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Changes in the natural diet of green abalone (*Haliotis fulgens* Philippi 1845), during the 1997-1998 ENSO, in Baja California Sur, Mexico

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A stomach content analysis was undertaken to determine the changes in the natural diet of the green abalone *Haliotis fulgens* as they relate to the 1997 to 1998 El Niño event at 2 sites along the central coast of the Baja California Peninsula. The index of relative importance of each identified food item was calculated, and Levin's index was used to determine the breadth of the diet. A total of 20 macroalgal species, 1 seagrass species, and 4 invertebrate species were observed from March 1997 to July 1998. The main constituents of the diet of *H. fulgens* before the 1997 to 1998 El Niño were *Macrocystis pyrifera*, *Phyllospadix torreyi*, and *Cystoseira osmundacea*. During and after, the principal items were *Sargassum* sp., *Spatoglossum howelli*, *Cystoseira osmundacea*, *Dictyota* sp., *Gelidium* sp., and *Phyllospadix torreyi*. Diet breadth of abalone diet was greater during and after El Niño 1997 to 1998 than before. Our results show that green abalone diet varies with the availability of the food source; therefore, El Niño events caused a major shift in diet related to changes in the local algal flora.

Palabras clave: ENSO, *Macrocystis pyrifera*, stomach content, *Haliotis fulgens*, green abalone, relative importance index, kelp forest

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