

Recreational Chilipepper EFP

November, 2007

To: Dr. Donald O. McIsaac
Executive Director
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, OR 97220-1384

Subject: (Revised) RFA/GGFA Exempted Fishery Permit Proposal for 2008
Title: Recreational Rockfish Catch Composition in the Area Seaward of Rockfish Conservation Area
Date: October 17th, 2007

Applicants:



Recreational Fishing Alliance
Contact: Jim Martin, West Coast Regional Director
P.O. Box 2420, Fort Bragg, CA 95437
(707) 357-3422



Golden Gate Fishermen's Association
Contact: Roger Thomas, President
P.O. Box 40
Sausalito CA 94966
(415) 760-9362

Justification: Since the implementation of the Rockfish Conservation Area as a bycatch reduction measure to protect overfished species such as canary rockfish, over 90% of the EEZ has been closed to recreational rockfishing. This proposal would exempt a specific number of CPFV vessels in north-central California to fish seaward of the RCA for underutilized species such as chilipepper.

Potential impacts: There is some historical data for recreational catches of rockfish on the slope, but no recent data is available. Impacts on canary rockfish and cowcod should be very low.

Purpose and goal of the experiment: To use selective recreational fishing gear, hook and line, to access underutilized species such as chilipepper rockfish. While this study will test different weight limits to discover ways to avoid overfished species, this

experiment is primarily an area-based study. The data provided from this series of trips on CPFV vessels would provide management guidance to open a new market for fishing trips on the charter fleet in northern and central California (from Point Conception to the Oregon Border). Experimenting with different types of terminal tackle results in a more selective fishery. Anglers will retain all legal fish after contributing scales, otoliths, or any other physical evidence needed by data collectors. Any prohibited species landed will be donated to the CDFG for scientific purposes. This EFP would be limited to the CPFV fleet to control effort, and to provide observer coverage, but the data gathered could result in a new fishery for the entire recreational fishing fleet.

Broader Significance: the data collected should prove that a recreational fishery can be conducted for abundant and underutilized species such as chilipepper rockfish and reduce impacts overfished species. If successful, management can shift some of the recreational effort away from inshore species and areas where interaction with canary rockfish are common.

Duration of the EFP: One year (2008).

Number of vessels: 20 Charter Passenger Fishing Vessels (CPFVs). Angler loads will be limited to 15 people per trip. The following vessels and captains have expressed an interest in running trips for this EFP; the list may change according to their ability to market the trips and other factors.

Participants in the EFP:

Capt. Brent Williamson, *Chubasco*, Monterey, (831) 372-7440
 Capt. Brian Cutting, *Sir Randy*, Monterey (831) 901-5725
 Capt. Ken Stagnaro *Velocity*, Santa Cruz (831) 425-7003
 Capt. Tim Zolniak, *Makaira*, Santa Cruz (831) 426-4690
 Capt. Chris Arcoleo, *Checkmate*, Monterey (831) 375-5951
 Capt. Tim Gillespie, *Seahawk*, Fort Bragg (707) 964-1881
 Capt. Jason Rosetti, *Lady Irma II*, Fort Bragg (707) 964-3854
 Capt. Don Akin, *Rumblefish*, Noyo Harbor, Fort Bragg (707) 964-3000
 Capt. Randy Thornton, *Telstar*, Noyo Harbor, Fort Bragg (707) 964-8770
 Capt. Bob Ingles, *Queen of Hearts*, Half Moon Bay (650) 728-3377
 Capt. Alan Chin, *Tigerfish*, Half Moon Bay (650) 726-7133
 Capt. Dennis Baxter, *New Captain Pete*, Half Moon Bay (650) 726-6224
 Capt. Darby Neill, Morro Bay (805) 772-1222
 Capt. Tom Mattusch, *Hulicat*, Half Moon Bay (650) 726-2926
 Capt. Jay Yokomizo, *Huck Finn*, Emeryville (510) 527-3768
 Capt. Craig Shimokusu, *New Salmon Queen*, Emeryville (510) 385-1135
 Capt. Robert Gallia, *Eldorado*, Berkeley (415) 298-3948
 Capt. Joe Gallia, *New Easy Rider*, Berkeley Marina 510-849-3333
 Capt. Bill Parducci, *Profish'nt*, Bodega Bay (707) 463-3618

Funding: This EFP will be self-funding with individual anglers paying for an offshore rockfish trip. Grant funding is available for data analysis and observer coverage.

