

# Redondo Pier Fishing History

Article submitted by OSA member Bob Tuttle

“Fishing from the pier, the takes were so good that no one worried about taking home the specific fish he caught. You just piled them up behind you, as they came through, chasing the bait. If you caught five, you got to take five home.” (Personal memories of Bob Goldstone)

—Dennis Shanahan, Old Redondo, A Pictorial History of Redondo Beach, California

Master A. Currier last Wednesday captured a Jew-fish weighing four hundred pounds, which he brought to this city and sold to one of the markets, and only a day or two ago a stingaree was captured off the wharf which was a monster. It weighed two hundred pounds and was three feet across the back when laid on the ground. His stinger was four inches long.

—Los Angeles Herald, June 27, 1888

Redondo Beach—The smoothest seas of the year are now prevailing at Redondo. Rock cod, halibut and yellowtails are being caught from the pier. Early in the morning long strings of mackerel are pulled out. The balance of the day nothing but larger fish are caught.

—Los Angeles Herald, September 4, 1890

Redondo Beach, Nov. 15.—The deep sea fish are coming to the front in good numbers lately. We noted some splendid specimens of surf fish, yellowtail, sold and albacore landed today. The sole is somewhat rare to be found in these waters, but the large string shown by Judge Harrison this morning would indicate their arrival in considerable abundance. The many anglers on the Redondo wharf continue to secure good returns for their outlay of time and patience.

—Los Angeles Herald, November 16, 1892

The record of deep sea fish landed today at 3 o'clock p.m. was 1532 pounds of rock cod, sea bass, barracuda, pompano and yellowtail. The pompano are being caught in large quantities from Redondo wharf today.

—Los Angeles Herald—January 20, 1893

Fine Fishing From The Pier—Redondo, Aug. 16—Fishing from the pier was never better than at present. Some very remarkable catches have recently been reported, consisting principally of Spanish mackerel. Yellowtail are beginning to bite and barracuda are plentiful.

—Los Angeles Herald, August 17, 1894

Fishing on the wharf has been extremely good during the last couple of days. Many mackerel have been caught, besides bass, smelt, sculpin, halibut and sardines. John Edwards caught over 500 pounds of halibut yesterday and went out for more today. Less Worley also caught 475 pounds of halibut yesterday.

—Los Angeles Herald, February 18, 1895

A large specimen of the blue shark, common in the waters of the southern coast, was landed from the end of the north wharf shortly after noon today.

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—Los Angeles Herald, July 28, 1896

Redondo, Oct. 13.—No better fishing was ever had at Redondo than now. Numerous anglers on the wharves are catching hundreds of yellowtail, barracuda, halibut, flounder and mackerel. The fisherman today in drawing in the net for mackerel drew in about 150 large yellowtail.

—Los Angeles Herald, October 14, 1898

Fisherman Francis — He Catches a Ton of Assorted Fish at Redondo—Redondo, Oct.15—Mr. John F. Francis, who has been a guest at Hotel Redondo for the past week, says that fishing has never been so heavy as it is now. Mr. Francis has been on the wharves from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day this week and has brought to the dock something over a ton of fish, including halibut, flounder, speckled blue perch, yellowtail, barracuda, sculpin, bonita, mackerel, small fish of all varieties found here, and several sharks. It seems that the cloudy, murky weather is the best for fishing, and we have had plenty of it this week.

—Los Angeles Herald, October 16, 1898

The yellowtail however, long and slim of body, are in quite another class of fish, and indeed they are the aristocrat of southern waters. They lead a strenuous life for the sharks love yellowtail above all other meat, and it is no uncommon thing for a fisherman to have a safely hooked yellowtail bitten squarely in two before he is lifted from the boat. In fact, I have seen this very thing done from the wharf at Redondo—one of the best points for shore fishing on the coast south of Santa Barbara—and a heavier hook, baited with the remaining piece of yellowtail and thrown back into the ocean caught the robber as he returned to see what he had left.

