

Ocean fishing heats up

by Mike Baxter

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School will be out soon, and there are lots of fishing opportunities to be had. From camping trips to local spots, fresh- and saltwater fishing gets good in the summer.

The main focus lately has been in our local ocean fishing spots — beach fishing and boat fishing has been great.

Fish of the week honors must go to Allen Bushnell, with a 32-pound halibut he caught while kayak fishing along the Big Sur coast. He caught the giant flatfish in 120 feet of water while fishing for rockfish and ling cod. The huge halibut bit a Mega Bait lure and took some time to bring in. Allen proved big fish can be caught on small boats.

Local charter boat captain Jim Rubin reported: “The crabs are crawling and the cod are biting.”

Captain Jim has been taking his clients out on crab combo trips, and limits of crabs — six crabs per person on charter boats — are happening on every trip.

The rockfish are still a bit tougher to catch, with scores from five to 10 fish per person.

In Capitola, Ed Burrell reported, “Rental boats and private boats both are bringing in rockfish, ling cod and halibut.”

From the wharf in Capitola, anglers have been catching halibut and an occasional striped bass.

And from shore, the hot bite has been striped bass, with the top pick being New Brighton Beach. As the striped bass migrate up and down the stretch of beach from Monterey to Capitola, this area marks the end of beach, and the stripers tend to mill around there. The natural bay at New Brighton also tends to hold schools of bait fish, and we all know what that means: Where there are small fish, there will be larger fish!

Freshwater fishing is also in transition. As lakes warm up, trout are moving to deeper water and bass are moving into the shallows. Most lakes also get traffic from watersport enthusiasts, so pick your spots and head out early. The Sierra Nevada still produce great numbers of trout, and the snowmelt has kept stream levels up.

I hope you get a chance to get out and do some fishing.

Mike Baxter has fished in the Monterey Bay Area since he was a boy and has been a licensed charter boat captain for more than 15 years. Contact him at captmikebaxter@yahoo.com. He also hosts a fishing show on radio station KSCO (1080 AM) from 7:06 to 8 p.m. Thursdays April through September.