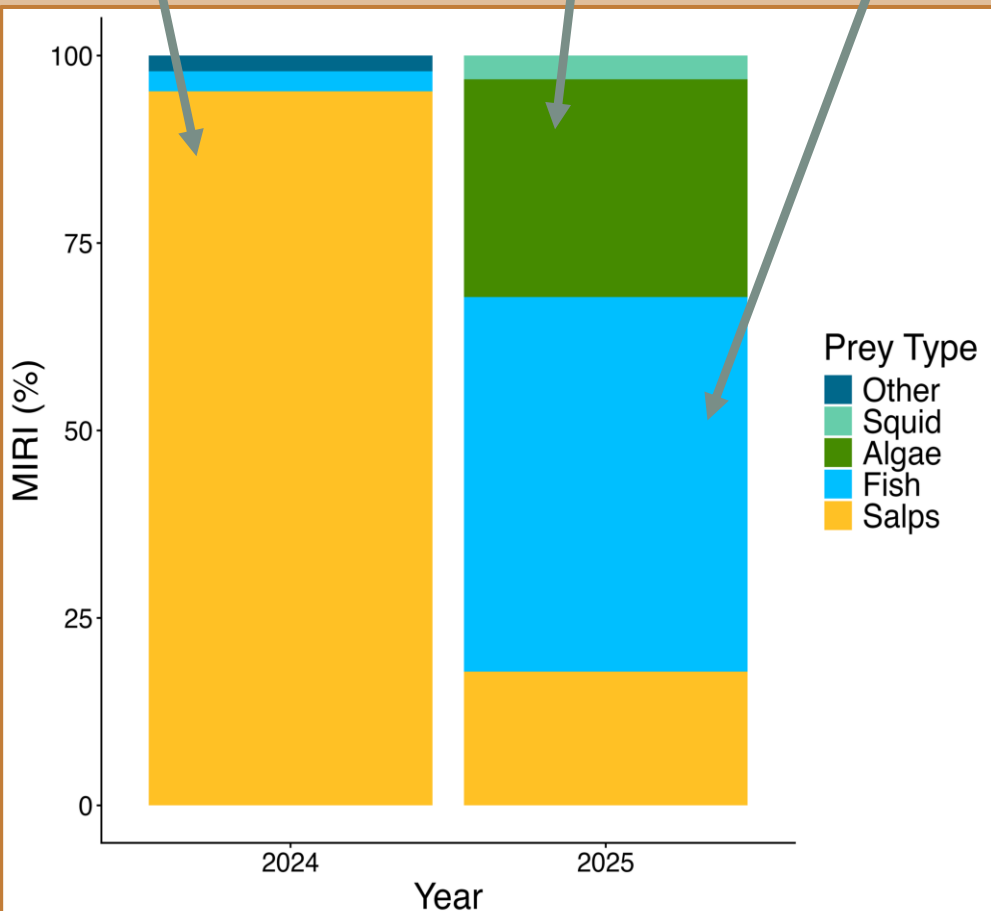
Those ravenous Gopher Rockfish dominated baited and unbaited shrimp flies.

What are the Blues eating?

If you fished with us in 2024, you might remember our surprise at the unusually low catch of Blue Rockfish compared with seasons before and after. To better understand what was going on, we analyzed the gut contents of Blue Rockfish collected during our 2024 and 2025 sampling seasons, examining a total of 37 stomachs (18 in 2024 and 19 in 2025).

In 2024, Blue Rockfish had a strong preference for salps!

In 2025, Blue Rockfish had a strong preference for fish and algae!



This chart represents **the relative importance of the prey type on the overall fish stomachs**. The Modified Index of Relative Importance (MIRI) accounts for the prey occurrence and weight. Notice the switch of preference from primarily salps in 2024 to primarily fish and algae in 2025!

Why do you think Blue Rockfish switched their prey preference?

Come to the angler meeting ready to discuss!



2025 CCFRP Sampling Season

