

#1 MARKET SQUID

Did you know that the No. 1 fishery in the Santa Barbara Channel is the commercial squid fishery? Squid is a coastal pelagic species (CPS) that lives in the water column of the open sea, as opposed to on the ocean floor, and reproduce in shallow sandy areas along the coast and Channel Islands. The CPS fishery includes both finfish and invertebrates, with the primary fin-tastic five species being market squid, sardine, anchovy and two species of mackerel. However, squid alone is ranked as the top fishery of the region.

Market squid

When the commercial squid fishery of California began in the mid-1800s (making it one of the oldest fisheries in the state) it wasn't nearly as advanced as it is today! Chinese fishermen took their skiffs (boats) out fishing late at night in Monterey Bay. Torches were attached to the front of the skiffs to attract the squid and the fishermen pulled in their nets by hand. Today, commercial fishery participants attach large lights to tall poles (masts) in the middle of specialized light boats, and use the powerful lights to attract squid to the surface of the water. These light boats work with the purse seine boats to catch the squid. After the light boat attracts a concentration of squid, the purse seine vessel encircles or 'wraps' the squid with the purse seine net while the light boat exits the circle. After scooping or pumping the catch onboard, most of today's fishermen use equipment to pull their net out of the water by rolling it on a drum. Talk about a large step in technology!

While squid is the No. 1 fishery for the Santa Barbara Channel, during El Niño conditions the squid disappear and almost none are landed in this area. Fishery participants must either fish elsewhere or fish for a different species

ACTIVITY:

Are squid a type of invertebrate (shellfish) or vertebrate (finfish)?

ANSWER: Invertebrate (shellfish). Squid lack a backbone, and an external shell, thus they are a shell-less invertebrate. They are certainly interesting-looking animals! They have an eye on either side of their long, pointed, slender soft body, right above 10 tentacles. Eight of these tentacles are used to help the squid swim, while the other two are used for feeding. Squid grow to be about 12 inches long, and normally live for less than one year.

CPS #1

Coastal Pelagic Species (aka 'wetfish')

The fin-tastic five CPS species (including squid) are often referred to as "wetfish" because they were traditionally transported from the ocean and packed 'wet' (raw) in cans with minimal processing. In other words, they were processed "wet from the sea." While the squid fishery itself is valuable, the other primary CPS also support an important local fishery.

Northern Anchovy

Engraulis mordax – now that's a mouthful! – is the scientific name for northern anchovy. Northern anchovies are mainly used as fish oil, feed for poultry and frozen and live bait, although some restaurants serve anchovies on pizza or Caesar salad.

Pacific Sardine

As demand for food grew during the early 1900s, a result of World War I, the Pacific sardine fishery was born. However, by about the middle 1900s, the sardine resource and fishery collapsed and sardine fishing was halted. The fishery has since recovered because of favorable environmental conditions and use of precautionary fishing regulations. Today California sardines are the most important wet fish fishery after squid, and the wetfish industry markets sardines to 26 countries worldwide, as well as California.



Pacific Mackerel

The Pacific mackerel fishery was reinvigorated in the 1930s and 1940s when the Pacific mackerel abundance and the efficiency of canning techniques skyrocketed. Pacific mackerel are still commercially fished today, and are mainly eaten by people and used as fish meal.

