

FV SEEADLER

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Mr. Don Hansen  
Pacific Fishery Management Council  
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101  
Portland Oregon 97220-1384

Dear Mr. Hansen and Members of the Council,

Thank you for considering my chilipepper EFP and for working with me. I would like to request a change in the 12 month term for the EFP. Currently January is the 12 month start date.

However, observer training starts in March and it is very late for me to fish a February through April EFP. Additionally my grant request was denied for this year to help pay for observer training. However, I am fortunate to have a qualified volunteer offer to help and be trained for next year in March.

The EFP could still be fished in April and if continued through the following year from February through April there may be sufficient information for analysis. I will again be submitting an application next year for consideration for the EFP in 2011 and am hoping to expedite approval through NMFS pending a Council recommendation to do this EFP in 2011. Catch data and changes to caps would apply and any necessary changes made when EFPs are reviewed.

I am willing to make whatever changes are needed to make the fishery work. Thank you for your consideration as I was unable to execute the EFP last year.

Sincerely,

Steve Fosmark

## EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT – CHILIPEPPER ROCKFISH

Request for an exempted fishing permit (EFP).

Project Title: Evaluation of an epibenthic trolled longline to selectively catch chilipepper rockfish (*Sebastes goodei*).

Date of Application: March 6, 2009

Applicant:	Steven Fosmark	Analysis:	NMFS Santa Cruz Laboratory
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### Purpose and Goals

Chilipepper rockfish stocks on the west coast are considered healthy. However, because of weak stock management, the OY for this species cannot be taken. In 2006, chilipepper landings were 39.7 mt (<http://www.psmfc.org/pacfin/data/r001.p06>) of a 2000 mt OY. Area closures to protect overfished rockfish species have effectively closed access to this resource.

The long-term objective of this project is to describe and evaluate the effectiveness of a species-selective longline technique, which if proven effective, will allow commercial fishermen access to chilipepper rockfish, a relatively abundant species of rockfish. This fishery is constrained by the current rockfish area closures (Rockfish Conservation Areas, RCA), implemented to protect overfished rockfish species. Despite the depressed condition of some west coast groundfish stocks, there are other stocks that remain healthy. These healthier stocks could safely sustain increased harvest levels if they could be fished more cleanly and without bycatch of more depleted stocks. If stronger stocks could be targeted without increasing fishing mortality on depressed stocks, the California commercial fishing fleet would have alternative fishing opportunities that would provide some economic relief to the industry while providing the public with a highly desirable product.

The objective of the research for which we are requesting an EFP would be to establish the performance characteristics of the gear and to rigorously document the catch and bycatch when deployed in areas where chilipepper are abundant and bycatch species are not, under commercial fishing conditions. The objectives would be: 1) to test the trolled gear and fishing strategy with vertical lines and artificial flies, and 2) determine Groundfish Fishing Areas that are abundant with chilipepper rockfish, and that correspond to low densities of overfished species. The second objective may better help to answer the question of how EFP results can potentially be translated into future fleet-wide fishing opportunities.

The location, gear characteristics (number of hooks, length of mainline, etc.), species composition, size distribution, and sex ratio (of chilipepper) of each set of gear will be recorded by onboard observers. In addition, a camera may be used at the discretion of the operator.

The EFP that we are requesting would allow up to three (3) vessels. Each would be allowed to fish inside the current RCA using otherwise legal open access fixed gear. Full retention applies to rockfish species (as defined in Federal regulations), and retention of non-rockfish species will be governed by applicable open access limits, and may be released once documented by an observer.

This EFP for chilipeppers is a mid-water project and will also be using a test line with a couple of hooks called prospecting as to avoid bocaccio. Line will be an off the bottom longline with corks attached close to line, consisting of drop line, main line, and wire attached to a reel, (Diagram below). The gear will consist of a maximum of 500-750 hooks per set. Gear consists of open access troll fly and vertical hook and line gear that is set and fished in a unique way such that the hooks sink to near, but not hard on bottom. Prior to setting the gear, a test set will be made with vertical gear in which the gear is set vertically. This will be with no hooks closer than 3 fm of the bottom, based on acoustic soundings, to ensure that the target species is present and to minimize the chance of encountering any overfished rockfish species.

Once the test set establishes the presence of chilipepper rockfish, the gear will be deployed as follows: The vessel moves slowly ahead as the gear is deployed. The gear remains attached to the vessel at all times. Artificial “flies” are used in lieu of bait for efficiency and are preferred by chilipepper. The mainline consists of 200-800 lb. test monofilament, and may be spooled on a hydraulic drum. One end, with buoy and weight attached in such a way that the gear does not touch the bottom is sent overboard as the boat moves slowly ahead, and the remaining gear is deployed. The weighted buoy line length is adjusted to avoid bottom contact to reduce the likelihood of bycatch and prevent the hooks from hanging up on bottom. Hooks are spaced approximately 18-30” apart on 12” monofilament gangions (approximately 60 lb test). Hooks are tied with artificial flies, and no bait is used. This gear is reported by the fisherman to selectively catch chilipepper rockfish when properly deployed (Steve Fosmark, Moss Landing, CA, F/V SeeAdler, Phone: 831-373-5238; cell phones: 831-601-4074; or Boat 831-601-7934 email: [FVSeeAdler@aol.com](mailto:FVSeeAdler@aol.com)).

