

Fish Rap: Halibut hot at Capitola Wharf
By Allen Bushnell - Sentinel Correspondent
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Fish Rap

The weather certainly improved this week. Balmy temperatures, light winds, and low swells provided perfect fishing conditions for local anglers looking for a legal flattie.

Ed Burrell at Capitola Boat and Bait saw a number of halibut come over the rail of the wharf this week. Most were small fish, but anything over 22 inches is legal, and many of them met this length requirement. Burrell hooked at least one halibut from his boat near the harbor early in the week. It seems the bite is concentrated in that area now: in front of Twin Lakes Beach, from 35 feet of water out to the Mile Buoy area, where it is 70 feet deep. Not everyone is lucky enough to get a bite, but reports have been consistent all week of halibut caught, including at least one limit of three fish.

It is unusual to have a bona-fide halibut bite in Santa Cruz this early in the season. Typically we see halibut fishing start later in May, then continue through fall. The early arrival of these halibut from deeper waters offshore may be an indication of a decent season ahead of us. One can only hope.

Anglers on San Francisco Bay are enjoying a decent halibut run as well. Captain Jay Yokomizo on the New Huck Finn has been averaging "about a fish per rod" for the past few weeks. He is concentrating on the South Bay spots, near Candlestick Park, Oyster Point and the Berkeley and Alameda flats. Most of these fish are in the 6- to 20-pound range, though he has

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seen halibut as large as 25 pounds caught in the bay this week.

Yokomizo says the striped bass bite is "wide open" near Vallejo and Crockett, where salmon fingerlings are being released. The New Huck Finn has been fishing for stripers near San Francisco Airport, where it has found a scattering of bass from 5 to 15 pounds.

If you have kids, mark your calendars for this weekend's Kid's Fishing Derby at Pinto Lake in Watsonville. Bruce Kobara, President of the Pajaro Valley Rod and Gun Club says the annual event is for kids 12 and under, with lots of prizes for winners and other participants. The derby is scheduled for 8 a.m. Sunday. The California

Department of Fish and Game will plant a load of trout at 7a.m. and adults are not allowed to fish until after noon, so every kid has a very good chance of catching fish.

Allen Bushnell's fish report can also be heard on KSCO 1080-AM, Friday mornings at 6:45 a.m. Please send your fishing reports or pictures, questions and comments to: scruzfishing@yahoo.com.