



State of Washington  
**DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

Mailing Address: 600 Capitol Way N • Olympia, WA 98501-1091 • (360) 902-2200, TDD (360) 902-2207  
Main Office Location: Natural Resources Building • 1111 Washington Street SE • Olympia, WA

June 4, 2001

Dear Coastal Pink Shrimp Fisher:

In September 2000, the Pacific Fishery Management Council determined canary rockfish to be overfished under the terms of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act enacted by Congress in 1996 and the accompanying National Standard Guidelines adopted by the National Marine Fisheries Service. In response to this determination, the Pacific Council approved a rebuilding program for canary rockfish which resulted in the adoption of a number of very small harvest targets for each commercial and recreational sector in order to not exceed 93 metric tons of fishery related mortality in 2001. In November 2000, the three coastal states committed to reduce the incidental take of canary rockfish in the state-managed coastal pink shrimp fishery to a level not to exceed 5 ½ metric tons which is less than half of the recent average catch.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) believes finfish excluders to be the most effective approach to reducing canary rockfish catch in the shrimp fishery. Both Oregon and California agree with the use of excluders, however, the states differ on the regulatory strategies to implement excluder use. At this time, WDFW has not taken regulatory action that would mandate the use of finfish excluders by Washington-licensed vessels. However, we are committed to fulfilling our obligation to reduce canary bycatch in the Washington pink shrimp fishery and we strongly recommend the use of finfish excluders to minimize canary rockfish bycatch. Analysis of 2001 Washington shrimp landing data indicates measures have been taken by the Washington shrimp fleet to reduce the catch of finfish including canary rockfish. We commend you for taking action to address this critical issue and encourage you to continue these efforts.

Fishers should note that mandatory use of excluders could still be implemented with short notice if the coastwide bycatch of canary appears to be proceeding at a rate too rapid to remain within the 5½ metric ton target. Accordingly, fishers are advised to use the opportunity afforded within the current voluntary regime to gain experience tuning an excluder to function properly with their particular vessel, gear and fishing technique.

Fishers currently using excluders are encouraged to share their observations regarding the effectiveness of excluders in reducing canary rockfish by-catch. Please contact Lorna Wargo by phone at (360) 249-1221 or by email at [wargollw@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:wargollw@dfw.wa.gov). Comments can also be sent in writing at the address above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Philip Anderson".

Philip Anderson  
Special Assistant  
Intergovernmental Policy

cc: Brian Culver  
Dan Ayres