

## California Artificial Reef Perspective



Photo Credit Eric Wilkins

## National Artificial Reef Workshop June 9, 2016 • Alexandria, Virginia Eric Wilkins, Senior Environmental Scientist, Specialist

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

# **CDFW – Role**

Trustee and Responsible Agency

CALIFO

- California Environmental Quality Act
- Advisory Role to Other Agencies
- Office of Spill Prevention and Response





# **Historical Program**

- CDFW Artificial Reef Program Early 2000s
- Fish and Game Code Sections 6420 6425
  - Placement of artificial reefs in state waters
    - Enhance species and fishing opportunity
- Numerous artificial reefs created during the 1980's and 1990's
  - A Guide to the Artificial Reefs of Southern California (1989)
  - Guidelines were investigated
- National Artificial Reef Guidelines



## **Current Status**

- Unfunded Program
- Efforts Unfinished
- Program Needs
  - Funding
  - Research
  - Scientific Plan
  - Policy Guidance



Photo Credit Eric Wilkins

# **Artificial Reef Requests**

- California is now seeing numerous requests for artificial reefs.
  - Mitigation
  - Restoration
  - Diving
  - Fishing
  - Kelp Harvesting
  - Oyster Beds
  - Dampening Impacts

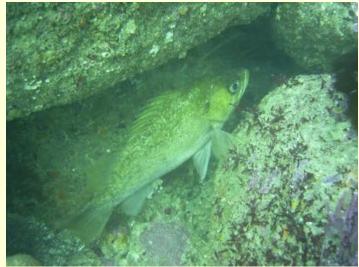


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- Requests are not always consistent with Fish & Game Code.
- Removal as mitigation.

# Wheeler North Reef Example

# Mitigation for San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (Songs)

- Impacts to San
  Onofre kelp forest
- Goal of 150 acres of kelp forest
- Natural rock and Concrete
- Three Phases
- Functioning reef but not meeting all mitigation goals.



Credit Dan Reed, Stephen Schroeter, and Mark Page



# **Take Home Messages**

### Need for state wide policy, guidance, and scientific plan

There are unanswered policy questions and research needs: Policy

- Should fishing be allowed on artificial reefs or are they a protected resource?
- What is the context of artificial reefs in Marine Protected Areas?
- Rigs to Reefs and Ships to Reefs, how do they fit within our current policy?
- How do artificial reefs fit in the context of marine spatial planning and competing ocean uses?
- How do we trade one habitat, soft bottom that is important to halibut trawlers, for a different habitat?

#### Research

- What impact does the placement of the artificial reef have on existing habitat?
- What restoration of fish population goals can be set for mitigation that are realistic and a positive for the fishery?
- How can siting of artificial reefs be best planned in CA?

## **Thank You**

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#### Pt. Buchon habitat and marine life



Source CDFW