—Harry H. Dunn, After Big Fish In The Channel,  
Western Field, February, 1904

Good Fishing in Past Week—Redondo has been another point of interest during the week. From mackerel fishermen and hand-liners catches of as high as a hundred “cornfeds” have been reported. Many of these fish have been as much as a foot in length. Several local fishermen have paid night trips to this beach, returning on the last car with a fine mess for breakfast. The best bait for the mackerel is the mackerel steak, cut from the side of the first ones caught. There have been a good many catches during the week with the Jftp fly bait, the fish rising to it if it is sunk and jerked about a bit. As is usual when the mackerel are running there have been some yellowtail and a few halibut taken by hand-liners. Surf fishing has been unusually good at Redondo, and the wharves at the beach town have been lined with fishermen seeking the little fish each day.

—Los Angeles Herald, Sunday Morning, June 30, 1907

Laporte Man A Fisherman— Caught 12 Yellowtails  
One Day Weighing 15 lbs. Each

Mrs. J. H. Cissel is in receipt of a letter from her son, Lew W. Cissel, who is now at Redondo Beach, California, where he recently figured in a large catch of yellowtail. Mr. Cissel enclosed a newspaper

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clipping from the Los Angeles Times, showing a picture of the women on the pier and an article of the big "run."

The Times says: Redondo experienced a remarkable run of yellowtail yesterday. Twenty-four tons is a conservative estimate of the amount carried off Pier No. 1. A count at the Redondo fish market of the yellowtail that had been taken off the pier by 5 o'clock, when they ceased to bite, showed 2,500, and there were fully 500 more of the gamy fish lying on the pier at the time. These 3,000 fish weighed an average of 15 pounds each. Less than five tons of the enormous catch were handled through the Redondo fish market, and the balance were carried away by amateur fishermen who flocked to the pier when it was discovered that the phenomenal school had come.

In every back yard in Redondo a group was to be seen cleaning fish yesterday, and along the streets were many of the prominent citizens with large fish dangling from their hands. Stores and shops were closed while the proprietors and clerks took an hour off and rushed down to the pier to enjoy the sport. Women left their baking, got out their husband's tackle and hastened to the wharf.

By 8 o'clock in the morning the one pier where the yellowtail were biting was crowded with fishermen and women. The carnival lasted practically all day. The arrival of the steamship Santa Rosa in the forenoon temporarily interrupted the fishing on one side of the pier, but with the departure of the vessel a greater crowd than ever swarmed to the fishing place.

The presence of a myriad of squid about the pier was the cause of the inrush of yellowtail from the deeper water. The squid are the chief food for the larger fish, and an immense school of them had been driven close to shore. They took refuge under Pier No. 1 while the voracious yellowtail lurked about the edges of the wharf, devastating the ranks of their prey. The squid is a peculiar soft fish of a bluish color, and the school was so numerous at Redondo yesterday that it was only necessary to drop a fish hook in the water to snag them. While still alive they were fastened to the hooks, and thrown into the water to be snapped up by the waiting yellowtail.

—LaPorte, Indiana Weekly Herald, November 28, 1907

Where To Fish—Yellowtail, that monarch of game fish, was a regular visitor at Redondo and nearby beaches but it was from No. 3 that most of the big fellows were caught during the week and no less than 100 ranging in weight from fifteen to twenty-five pounds were taken... Yellowtail, corbina, mackerel, cornfed mackerel, jacksmelt, herring, perch, smelt, yellow fin, bonita, and halibut.

—Los Angeles Herald, September 26, 1908

Where To Fish—Redondo continues good all the week for cornfed mackerel and jacksmelt, and on two days yellowtail made their appearance and gave great sport. An unusual shore run of sardines brought schools of bonita and skipjacks inside and kept things lively on all three wharves for a day to two.

