

## **Fish Rap: Tropical waters bringing albacore closer**

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Fish Rap

Another pesky mixed swell might make fishing difficult for the inshore anglers this weekend. Offshore albacore hunters are looking at the weather forecast with mixed emotions of hope and dismay.

Last week's tropical depressions and resulting south swell as expected pushed warm water currents offshore closer to Santa Cruz. This is good news for the tuna anglers who had been traveling up to 60 miles to reach the albacore grounds. According to Corey Ragan at Bayside Marine, 20-25 boats launched Wednesday from Santa Cruz in search of tuna. Ragan says the boats were scattered from the Big Sur area to the 601 Buoy area, and everyone caught tuna.

"Most scores were in the teens or 20s," Ragan said. "We fished the [Big] Sur Canyon area and got eight for the boat; five on the troll, and three with live bait. It was a gorgeous day. You couldn't ask for much more, with a minimal swell and light winds. We found the beautiful blue water and measured temperatures from 66-70 degrees."

Ragan added that the offshore conditions are truly tropical. At least three yellowtail were caught from the tuna grounds Wednesday, and one boat sighted a swordfish.

The weekend forecast is for 15- to 25-knot winds over a 3- to 6-foot mixed swell, which is potentially too rough for safe fishing. Tuna hunters are hoping the forecast will be downgraded before the weekend.

If we must remain inshore, the good news is fishing is still very good in our local waters. Ed Burrell at Capitola Boat and Bait weighed in a good number of striped bass caught from the Cement Ship area, as well as a steady influx of halibut ranging from 6-20 pounds.

Burrell also reported pier anglers are having a blast catching dozens of jumbo sardines from the Capitola Wharf [very good cooked whole on the barbecue]. Bayside Marine weighed in a number of halibut this week, with a few approaching or exceeding the 30-pound mark. Gerry Brookes from Reel Sportfishing took a charter out on the Doble Wednesday and returned with four nice halibut to 25 pounds and a couple bonus lings.

Rockfish and lingcod are on the bite if you can find the right spot on the right day. We are seeing an increase in lingcod numbers as their spawning season approaches. Sarah Graham from Stagnaro's Sportfishing reported that fishing was pretty good on our local reefs last Tuesday. Ken Stagnaro took a group out on the Velocity to fish the local reefs near town. They returned with full bag limits of mixed rockfish, mostly browns, reds and yellowtails.

Allen Bushnell can also be heard on The Let's Go Fishing Radio Show, Thursdays at 7 p.m. on KSCO radio on 1080 AM. Send your photos, comments or questions to [scrzfishing@yahoo.com](mailto:scrzfishing@yahoo.com)