

SOLVING THE PROBLEM
IN THE
PACIFIC GROUND FISH FISHERY

September 8, 2000

Introduction

The Pacific Groundfish fishery is in disarray. Quotas on many species have been reduced progressively over the past several years. New stock assessments suggest that the current harvest levels are still too aggressive and quotas need to be reduced further. Economic returns from the fishery have been declining through this period and will decline further. Additional economic burdens will likely be placed on the fishery in the near future in the form of marine reserves, industry funding of on board observers, and the need for industry contributions in the form of resource or capital to fund new research efforts.

The reduced availability of the resource has occurred while the capacity of the fishing fleet has remained static and change in capacity should have been occurring at the same time. The economic value of the available resource is out of balance with the harvesting capacity of the fleet. This situation has been declared a fisheries disaster by the Secretary of Commerce.

For stability and economic viability to return to the groundfish fishery, the capacity of the fishing fleet must be brought into balance with the available resource. To avoid further incremental creep toward imbalance it is in the best interest of the fishing fleet to have fishery managers identify now all reasonable issues that may further reduce the economic value of the available resource. These issues should be incorporated into a view of what the future fishery will look like. A vision of where we need to be in the future will provide the proper target for the necessary reductions in the fishing capacity of the fleet. Therefore, the following is offered as vision of the future of groundfish fishery.

Vision

The "Open Access" portion of the fishery that targets groundfish will no longer exist. A portion of the total OY will continue to be made available to be taken incidentally in other fisheries, such as Troll Salmon, Pink Shrimp, etc. The number of Trawl, Longline, and Pot boats in the Limited Entry fleet will be reduced to a level that is in balance with the economic value of the available resource.

The available resource will be reduced from its current levels, reflecting changes in:

1) our understanding of F_{msy} , 2) downward adjustments in harvest as a precaution due to uncertainty in estimating stock size or F_{msy} , 3) the need to rebuild stocks that are currently at low levels, and 4) the establishment of marine reserves as no take zones.

Approximately 20% of the continental shelf within the Pacific Region will be set aside as no-take marine reserves. These areas will be distributed along the coast from Canada to Mexico and represents all habitat types. These areas will be closed to all fishing by commercial and recreational fishermen.

Additionally, recreational or commercial management priorities will be designated for major areas of the coast. Both recreational and commercial fishing would be allowed to occur along the coast with these designations, however some species (rockfish and lingcod) would be managed for the priority of the area.

The near-shore rockfish group will be removed from the FMP and managed by the three states. This fishery has for the most part been commercial open access and recreational fishermen. The States will implement their own Limited Entry program for the near-shore fishery.

There will be an observer program implemented that will sample 10% of all commercial vessels harvesting groundfish.

Cooperative industry/agency research will become an integral part of data collection. Five percent of the available resource will be made available for "fish for research".

Impacts/Adjustments

The actions mentioned above will reduce the available resource and/or reduce gross revenue derived from the resource. In order for the fleet to be in balance with the available resource, fleet reduction is necessary.

Since the near-shore rockfish will be managed by the States and they will be adopting new access restrictions; fleet target levels will be achieved through new qualifying minimum landing requirements.

The current fleet of trawl catcher boats is approximately 260 boats. It is generally agreed that the fleet at this time needs to be reduced by 50%. Given this, the size of the fleet in balance with the available resource at this time would be 130 boats. If the available resource is also reduced by 20% for marine reserves, followed by an additional 15% reduction for precautionary reasons, and then 5% of the resource is set aside for "fish for research", the fleet must be now reduced to approximately 84 boats. Lastly, a fee for observers of 5% of gross revenue would result in a fleet "in balance" of 80 boats.

The industry share can be distributed between Groundfish, shrimp and crab based upon the level of participation in each fishery by holders of groundfish permits as follows:

Groundfish	100%
Shrimp	60% (based on permits)
Crab	50% (based on landings)
Total	210%

Then for an industry share of the total at \$25 million –

Groundfish would be $100\%/210\% = 47.6\%$ of \$25 million or \$11.9 million.

Shrimp would be $60\%/210\% = 28.6\%$ of \$25 million or \$7.15 million.

