

Allen Bushnell, Fish Rap: High winds stymie tuna hunters

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Allen Bushnell

Fish Rap

The weather was not very cooperative this week, which slowed fishing down somewhat.

Despite high winds and a persistent swell, a number of anglers managed to get out and find the fish, both inshore and offshore. This weekend looks like more of the same, with a NOAA forecast of "moderate to strong northwest winds over our area." This translates to 30-knot winds offshore, and 5-15 knots along the coast. Combined with an 8-second, seven-foot swell offshore, we can rule out tuna fishing for the weekend. The inshore swell may be as high as six feet, which suggests caution even if fishing locally.

The good news is the bite is still on within the Monterey Bay. Ed Burrell at Capitola Boat and Bait said mornings are the time to catch sardines from the wharf. The bait balls tend to move out later in the day. There are still plenty of sardines to be caught, and they make fantastic bait for stripers, halibut and rockfish.

A number of halibut and stripers were caught from the Capitola Wharf this week using the live sardines. Anglers renting skiffs or launching private boats from the wharf are catching stripers, rockfish, lingcod and halibut from 6-23 pounds while fishing the local reefs near Capitola and Pleasure Point. One skiff brought in a barred sand bass this week, which is a Southern California fish. Hopefully we will see some more exotics as we move into fall and the water continues to warm.

Captain Jimmy Charters fished the West Cliff area Wednesday and had no problems finding limits of rockfish.

"We caught more of those big blacks and jumbo olives. We even caught a bunch of bocaccio, though none made the minimum 12-inch size limit," Skipper Jim Rubin reported.

He also kept two halibut up to 12 pounds and released four undersized fatties on the trip. Gerry Brookes fished the same area Saturday with a charter of die-hard halibut hunters. Conditions were "lumpy" according to Brookes, but the anglers managed to land two big halibut weighing 22 and 31 pounds, respectively.

Todd Fraser at Bayside Marine has his fingers crossed, waiting for the weather to subside for offshore fishing. Last weekend was too windy and choppy and the coming weekend looks the same. The best day for tuna this week was Tuesday. Boats from Santa Cruz fished the Sur Canyon area, and with scores of 12-40 fish per boat, according to Fraser.

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 scruzfishing@yahoo.com