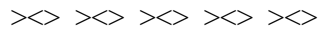


Fish Facts – California's State Fish, Marine Fish and Marine Mammal



California has 1,100 miles of coastline; 30,000 miles of rivers and streams; 4,800 lakes and reservoirs and 80 major rivers. The state has more than 1,000 native fish and wildlife species. Almost 34 million people live within the state's 159,000 square miles.

California offers excellent ocean fishing opportunities along the coast, from piers and boats, and freshwater fishing at thousands of lakes, streams and reservoirs. To augment angling opportunities, the Department of Fish and Game raises and plants over 57 million fish annually, including 41 million salmon and steelhead and 16 million resident fish, mostly trout. The state's 21 fish facilities produce and plant a total of 5.5 million pounds of fish, including about 8 million catchable trout of one-half pound each.

Anglers purchase approximately 2.2 million fishing licenses annually. Sales of sport fishing licenses and stamps generated more than \$48 million in revenue for the Department in 2000. This revenue is deposited into the Fish and Game Preservation Fund. A major portion of this money is used to raise and plant nearly 8 million catchable trout and 11 million fingerling trout each year. Other funds collected are dedicated for particular species such as steelhead, striped bass, and salmon. Sport fishing licenses are valid January 1 through December 31. A 2002 California Resident Sport Fishing License costs \$30.45, including a \$1.45 license agent handling fee.

The Department of Fish and Game's, License and Revenue Branch (LRB) is responsible for the design, procurement, distribution and sale of more than 150 types of licenses and permits and the associated revenue collection. The DFG enlists more than 2500 retail license agents that vary in size from "mom and pop" stores in rural areas, to large sporting goods stores in urban areas.

State Fish: The golden trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss aguabonita*) is native only to California and was named the official state fish by act of the State Legislature in 1947. Originally the species was found only in a few streams in the icy headwaters of the Kern River, south of Mount Whitney, the highest peak in the United States outside of Alaska. Stocking of wild and hatchery-reared fish has extended its range to many waters at high elevation in the Sierra Nevada from El Dorado and Alpine Counties southward. It has also been planted in other states.

State Marine Fish: A golden orange fish approximately 14 inches in length, the garibaldi (*Hypsypops rubicundus*) is most common in the shallow waters off the Southern California coast. Young garibaldi are even more colorful with bright blue spots on a reddish orange body.

When disturbed these fish emit a thumping sound which can be heard by divers. Although the garibaldi is not an endangered species, there is concern that commercial collection by the saltwater aquarium industry has reduced its numbers. In 1995, the Legislature acted to protect the garibaldi by placing a moratorium on commercial collection and designating the garibaldi as the official State Marine Fish.

State Marine Mammal: Measuring 35 to 50 feet in length and around 20 to 40 tons in weight, the California gray whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*) is identified by its mottled gray color and low hump in place of a dorsal fin. Gray whale feed mainly on small crustaceans along the ocean bottom in the western Bering Sea where they spend the summer.

From December through February, the whales can be seen traveling southward in small groups along the California coast on their way to the bays and lagoons of Baja California where mating occurs and the females calve. In March and April, they once again travel north following the shoreline. The whales cover approximately 6,000 to 7,000 miles each way. It is believed that memory and vision aid them on their long migration. The California gray whale was designated the State Marine Mammal in 1975.