Crab would be $50\%/210\% = 23.8\%$ of \$25 million or \$5.95 million.

If the total annual exvessel value of the groundfish fishery were \$20 million, the shrimp fishery \$20 million, and crab \$60 million, and each sector was to have a 5% assessment to pay their share, the annual revenue generated would be \$1 million for groundfish and shrimp and \$3 million for crab.

The time required to for each sector to repay their share be calculated by dividing their share by their annual revenue. This would be 12 years for groundfish, 7 years for shrimp, and 2 years for crab.

What is required?

Federal legislation that would:

- 1) Appropriate money for a buy-back program
- 2) Interest free loan for industry share
- 3) Impose a fee on the fishing industry to recover the industry's share
- 4) Set the within industry sharing arrangement
- 5) Set the target fleet reduction goals

October 12, 2000

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Pacific Fishery Management Council
2130 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 224
Portland, Oregon 97201

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PFMC

Gentlemen:

I am writing to you in regard to my concerns relating to the groundfish plans for the upcoming 2001 fishery on the Oregon coast. Twenty of my fellow sports fishermen share my concerns as well.

First a word about me: I own my own boat and thoroughly enjoy all types of ocean sports fishing. I listen to and try to represent the concerns of many of the avid sports fishermen on the Central Coast between Florence and Winchester Bay. These are the concerns I hear and agree with:

1. In the past few years, there have been so many regulations on what we are allowed to fish for; how we must fish for them; when we are allowed to fish for different species; and changes in regulations without sufficient notification to the public. Most of us feel these imposed regulations have gotten to the point where one needs a "fish attorney" in our boat to comply with the restrictions imposed...especially since there are four enforcement agencies on the water or at the docks to check for compliance. This topic may very likely interest ABC's 20/20 program's John Stossel, "Gimme a Break!"
2. Mr. Golden of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's information relating to the groundfish strategic plan has given us a "faint glimmer of hope" for next year. We could live with a bag limit of 2 ling cod, but would like the size limit to be increased to 38 inches. Lings larger than 38 inches are female breeders, not that good eating, and we have voluntarily released them for several years. We can live with the rock fish bag limit at 10 and only 3 canary's. The one ling cod limit makes bottom fishing unworthwhile considering our time and expenses. Two lings we can live with.
3. Salmon fishing (I have been doing this for the past 11 years) is ridiculous under present regulations. Simplify your regulations and open the season for a specific time period (4 to 6 weeks) and allow legal size salmon of both species to be caught using barbless hooks and remove the varied requirements on terminal and diver gear. The multitude of changing requirements only results in a lot of dead salmon released to die floating in the ocean. I am out

there, I see it happen all the time. The public, as well as myself, are not able to understand or keep current on your ever changing requirements and lack of notification methods. The K.I.S.S. method, when dealing with the public is better and a lot of innocent fisherman will stay out of trouble (including myself).

4. What your organization should know about avid sports fishermen: Our segment of the fishery impact is a very small portion of the annual harvest. Most of us fish within 10 miles of the shore. Our economic input to coastal communities and related expenses....such as dock rental, boat maintenance, fishing gear, boat and fish licenses....are well known to exceed commercial economic inputs. My expenses yearly to pursue this interest averages \$6,000 to \$8,000 annually. If things do not change in the near future, I and many of my fellow fishermen are considering changing our location for fishing and spend our money in Alaska and, possibly, San Diego, California. We do not want to do this but your requirements will leave us no choice if we want to continue our fishing interest. I would, however, prefer to spend my fishing funds within my own community.

Respectfully,

Kent F. Duke

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Satellite VMS for Pacific Ground Fish Vessels off the Oregon Coast

Demonstration Project -- Progress Report
September 2000

Cooperative Effort

- National Marine Fisheries Service, Northwest Law Enforcement, Alaska Law Enforcement, Northwest Fisheries Science Center
- North American CLS, Inc. (Argos service provider for the USA)
- Fishing vessel owners/captains of the Excalibur and Sea Eagle

Goal

Demonstrate feasibility of satellite monitoring of WOC Ground fish vessels in the Pacific EEZ, for the purpose of enforcing Marine Reserves and closed areas.

