

## PROGRESS ON BYCATCH REDUCTION DEVICES OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Since April 1, ODFW staff have been monitoring both canary rockfish landed catch in Oregon and the use of Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRDs) by Oregon shrimp fishermen. While some skippers have been aggressively working to develop effective BRDs in preparation for a mandatory BRD requirement, most of the fleet has not. Roughly 30% of the fleet has some type of BRD in one or more nets, but most have left them de-activated most of the time. Patterns in the landed catch suggest that some vessels have been discarding canary rockfish. This discard has been roughly accounted for in the following ODFW total catch estimates and full-season projections.

Landed catch of canary rockfish in Oregon's 2001 shrimp fishery totals 1,600 lbs (0.73 t) through the end of May. We estimate that this represents about 2,172 lbs (0.99 t) of total take (including discard). Our best models suggest that total take through the end of shrimp season will be between 2.1 and 7.5 t, compared to an Oregon catch target of 3.9 t (71% of 5.5 t). Considering some canary rockfish will continue to be taken after BRDs are required (during "test" tows and by vessels fishing Fisheye BRDs), we project that BRDs should be mandated in Oregon after July 15, 2001 but no later than August 1, 2001. Despite plenty of notice to fishermen, we expect some fishermen will still be caught unprepared when BRDs are actually mandated.

In May, ODFW staff went to sea on the F/V Miss Yvonne to examine a modified Bycatch Reduction Device using underwater video equipment. The new device used a stiffening ring in combination with a soft-panel BRD as well as some modifications to the escape hole. Staff determined that the device was causing excessive shrimp loss due to placement in the tapered section of the net. Based on the underwater footage, the device was moved further back in the net and some additional modifications were applied to the escape hole. This new device seems to be working well at this time. The fleet has also developed a few other new devices and modifications to existing BRDs that show promise but need further evaluation.

On June 13<sup>th</sup>, staff went to sea to test a new device for measuring trawl footrope height above the sea bottom and to measure how variations in footrope height change the bycatch of flatfish and juvenile rockfish. This new device was developed with help from Craig Rose and Scott McIntire of NMFS. It significantly improves our ability to assess BRD performance, because it allows much more precise control of shrimp catch efficiency between two double-rigged nets, allowing more precise measurement of BRD generated shrimp loss.

We expect to implement a temporary rule mandating BRDs in the Oregon shrimp fishery after July 15, 2001 effective no later than August 1, 2001.