

# City cracks down on cliff fishing

## Seldom used law enforced after body found offshore

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*Fish + Fishing*  
SANTA CRUZ — Anglers fishing from the bluffs along West Cliff Drive are getting hooked by a city ordinance so seldom enforced that longtime fishermen say they've never heard of it.

They also wonder why it's being used against them but not against surfers.

The rule is this: People aren't supposed to be in front of the rails along the scenic but dangerous cliffs that line most of the ocean-front street. Those who ignore warnings from the city's beach rangers are apt to get \$81 tickets, as at least three men did earlier this week. Dozens more were told to move back.

"You may not be on the ocean side wherever there's a rail," said Jim Lang, city Parks and Recreation Department director.

Lang said the long-standing ordinance is to protect people from cliffs collapsing under them.

The problem for the fishermen, who have been having great success catching perch in recent weeks, is they essentially need to be on the wrong side of the rail if they're going to catch any fish.

Enforcement was stepped up after the body of a man presumed to be a fisherman was found floating last week along West Cliff.

The drowning victim hasn't been identified, and it isn't known how he ended up in the water. But the death



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

Corozon Dizon prepares to cast on the cliff side of the fence along West Cliff Drive.

prompted city rangers to warn anglers of the dangers of the cliffs. Starting this week, they also issued tickets to those who had received a previous warning.

Anglers are steamed by the rule and how it's being enforced.

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## West Cliff

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"The surfers jump the fence every day and the rangers don't say nothing, but it's not OK for us fishing? That's wrong," said Manuel Telles, a San Jose resident who has fished in Santa Cruz for the past 14 years.

"The guy they found in the water, he's not a fisherman. Why are they stopping the fisherman? I can't believe they're running people out of the best place in Santa Cruz to fish," Telles said.

Surfers and anglers have clashed several times over the past months after surfers became tangled in fishing lines and lures, fishermen said.

Lang said there also have been reports of anglers casting with lead weights toward surfers.

The clashes have added to the anglers' feeling they are being singled out.

But the surfers who hop the fence to get to the surf aren't the issue, Lang said. "Our concern is not that. It's the standing there and putting yourself in that kind of jeopardy."

Lang said anglers usually aren't a problem. But this year, an unusually high number have been drawn to the cliffs by the good run of perch.

Winston Ware came from Santa Clara County this week to try for some perch and, if he was lucky, a cabazon.

He, too, was upset by the city's "hassling."

"Old-timers down here say they

been fishing here how many years and they didn't bother to give them tickets," Ware said.

Although there are a number of signs noting the dangers of the cliffs, "There's no sign that says you're not allowed to go" in front of the rails, he said. "I think it's not fair."

His fishing partner, Ceasar Bonin, agreed. "As long as there's not a sign, people will go across the fence," he said.

Corazon Dizon stepped in front of the rail to untangle her line from a piece of kelp. Because she's small, it makes it a littler harder for her to fish from behind the fence, she said.

"When the ranger comes and says to move, of course, we'll go," she said.