



# NOAA FISHERIES

**Southwest  
Fisheries Science  
Center  
La Jolla, CA**

## An Economic Profile of the Charter Fishing Fleet in California in 2012

### Introduction

During 2012, anglers in California took over 544,000 saltwater fishing trips aboard charter or party boats, also known as commercial passenger fishing vessels (CPFV). To better understand the economic sustainability of the industry, the Southwest Fisheries Science Center conducted a survey of charter operators and owners in 2013 to collect data related to fleet characteristics, profitability, productivity, and attitudes. This factsheet reports the results based on a sample of 103 completed surveys (out of 264 vessels which were active in 2012).

### Characteristics of California CPFV Fishing Trips and Fleet:

The charter fleet offers different types of trips based on duration of trip: partial-day (including half-day and twilight trips), full-day (including ¾ day trips), and long-distance (including multi-day trips, and trips to Mexico and international waters). The survey collected information on the annual number of each type of trip offered, the average number of passengers per trip by trip type, and average length of trips by trip type. The annual number of angler days per vessel (an angler day is any part of a day spent fishing by one angler), length of trip in hours, and the number of vessels offering the trip-type are reported below.:

CPFV Trip Characteristics (by vessels offering trip type)	Partial Day	Full Day	Overnight (large vessels only)	Long Distance (large vessels only)
Annual angler days (mean) per vessel	3,666	2,024	1,254	3,197
Length of trip in hours (mean)	5.6	9.8	24	102
Number of vessels	42	66	22	16

Industry respondents reported (on average): 1) that they had 33.7 years' experience in the CPFV fleet, 2) that they owned 2 CPFV vessels, and 3) that they were the primary vessel captain 72% of the time. CPFV related income made up roughly 40% of their household income.

CPFV vessels averaged gross tonnage of 45.1 metric tons, length of 55.5 feet, and a build year of 1977. Vessels carried, on average, 3.1 crew members per vessel, a maximum of 45.9 passengers on partial day of full day trips, and a maximum of 24.7 passengers on overnight trips.

### Contact us

If you have questions, please contact

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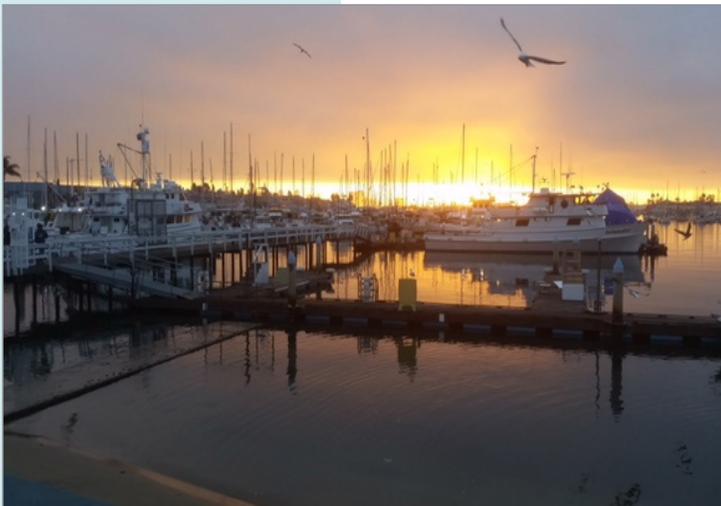
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*Photo: Rachel Mahler*



## CPFV Fleet Revenues and Costs:

The survey also collected information on annual vessel revenue sources and vessel operating costs. Vessels earned the largest share of revenues from recreational fishing trip ticket sales and related fees. Vessels may also earn revenues from non-recreational fishing trips such as other types of recreation (scuba diving, wildlife watching), commercial fishing, or miscellaneous trips (including research and commercial filming). Vessels spent the most money on payroll and fuel compared to other types of operating costs. Average vessel net revenues (revenues less operating costs) were \$42,033. Select average vessel revenues and costs are reported below.

Typical Annual Revenues	Mean
Recreational fishing ticket sales & fees	\$263,107
Recreational fishing food & beverage sales	\$6,962
Non-fishing recreation	\$55,730
Commercial fishing	\$7,093
Non-recreational charter	\$5,437
<b>Average total revenues*</b>	<b>\$337,371</b>

\* Total not equal to sum of categories. See paper.

Typical Annual Costs	Mean
Vessel-based expenditures:	
Payroll for skipper and crew	\$69,076
Vessel fuel costs	\$65,100
Bait costs	\$25,183
Booking fees	\$21,407
Equipment purchases, repair and maintenance	\$20,335
Food and drink costs	\$15,157
Moorage	\$10,619
Vessel expenditures (subtotal)	\$244,186
Non-vessel business expenditures	\$51,152
<b>Average total expenditures</b>	<b>\$295,338</b>

## Opinions on Conditions Facing the Industry:

To increase understanding on the factors impacting individual CPFV businesses and the industry overall, a series of short questions were asked about fishery and non-fishery related regulations, the general environment, and fish stock health. Non-fishery government regulations

can include federal or state regulations on passenger safety, business activities, and environmental compliance. Environmental conditions can include monthly or annual weather conditions, water pollution, El Nino, etc. Responses are summarized below.

Percentage of owners answering	Very challenging	Somewhat challenging	Neutral	Somewhat favorable	Very favorable
Fishery regulations (including Marine Protected Areas or MPA's)	71%	16%	8%	4%	2%
Non-fishery government regulations	35%	40%	21%	4%	0%
Environmental conditions	36%	31%	30%	2%	0%
Ocean and fish stock health	26%	27%	15%	14%	17%



For more information, including reporting by vessel size-class, see: Hilger, J., and S. Lovell. 2017. An Economic Profile of the Charter Fishing Fleet in California. U.S. Dept. Commerce. Marine Fisheries Review, 79(3-4). March 2018, 8 p.

(online at <https://doi.org/10.7755/MFR.79.3-4.3>)

Photo: James Hilger, NMFS-SWFSC