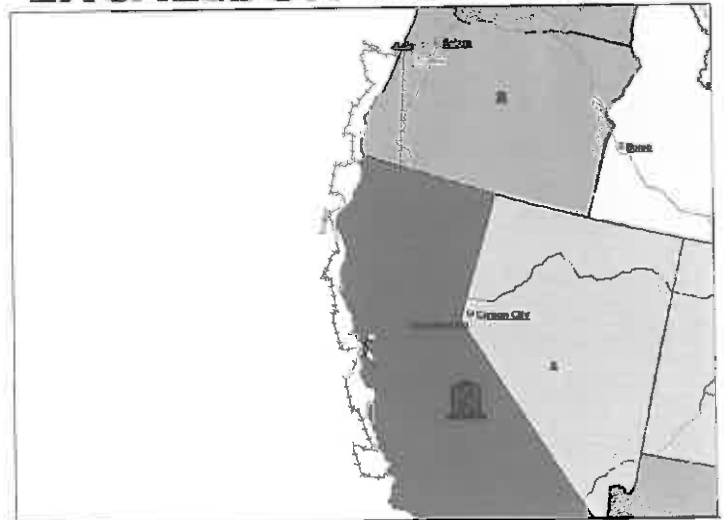
Project

- Pacific EEZ trawl surveys off Oregon – California coasts
- Transmitters installed in August 2000
- Project completed in September 2000

SEA EAGLE TRACK LINE



EXCALIBUR TRACK LINE

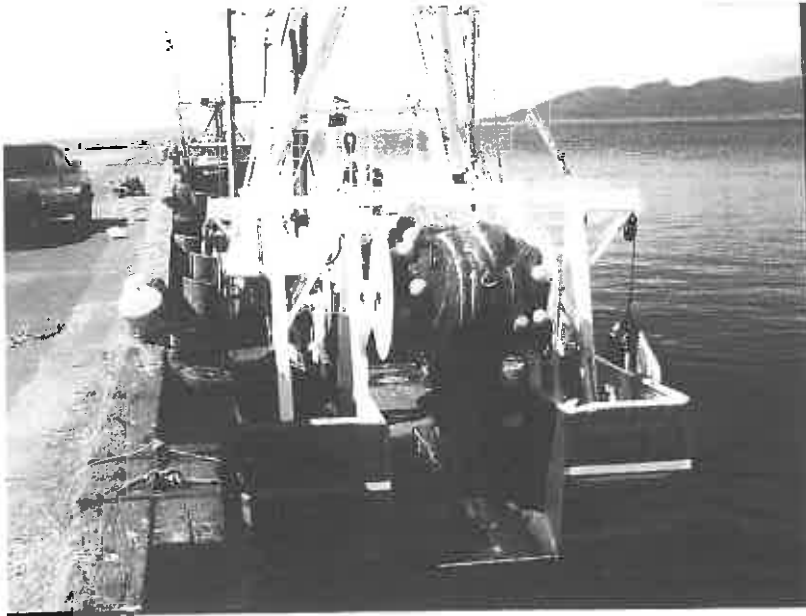


VESSELS

EXCALIBUR



SEA EAGLE



VMS Equipment

- Argos "MAR-GE" Transmitter
- Sends both GPS and Argos (Doppler) positions
- Compact and buoyant
- Simple installation
- Fully automatic, low maintenance
- Withstands harsh marine environment
- 24 GPS position reports per day
- Automatic GPS and battery status reports
- Distress function

Costs

- Transmitter cost \$1,800
- Data processing \$5 per day

Added Benefits

- Fleet management – owner knows location of vessel
- Vessel and crew safety --vessel monitored around the clock, and transmitter has distress function
- VMS control center integrates information from other VMS fisheries added in the future



Results

- 24 GPS position reports transmitted per day,
- Additional four Argos (Doppler) position reports per day, when GPS positions are not available
- Information processed by NACLS in Maryland, and delivered to NMFS Enforcement in Seattle
- Data delivered within 1-2 hours

Contacts

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