

GETTING STARTED

A few simple practices and gear choices can greatly enhance your enjoyment of Central California's year-round surfperch fishing. Anglers also enjoy seasonal opportunities for striped bass, California halibut, jacksmelt and surf smelt, among others.

WHEN TO GO FISHING ...



You are more likely to catch fish:

- In the early morning or an hour before dusk
- On an incoming high tide. The rising water level dislodges small invertebrates in sand bars, stimulating fish to feed.
- During mild to moderate surf
- **EXCEPTIONS:** Surf smelt and night smelt fishing are best in the daytime and evening respectively, on a falling high tide. Both species usually spawn on coarse-grained sandy beaches when the surf is mild.



CASTING TIPS ...

- When you are beach fishing, cast to the edges of sand bars and drop-offs and be on the lookout for fish "highways," or channels with transiting fish in search of food.
- If you are surfperch fishing, try casting near sand crab beds.
- If you are striped bass or halibut fishing, look for signs of baitfish, such as feeding birds and marine mammals, and cast into these areas.

Species	Peak Months
Surfperch	October – June
Striped Bass	April – September
California Halibut	May – August
Jacksmelt	April – August
Night/Surf Smelt	February – August

Peak months for some favorite species in Central California.



Alternate communication formats available upon request. If reasonable accommodation is needed call (916) 322-8911 or the California Relay (Telephone) Service for the deaf or hearing impaired from TDD phones at 1 (800) 735-2929 or 711.

ROD AND REEL TIPS



If you are **heavy bait fishing** or "**plugging**," use a 10- to 12-ft rod rated for 2- to 8-oz casting, with spinning or conventional reels capable of holding 150 to 200 yds of 20- to 30-lb monofilament line.

If you are **fly-fishing**, try a 9- to 11-ft rod, rated for a 6- to 8-weight line, with matching reel and sink-tip or shooting head lines. Stripping baskets help manage line in the surf.

If you are **light bait fishing** or using **Carolina-rigged grubs**, try a 7- to 9-ft rod, with either a spinning or bait casting reel. Use a 6- to 12-lb test line that can comfortably cast a 1/2- to 1-oz egg sinker, depending on surf conditions.

NET FISHING

For **surf smelt fishing along San Mateo County beaches**, try cast or "throw" nets in the 6- to 8-ft range, with 1 to 1 1/2 lbs of lead per foot and 3/8-in webbing.

For **night smelt fishing**, try "A-frame" nylon webbing nets constructed of two rigid poles and a cross-member.



Carolina rig

DFG/S. Bell

EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

- Waders, hat, polarized sunglasses and sunblock. Besides protecting your eyes, polarized sunglasses will help you see fish in the shore break and run-up. Wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device if wading.
- Pack for fish, tackle, tape measure, and needle-nose pliers for removing hooks
- Bucket and scale to weigh catch, if fishing for night or surf smelt

Pack Out What You Pack In: Fishing Line, Hooks and Trash

To report lost fishing gear visit:

www.lostfishinggear.org



TURN IN POACHERS AND POLLUTERS.

Cheaters ruin the resource and your sport.

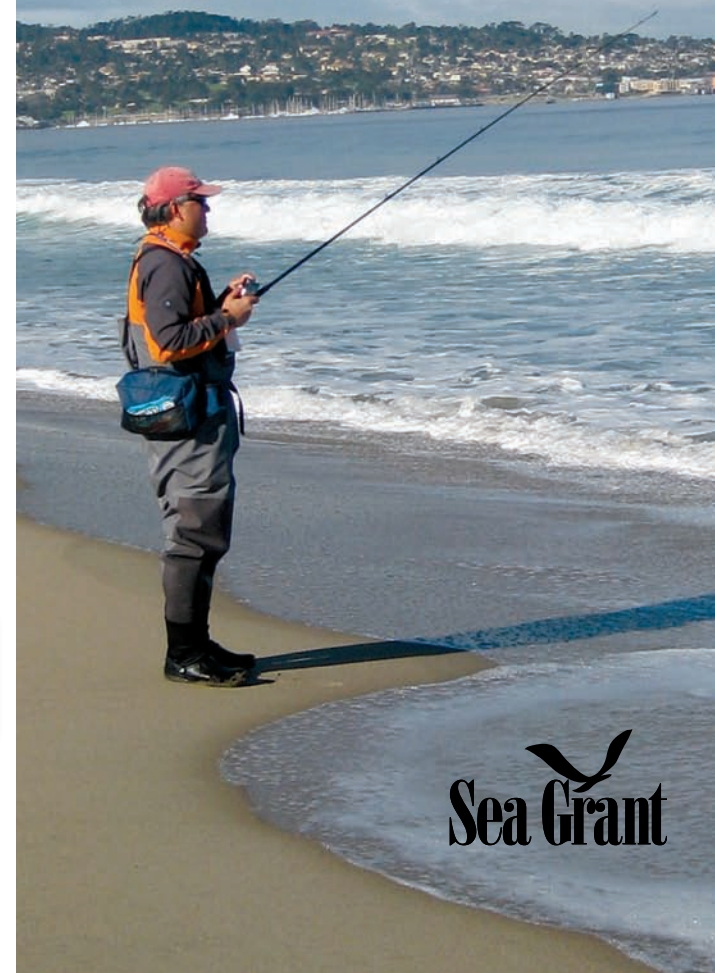
To bust them, make an anonymous call to CalTIP:

1 (888) DFG-CalTIP (1 (888) 334-2258)



A Guide to CENTRAL CALIFORNIA BEACH FISHING

Photo credit: DFG/K. Oda



Sea Grant



COMMONLY CAUGHT CENTRAL CALIFORNIA SURF SPECIES



A. Bachar

Barred surfperch
Amphistichus argenteus



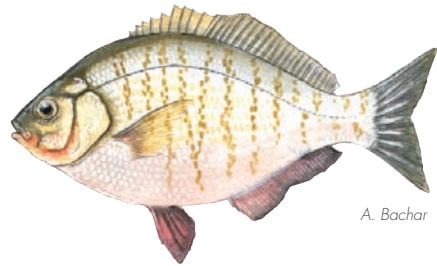
A. Bachar

Walleye surfperch
Hyperprosopon argenteum



J. Taylor

Striped bass
Morone saxatilis



A. Bachar

Calico surfperch
Amphistichus koelzi



A. Bachar

Silver surfperch
Hyperprosopon ellipticum



A. Bachar

California halibut
Paralichthys californicus



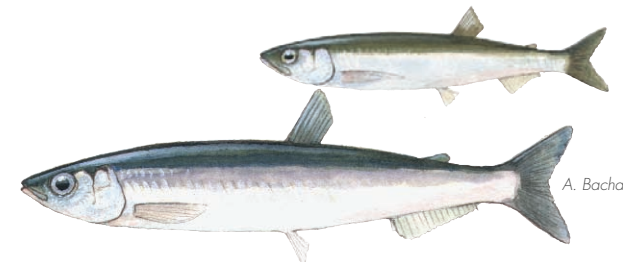
A. Bachar

Redtail surfperch
Amphistichus rhodoterus



A. Bachar

Jacksmelt
Atherinopsis californiensis



A. Bachar

Surf smelt
Hypomesus pretiosus

Night smelt
Spirinchus starksi

For fish consumption advisories visit www.oehha.ca.gov/fish.html

For more information and current fishing regulations, visit the California Department of Fish and Game Web site at: www.dfg.ca.gov/marine.