

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON
TRAWL RATIONALIZATION TRAILING ACTIONS – ELECTRONIC MONITORING
REGULATORY PROCESS

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviewed the Trawl Catch Share Program Electronic Monitoring (EM) Workshop Report (D.7.b, EM Workshop Report), along with documents prepared by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) including: 1) the results of a pilot EM program in 2012 (D.7.c, PSMFC Report 1), and 2) a plan for EM work to be conducted in 2013 (D.7.c, PSMFC Report 2). Mr. Jim Seger provided an overview of how this research relates to Council objectives and the groundfish trawl share catch program, and Mr. Dave Colpo (PSMFC) was available to answer questions about the EM program.

SSC noted that there was no coverage of non-whiting trawlers in 2012, and the relative performance of the EM system differed between the shoreside and mothership whiting vessels sampled. A clear explanation for the differences was not presented; however, it was noted that the observer data provided in the 2012 report are preliminary. The SSC recommends that when the finalized data are available, the 2012 report results should be re-analyzed and presented in an updated report. The 2013 study will focus on non-whiting trawl, where species identification will be particularly important. One limitation of the cameras is that they cannot, at present, be used to identify rockfish and flatfish discards to species.

Mr. Colpo provided his perspective on the prospects for the work planned in 2013. He noted that, thus far, it has been difficult to recruit trawl vessels to participate in the research program. The SSC notes that, without knowing the number and variety of vessels available for the 2013 research, and a detailed study design, it is not possible to evaluate the likelihood of project success in 2013. For example, a detailed study design should address possible management measures that could be implemented. The SSC also encouraged the collection of information in 2013 that can help to evaluate the costs associated with the program. This could help to evaluate management options that could be proposed in the future.

Review of the 2012 EM sampling results suggests that an ancillary benefit of this research is the opportunity it could provide to examine the performance of at sea observers. Detailed analysis of the videos could yield insights about how the observers operate and some of the particular challenges they face at sea that affect the uncertainty of discard estimates.