—Los Angeles Herald, October 17, 1908

Where To Fish—Redondo was the mecca for fishermen on the west coast last week, and yellowtail, sea bass, jewfish, halibut, all big fellows—jacksmelt, mackerel, sculpin, calico bass, corbina—just pan size—was the magnet which attracted them. There was great sport on almost every day of the week at this old reliable resort, and some notable catches were made. Yellowtail were running in great numbers and

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size, and several giant sea bass and jewfish as big as they grow were caught just outside the anchor buoys.

—Los Angeles Herald, November 14, 1908

Redondo Beach, May 5.—This beach has been experiencing an unprecedented run of pompano during the last week. Sunday and Monday the local wharves were black with anglers, who came here for the purpose of enjoying the sport. Many fine specimens of other varieties have been caught, amongst them three sea bass which aggregated 1000 pounds. The largest of these is estimated to weigh nearly 500 pounds.

—Los Angeles Herald, May 5, 1909

Redondo Beach, May 14,—Large schools of pompano are running at wharf No. 1 during early hours of each day, and many large catches are reported. The prize catches of the run this morning were made by Charles Clark and Ed Sheely, who caught several dozen each. A curiosity in marine life was a double halibut taken on the banks this morning by Charles Johnson. The fish was identical on both upper and lower sides.

—Los Angeles Herald, May 15, 1909

At Redondo on wharf No. 1 the pompano are greatly in evidence, and with the exception of steamer days, when the sport necessarily ceases for a time, men, women and children constantly line the pier and dangle lines between the pilings. At number 3 wharf yellowtail and sea trout are taken occasionally, although they have not made their appearance yet in great numbers.

—Los Angeles Herald, June 12, 1909

Good Fishing At Redondo—Redondo, Oct. 12.—Spanish and greenback mackerel and yellowtail are running in great numbers here now. All three wharves are occupied by many fishermen. Some exceptionally large mackerel have been caught.

—Santa Ana Register, October 12, 1909

On wharf No. 3 the largest run of sea trout of the season kept a forest of poles busy.

—Los Angeles Herald, August 7, 1910

## Redondo Having Fine Run Of Mackerel

Redondo, Aug. 25.—Excitement over the heavy run of mackerel has now reached the point where scores of fishermen line the wharves as early as 3 o'clock in the morning to make certain of a place from which to fish at daylight when the mackerel come in to feed. At daylight yesterday morning there were no fewer than 300 fishermen on the various wharves waiting for the run. Many fine hauls were made, and it is estimated that summer visitors here have salted down nearly a ton of the toothsome "corn-feds." On wharf No. 3, seventeen yellowtails were landed yesterday, the largest one weighing 33 ½ pounds.

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—Santa Ana Register, August 25, 1910

**Gaffs 233-Pound Fish After Six-Hour Fight**

**A Los Angeles Business Man Lands Sea Monster While Fishing From Pier**

Los Angeles, May 20.—The pier fishing record for Los Angeles was broken at Redondo yesterday when James Helbach, a local business man, brought to gaff a Jew fish weighing 223 pounds. Helbach fought his prize from 6:30 in the morning until 12 o'clock, and after it was landed on the pier he nearly fell from exhaustion. No fish approaching this one in size was ever caught before by a pier fisherman in Los Angeles.

—Los Angeles Herald, May 20, 1912

In the stomach of a big yellowtail caught at Redondo Sunday by Dwight Millyard of Lexington, Kentucky, was found a child's ring bearing the inscription "Pearl, June 12, 1910."

—Santa Ana Register, December 14, 1914

Redondo Beach,—Three huge fish, commonly known as jewfish, were caught from the end of the municipal pier here. The monsters weighed 408, 278 and 285 pounds, respectively, and the fights to land them lasted upward of an hour, thousands of pleasure-seekers witnessing the struggle. C. E. Allen and A. E. Putter, both of this city, were the lucky anglers. Allen caught one and Putter two.

—Santa Ana Register, May 20, 1918

Redondo—Yesterday was the first day of the season that the yellowtail and barracuda began running in schools and much excitement and interest prevails along the three wharves where men, women and children are bringing in the big ones, ranging in weight from five to fifteen pounds.

—Santa Ana Register, August 5, 1919