The research would be conducted off central California (36 to 37.50 degrees), at depths of approximately 80-120 fm (chilipepper rockfish tend to get smaller in size and schools are thinner in shallow depths), in areas with canyon edges and walls, smooth hard bottom, with no rocks (example: canyon south of Año Nuevo). This depth range is currently within the non-trawl RCA established to protect overfished rockfish species.

To ensure that this experimental fishery has a minimal impact on overfished rockfish species, the Council recommended aggregate catch limits on the fishery for overfished species as follow:

Widow rockfish: 0.700 mt  
Bocaccio: 3.300 mt  
Canary: 0.027 mt (20 fish)  
Cowcod: 0.015 mt (3 fish)  
Yelloweye: 0.005 mt (3 fish)  
Darkblotched: 0.400 mt  
POP: none

The widow cap may be changed depending on the outcome of the STAR panel if it is no longer overfished or if the GMT advises a change in the EFP widow rockfish limit.

Under the terms of this EFP, each vessel will carry an observer with the cost of observer coverage borne by the EFP participants. All species will be retained. Catch of species other than the above are expected to be uncommon although some yellowtail and perhaps other rockfish may be encountered in small numbers. Attaining any of the above aggregate catch limits will terminate the EFP for all vessels.

We anticipate that fishing as described in this EFP will not be constrained by these caps.

Chilipepper rockfish caught under this EFP will be retained and sold by the permitted vessel.

We request that NMFS issue this EFP for one year, or 12 calendar months starting after April.

This EFP will incorporate a standardized data collection and reporting format as determined by the NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center. All vessels participating in this EFP fishery will be required to carry an observer. The observer will record all fish caught and ensure that aggregate bycatch limits are not exceeded. Vessel captains will keep records of catch by species by set for all sets under this EFP. It is possible that the catch and bycatch will change seasonally,

The applicant and the scientist will be responsible for data analysis. Data analysis will consist of statistical analysis of catch and bycatch of all species by set, trip, and month. Catch rates will be expressed as catch per hook, per set, per day, and per trip. Value of the catch will be recorded following sale. The final report will provide an estimate of fishing effort and total catch; absolute and relative species composition summarized by set, trip, and month; size composition of catch and bycatch; and sex ratio and stage of maturity for chilipepper.

Vessels participating in this EFP fishery will be chosen on their ability to accommodate an observer, their willingness to maintain detailed catch data and their willingness to participate during months when fish are available to this fishery.

Areas to be selected for high-density target species will be between 37.35 degrees (Pedro Point) and 36 degrees (Point Lopez).

### **Equipment needed**

Hydraulic type powered reels, and stern roller, powered puller, 1000 feet of conveyor belting or wide carpet runner, fly-hooks, line, wire, snaps, swivels, small buoys, one large buoy, one 3 to 5 pound weight, one 20 to 30 pound weight, fish finder, fathometer or sonar.

### **Description**

500 to 750 hooks are needed for three or four sets in the morning and afternoon; 1,000 hooks would be the best if sets are limited by less available time.

## **Determine depth**

At 90 fm deep, use 85-89 fm terminal drop line buoyed to sustain depth with a 3-5 pound weight at the end a long line is attached. When long line is 1,000 feet use 750 leaders on swivels with attached fly hooks. Swivels are slipped onto line held in place by stops. Small floats are attached to long line between several leaders when deployed. Floats have short lines and snaps to be snapped onto the long line. Long line is attached at the other end to a drop wire at 1 fm above a 20-30 pound weight. Drop wire always is attached to the front reel on the boat.

Time to fish is short. During the day chilipepper come off the bottom and once they are mid-water one cannot catch them by this method. Therefore the morning and evening are the best times.

Line is approximately 1,000 feet long and the weight is 3 fm from the bottom to provide control. When the line reacts to bites, take the boat out of gear and the line will sag between floats and fish will climb the line to the floats as they do with vertical gear on up and as line is pulled, line rises to the surface. Boat must then be going ahead while pulling to keep the fish on. The terminal drop line remains at 85 fathoms. As the boat moves forward the drop line moves close to the end of the boat tight and fish continue to climb the line. As the line is towed in, fish stay in area of line where school is thicker, (pull through spot of fish). Line is pulled on board until it becomes vertical to the vessel.

## **Suggested Deployment**

Reel to reel gear can be used to deploy a line over a conveyor belt into the water. Whichever reel has coiled belt is always free wheeled. Forward reel coils conveyor belt for storage only. Back power reel uncoils gear over the conveyor belt and deploys it to a stern roller as forward reel is in power to coil belt. Conveyor belt is coiled from the back reel to the forward reel and line spools by its own weight over the stern roller into the water.

## **Suggested Retrieval**

Pull wire to surface with a separate power puller. Snap longline onto back reel. Pull line with powered back reel by rolling line onto conveyor belt. Belt is spooling from over the forward reel. Belt is pulled under and over the back reel. Longline is pulled over stern roller to back reel while conveyor belt is moving with it. As line comes over the stern roller, remove fish. Line is never coiled onto the forward reel. The line comes from the water over the stern roller, and is coiled onto the back reel. Belt acts as a protection from entanglement for hook and line separation. Another technique is to pull by hand with two people pulling, one person removing fish, and one person storing gear.

CHILIPEPPER LONGLINE-TROLL GEAR

