Central San Francisco Bay
Drawn by Dewayne Hight

Fishing Notes
- Halibut can be taken in the central bay year round, but the best months are generally from April through October. Live bait drifting is the main method that anglers use to catch the halibut, though trolling is also very effective. Both live anchovies and shiner perch are productive baits. Top areas to fish include the Berkeley Flats, Paradise Cay, Southampton Shoal, Richardson Bay, Angel Island, Alcatraz and Crissy Field. Generally, the smaller tides when the water is relatively clear yield the best action.
- Striped Bass also offer year round fishing, but these hard-fighting fish generally appear at the same times as the halibut, since both species are drawn into the central bay to feed by large schools of anchovies that move into the area from spring through the late fall. Live bait anglers target the rocks and reefs of the bay, including the Rockpile, Shag Rock, Yellow Bluff and Mel's Reef. Trollers can also bag lots of schoolie stripers while using white and chartreuse worm tail jigs and Rat-L-Traps at the top of the tide. Shore fishing for striped bass can be fabulous when you find a concentration of fish on the flats, particularly in the Oakland, Emeryville and Berkeley area. Toss out swim baits, Kastmasters and Krocodiles for past-paced light tackle action.
- Leopard, Soupfin and Sevengill Sharks are often caught by anglers drifting for halibut and stripers. To target the leopards, fish midshipmen and squid for bait in the deep holes. The sevengills and soupskins can be taken on large cut baits in the deep water at Yellow Bluff and Angel Island.
- Lingcod and Blue, Brown and Other Rockfish move into the bay from the adjoining ocean waters to feed on anchovies, herring and other forage. These bottomfish are caught on the central bay reefs during the slower tides. Excellent rockfish action is available at times just outside the Golden Gate Bridge at Seal Rocks, the Mile Light and Point Bonita.