Description of Target species: Chilipepper rockfish. This species can be targeted in midwater and is vastly underutilized (1000+ mt under OY).

Harvest Control: Under current regulations, anglers are limited to two hooks per line, with a bag limit of ten rockfish. For a load of 15 anglers, a vessel would retain a maximum of 150 fish per trip, with observer coverage at-sea and dockside. CPFV logbooks will record species landed. While recent catch data is unavailable for the recreational fishery in deep water, a review of mortality impacts from the commercial sablefish fishery indicate zero bycatch of cowcod, zero bycatch of widow rockfish, and a total projected bycatch of canary rockfish for 2007 in the combined fixed gear (sablefish and non-sablefish) of 1.1 metric tons. We have revised our proposed bycatch caps:

Vessel-level bycatch caps:

Cowcod: 4 fish

Canary: 20 fish

Total bycatch caps:

Cowcod: 40 fish

Canary: Option A: 200 fish; Option B: 100 fish

Proposed Data Collection and Analysis Methodology: Data collection will be consistent with the existing CRFS data collection and analysis system. Expansion of the data modeling can provide an estimate of potential catches for both private boaters and the CPFV fleet, should the Council decide at a future time it would consider providing more fishing opportunity to the entire recreational sector. Onboard observers will count and identify the fish, with 100% retention to guarantee accurate identification and age class data. Type of terminal tackle (weights, lures, hook sizes) would be recorded for comparison purposes and bycatch reduction data. Vessels will record other information such as location, depth and water temperatures. By fishing different depth strata throughout an entire year, variations by depth and month can be identified. The goal of the data collection format and data analysis will be to gather enough information to project the outcomes for an expansion of the fishery throughout the recreational sector.

Participation: Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessels with a clean logbook reporting record will be chosen (from those captains who have expressed an interest in the project, or by lottery amongst interested captains if more than 20 vessels want to participate) from various ports such as Monterey, Santa Cruz, Bodega Bay, Half Moon Bay, San Francisco Bay Area, Morro Bay and Fort Bragg where the slope is reachable on a day trip.

Time, Place and Amount of Gear Used: This EFP would be conducted during fair weather days during the entire year of 2008, with anglers limited to one rod apiece, two hooks per line, with a 3-10 pound weight limit. All fishing would occur seaward of the Rockfish Conservation Area between Pt. Conception and the Oregon border, from depths ranging from 900 to 2000 feet and beyond. Each vessel will have one line rigged with an in-line depth gauge device, and a line counter unit to help target fish schools using onboard sonar electronics. By logging the line out, the actual depth from the depth logger, the line diameters (braided and mono) and the time, etc., good information about how much weight can be allowed before reaching the bottom. To the extent we can keep off the bottom, we expect that we can avoid some of the overfished species. Fishing gear will be modified using a 30-foot leader between the weight and the hooks to keep lures off the bottom.

Data Analysis:

There is a minimum set proportion of trips that CRFS is required to sample – 50% north of Bodega, 25% of trips south in any given month. A similar number of trips targeting chilipepper rockfish can provide data and an estimate for catch rates for the wider recreational fishery. The results of a discovery curve with the number of trips on the X axis with number of species on the Y axis can show whether enough trips have been conducted to get useful data covering all species for expansion throughout the recreational sector. Comparisons to bycatch rates in this EFP to current catch rates in the nearshore should be evaluated, because we believe this fishery would reduce bycatch of canary rockfish in the nearshore by shifting effort offshore. The sampling method will be consistent with CRFS methodology. Expansion of the data can provide an estimate of potential catches for both private boaters and the CPFV fleet and allow fishery managers to model potential deep water rockfish seasons.

Signature of Applicant:



James Martin, RFA

[original signed]

Roger Thomas, GGFA