

EDITORIAL »

The more opportunity, the more use

Where there's more fishing or hunting opportunity, there are more fishermen and hunters — it's that simple. That's why folks who live outside the cities, in areas where hunting and fishing are close by, are more prone to participate in those sports.

The same thing goes for folks who live in more metropolitan areas. If there's a nearby lake or fishing pier in the ocean, there will be far more users in the local area. Unfortunately, there aren't a lot of opportunities for "big city" folks. That's why fishing piers in the ocean are such a huge draw: they're an easy escape for some prime recreation, and in most cases, fishing off a public fishing pier in the ocean does not require a fishing license!

That's why the California Fish and Game Commission should be commended for unanimously approving recommendations from the California Sportfishing League (CSL) to conduct a review to identify illegal locally-imposed pier and jetty fishing regulations in Southern California. The action was in response to complaints that municipalities throughout Southern California were imposing illegal restrictions on fishing, including the City of Manhattan Beach, which imposed a temporary ban on pier fishing following a rare shark attack.

Under California law, only the California Fish and Game Commission has the legal authority to regulate fishing equipment and manner of take, and not local municipalities.

"Illegal restrictions on recreational fishing is contributing to a significant decline in participation," said Marko Mlikotin, CSL executive director. "We applaud the commission's decision to identify illegal restrictions on a safe form of family recreation and, to many working Californians, a way to put food on the table."

CSL is also calling on the fishing community to help the state identify illegal local restrictions on fishing equipment and manner of take by e-mailing CSL at abuse@sportfishingconservation.org.

"We encourage anglers throughout California to help the state identify illegal restrictions on fishing," said Mlikotin. "By limiting access to recreational fishing, municipalities are also harming local tourism and the jobs it supports."

We fully support the actions of the F & G Commission and applaud the efforts of CSL for being our watchdog. We need more outdoor opportunities in this state, not fewer.