

September 13, 2001

Shrimp Fishery Excluder / Incidental Canary Issue

Oregon has spent a lot of time and energy working with the shrimp industry developing solutions to problems such as incidental canary catch in the fishery. Oregon has a good logbook program in place with lots of data regarding groundfish catches in the shrimp fishery. They also helped the fishery develop a voluntary excluder program that was implemented prior to the start of the 2001 shrimp season.

All of this cooperation between the industry and management needs to continue with a single goal in sight; to develop a fish excluder to exclude canary rockfish while allowing the fishery to operate with as little economic loss as possible.

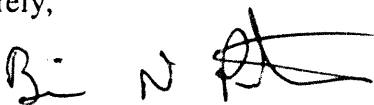
In order to accomplish this goal, Oregon started the 2001 season with a voluntary excluder program. This allowed industry experimentation with excluders and the ability for industry to use them when fishing in areas of high incidental canary catch.

2001 is a success in the way management and the industry pulled together to work at solving these difficult issues. The shrimp industry wants 2002 to be just as successful. There is still a lot of work necessary to develop a better fish excluder.

The shrimp fishing industry is very concerned that the Council will perceive the use of current excluders as the solution to the canary bycatch issue. This assumption is far from correct. Mandatory excluder use re-allocates all of the groundfish away from the shrimp fishery, which has a very long history of groundfish harvest. This, along with the poor performance of today's devices, allowing extensive shrimp loss, causes extreme economic hardship on the shrimp fishery. The real solution should be to reduce incidental canary catch and limit the economic hardship to the industry to a minimum. Oregon and the shrimp industry are on the right track to finding a solution.

The Oregon shrimp fishing industry greatly appreciates the help from Oregon, and would like to see help from the other states and the Council to achieve success. The shrimp industry is certain that it can decrease incidental canary catch without suffering the economic loss, from lost product through escapement and or re-allocation. 2002 should provide evidence of this success.

Sincerely,



Brian Petersen  
Shrimp Producers Co-op