



# Commercial Fishing

*Putting fish on your dish*



## Matching Game

### Gear used

1. Air Hose
2. Metal guard and net
3. Lights, pulley and net
4. Metal 'doors' and net
5. Crates, traps

### Animal Fished

- a. Ridgeback shrimp
- b. Lobster
- c. White seabass
- d. Squid
- e. Sea urchin

The sea life of the Santa Barbara Channel region (SBC) has long been treasured as an important source of food. Historically, the Chumash Indians ate lots of local seafood. You know how we know? Lots of shells and bones have been found in their garbage piles. Today, people are eating more and more seafood. But where is it coming from?

Many people in our community are making a living by commercial fishing, providing seafood to people locally and all around the world. Commercial fishing is the system of catching and selling marine plants and animals for profit. The SBC region is a productive area for fisheries and many different types of fish are commercially caught here. Squid (which is the number one fishery of the SBC and the state), sea urchins, California halibut, white seabass, ridgeback shrimp and spot prawn are just a few of the animals that are fished locally.

Different types of gear are used to commercially fish, such as purse seine nets, traps and hook-and-line. Some sea life is picked by hand by commercial divers. You can learn a lot about your local fishing fleets by taking a trip to the harbor. There you can see what types of fish have been caught as they are unloaded from the boats. You can also just look at the commercial boats and the type of gear that is onboard and figure out what is being fished locally. For example, in SBC harbors:

- *If there are crates or traps on the boat, crabs, California spiny lobster, spot prawn or certain species of rockfishes are likely being fished.*
- *A metal net guard on the back of a boat is used when fishing white seabass, California halibut and other large fishes with a net.*
- *Boats with nets and wood or metal 'doors' hanging off the stern catch ridgeback shrimp, California halibut and other fishes.*
- *Large lights, a net and a round metal pulley are needed to fish squid.*
- *An air compressor and long coiled-up air hose is needed by divers to fish sea urchins and sea cucumbers by hand.*

In addition to knowing how to operate the boat, how to use the gear, and how to find fish, commercial fishermen have to know and follow many different types of regulations. There are times when and places where fishing is not allowed. There are also restrictions on the types of gear that can be used, the number of people that can be part of a fishery, and the size, gender, and amount of fish that can be taken. These regulations are different for every fishery. There is certainly a lot to keep track of. These laws are in place to maintain good populations of the fished animals. Fortunately, most of the fisheries in the SBC region are currently considered to be in good condition. Some species of rockfishes and abalones are exceptions, but their populations are showing improvement thanks to new regulations and favorable ocean conditions.

If you would like to enjoy some fresh local seafood, go down to the harbor in the morning on the weekend (check the harbor schedule) and you can buy local seafood at the fisherman's market (like the farmers markets). There are also seafood stores in the harbor that have local fish and some restaurants in the area that serve local seafood, too.

To learn more about commercial fishing of the SBC region, check out last year's newspaper *Fish on Your Dish* at [http://ceventura.ucdavis.edu/Marine\\_Fisheries](http://ceventura.ucdavis.edu/Marine_Fisheries) (click on *Fish on Your Dish*). It is a fun and interesting topic, and an important part of our community.



Sea urchins from SBC produce some of the world's highest quality and best favored uni (used in sushi).