

Water's warming up, which means good fishing

by Mike Baxter

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Fishing in Monterey Bay is starting to pick up as sea temperatures rise and fish move toward shore. As spring turns to summer, fishing is getting better — rockfish are more active, and halibut are moving closer to shore. Schools of baitfish also are becoming more frequent along the inshore areas.

Ed Burrell from Capitola Boat and Bait reported lots of action.

“The sardines are moving in,” he said. “We had our first report of halibut limits caught, rockfish and ling cod have been coming in steady from the local reefs.”

Water temperature in Capitola has been 62 degrees lately, and I have found when the water temperature rises above 60 degrees, the halibut start to migrate inshore to feed and, later, spawn.

Striped bass have also been caught along the southern beaches by surfcasters. Capitola hosts a nice calm area, and renting a boat from the wharf or the Municipal Wharf in Santa Cruz is a great way to do some ocean fishing if you don't own a boat.

In the Santa Cruz Harbor, on S dock, Boccie Boy reported from his commercial fishing boat, where he sells live bait: “Things are getting better as huge schools of sardines move inshore — the water is warm and the swells are down.”

Boccie sells live bait from the harbor and always is a reliable hub for current fishing information. “The local boats are bringing in one to two halibut a day while fishing out in front of the harbor in 40 to 60 feet of water,” he added.

Ken Stagnaro reported from his charter vessel, Velocity: “We caught limits of rockfish the past trip, while 24 anglers caught nice-sized reds, bolina and copper rockfish while fishing off the Davenport coast.”

Ken will continue running rockfish trips through the summer and will even run twilight trips in the afternoon.

Whether you own your own boat, rent one, or take a charter trip, it's time for some fresh fish!

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) from 7:06 to 8 p.m. Thursdays April through September.