

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE –  
NORTHWEST FISHERIES SCIENCE CENTER REPORT

### **Programmatic Review of Data**

As part of a national, 5-year series of programmatic reviews, the NW Fisheries Science Center hosted an independent review of data used in California Current groundfish assessments September 17-20, 2013. Other key participants include the SW Fisheries Science Center, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission. Each of the Panel members submitted comments, along with an overview prepared by the Chair, addressing all of the major data-collection programs which currently supply data to groundfish assessments, as well as other focal areas, such as Resource Allocation, Data Management/Access, and New Technologies. These comments, which were favorable overall, also included many constructive suggestions for program improvements and highlighted areas of resource limitation. The NWFSC has subsequently prepared responses to the major recommendations of Panel members and developed a set of action items in each area. The Science Report will include a brief overview of major themes in the review comments and some of the Center's responses. Documents containing all reviewer comments and NWFSC responses are now available on the Center's website: [http://www.nwfsc.noaa.gov/news/events/program\\_reviews/2013/index.cfm](http://www.nwfsc.noaa.gov/news/events/program_reviews/2013/index.cfm).

### **Economic Data Collection**

The NWFSC greatly appreciates the time and effort many fishermen have put into completing the surveys. This data is used for economic analyses of the fisheries, including in the IO-PAC model.

- The open access survey collects economic data from fishermen participating in the open access groundfish, non-tribal salmon, crab, and shrimp fisheries on the West Coast. Fielding was completed at the end of 2013, with 426 responses.
- Fielding of the limited entry fixed gear survey began on February 1 and will continue through late March. This survey collects economic data from the owners of vessels that operated with a limited entry fixed gear groundfish permit, and did not operate in the limited entry trawl fishery; their data is submitted through the EDC program.
- The recreational WA and OR charter operator survey was fielded December 2013-January 2014, with 153 responses. The CA charter operator survey was completed by the SWFSC.

## **Survey Planning for Cowcod Conservation Areas**

Several recent stock assessments suggest a need for fishery-independent survey coverage within the Cowcod Conservation Areas (CCAs). In response to Council member requests, the NWFSC, in conjunction with the SWFSC, is currently studying possibilities for extending survey coverage into these areas. Due to funding uncertainty, it is not clear what the extent of this sampling will be, or what gear or protocols may be involved, so we are exploring a range of options. One proposal under consideration expands the footprint of the hook and line survey into the CCAs. NWFSC is currently working with local sport and commercial fishing industry members to develop a database of potential sampling locations that includes coverage of all of the major banks and reefs within the CCAs. Industry input was critical in developing the survey's current sampling frame. We encourage anyone interested in contributing information to this effort to contact John Harms at (206) 860-3414; [John.Harms@noaa.gov](mailto:John.Harms@noaa.gov).

## **Summary Reports on 2013 Bycatch Reduction Engineering Research Projects**

In March, FRAM's Marine Habitat Ecology group will release two informational reports (developed with input from the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission and the fishing industry) that summarize the results of last year's bycatch reduction engineering research projects. One report focuses on testing of an industry-designed Bycatch Reduction Device (BRD) to reduce bycatch of Pacific halibut, while the second report provides the initial test of a BRD designed to improve trawl selectivity in the flatfish fishery.