

Fish Rap: The bite is on for tuna, halibut

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Jim Newsome hefts a 30-pound albacore caught on the Becky Ann ( Allen Bushnell/contributed photo)

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Allen Bushnell

Fish Rap

The good times keep rolling on. Much like the previous week, fishing for a variety of species in the Monterey Bay is very good right now.

Foremost on most anglers' minds is the offshore albacore bite. For the past month, warm water currents have pushed in from the south. As hoped, the currents are forming distinct "breaks" with our cooler northern waters. The warm waters hold albacore and other big tuna, while the colder, nutrient-rich waters support big bait schools the tuna feed upon. The current situation is a perfect recipe for albacore fishing in these offshore areas when the weather permits. Last weekend, conditions were perfect for the 30- to 60-mile tuna runs, and a number of boats took advantage of the situation.

"Our first tuna trip of the year was a banner! The winds never picked up over 3-4 knots, and the fish were biting," said skipper Gerry Brookes from Reel Sport Fishing. Brookes piloted the Doble 55 miles to an area between the 601 Buoy and the Guide Seamount, where he picked up 24 albacore for the five anglers aboard. Jim Rubin on the Becky Ann ran to the same area and achieved similar results, trolling up albacore tuna in the 18- to 30-pound range. Because there was no live bait to be had last weekend, all the albacore were caught on the troll, according to Rubin. Lucky lures last weekend included cedar plugs, Mexican flags and brushed zucchini lures. Offshore winds will be stiff this weekend and will likely

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keep boats from the tuna grounds. With the favorable temperature breaks, it is a good possibility we may enjoy a decent, extended albacore season this year.

Closer to home, the inshore fishing remains steady and productive. Ken Stagnaro from Stagnaro Sport Fishing reported his usual limits of rockfish on the Velocity from his trips to Año Nuevo and Davenport last weekend. "We had a good mix of

reds, yellows and lingcod," Stagnaro reported. Ed Burrell at Capitola Boat and Bait said the local reefs are producing brown rockfish and the occasional ling.

Halibut are still on the bite in that area. Eight flatties were brought in on the wharf Wednesday and nearly half were keepers. The boaters launching from Capitola are coming in with a steady catch of larger halibut from the Pleasure Point, the harbor and the Capitola kelp bed area. Burrell added that stripers are on the prowl in the area as well. "One surfcaster caught eight stripers casting near the Cement Ship. Two were keepers, 8 and 12 pounds," Burrell reported.

White sea bass are still biting on live sardines occasionally, and a few threshers were reported last week, including one caught Sunday that weighed in at 92 pounds dressed. For the kids, or the kid in you, there is plenty of action from the Capitola Wharf besides small halibut. Mackerel, jacksmelt, black and walleye perch and a number of striped bass were brought over the rail last week.

Allen Bushnell can also be heard on The Let's Go Fishing Radio Show every Thursday night from 7-8 p.m. on KSCO AM-1080. Send tips to him at [scruzfishing@yahoo.com](mailto:scruzfishing@yahoo.com).