

Monterey Bay Fishermen Exempted Fishing Permit

Chilipepper Rockfish

October 19, 2017

Applicant:

Real Good Fish, a Community Supported
Fishery
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Purpose and Goals

Chilipepper rockfish have historically been one of the most important fish stocks for commercial fishing in California, especially along the central coast. Chilipepper stocks are considered healthy, however commercial landings, year over year, continue to be a fraction of optimal yield (OY) for this species. In 2016, commercial chilipepper landings were 80.7 mt (<https://reports.psmfc.org/pacfin/f?p=501:501:::NO:::>) of a 1619 mt OY (https://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Chili_2016_final.pdf pg.27). A combination of management strategies, including area closures and observer coverage continue to restrict fishermen access to the resource. The short-term objective of this project is to test and assess the feasibility a new fishing technique to access chilipepper rockfish. The long-term objective is to create an economic opportunity for young fishermen in our region, while providing healthy, sustainable seafood to our community in the Monterey Bay and beyond. This is increasingly important as the overall economic health of our working waterfront

communities continue to diminish. In addition, we see the opportunity to gradually increase availability and demand for local rockfish in our markets as a way to build a critical bridge for recovering the West Coast groundfish industry as a whole. The need for additional access to our abundant fisheries resource cannot be overstated.

This Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) is designed to assess the feasibility of a new gear type that is readily accessible to existing commercial fishermen with a low barrier to entry cost, while leveraging affordable electronic monitoring tools that reduce cost prohibitive observer coverage. Several EFPs along similar lines have been submitted to the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC), one from Fosmark in 2009, and another from Platt in 2015. Both were designed to establish the performance characteristics of their respective gear types while identifying areas where target species are abundant and bycatch species are not, following commercial fishing conditions. The main difference in this EFP is the gear type being tested and the monitoring tools being deployed.

The objectives of this EFP would be: 1) to test fishing strategy with salmon gurdies, drop lines and reels, and artificial flies, 2) determine areas that are abundant with chilipepper rockfish, and that correspond to low densities of overfished species, and 3) to test new cost effective electronic monitoring (EM) and vessel monitoring system (VMS) solutions that provide oversight and data comparable to observer coverage. The EFP that we are requesting would allow up to ten (10) vessels, with no less than five (5), to fish inside the current Rockfish Conservation Area (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.

Equipment Needed

Hydraulic powered salmon gurdies or line reels, fly-hooks, line, wire, snaps, swivels, small buoys, fish finder, fathometer or sonar.

The gear deployed for this EFP operates in the mid-water column. Salmon gurdies on both sides of the vessel with stops typically every 3 fathoms will be lowered according to fishing depth. Attached to the wire at the fishing depth will be fly line with a maximum of 500-750 hooks per set. This gear will be fished at a slow speed through the fishing grounds. Gear will be lowered no closer than 1 fm off the bottom, based on soundings, to minimize the chance of encountering overfished rockfish species, while maximizing catch of target species. Ideally, three or four sets will be used per trip, occurring in the morning and afternoon, to maximize cost per unit of effort (CPUE). In instances where time is limited, 1,000 hooks would best.

For electronic monitoring a Flywire device (<http://www.flywirecameras.com/>), to be purchased by the applicants and participating fishermen. In addition, a Pelagic Data System vessel

monitoring device (<http://www.pelagicdata.com/>) will be used to track fishing locations to accurately mark areas of concern, whether it's highly effective fishing grounds, or areas of higher interactions with unwanted or overfished species.

Species Allocation

- Chilipepper rockfish 30 mt
- Widow rockfish: 9 mt
- Bocaccio: 3.300 mt
- Canary: 1 mt
- Cowcod: 0.015 mt
- Yelloweye: 0.03 mt
- Darkblotched: 0.400 mt
- Yellowtail: 30 mt

Determine Depth

Fishing depth is determined by acoustic sonar. A test drop will be made to ensure the presence of target species. Once a test set establishes the presence of target species, the gear will be deployed. Fishing will occur at least 1 fm off the bottom

Suggested Deployment

Vertical Test Line

Prior to setting the longline gear, a test set will be made with vertical line to ensure that the target species is present and minimize the chance of encountering any unwanted or overfished species. Using acoustic soundings will ensure that no hooks will get within 3 fm of the bottom. The weight may hit the bottom initially, then immediately be pulled up to avoid sagging of the hooks.

The fishing vessel, in gear or drifting, moves slowly ahead as the main line gear is deployed to ensure tension on the line and minimize tangles. The main line is released by spool or bucket over the rail. Fishing gear is attached to the vessel at all times. The main line consists of shrimp "flies" attached to gangions with swivels attached to 200-800lb test monofilament. Hooks are spaced approximately 18-30" apart on 12" monofilament gangions (approximately 60 lb test). Floats are spaced out on the main line to reduce any chance of sagging below the 1 fm limit. Once the line is deployed it is attached to preferred stop on the a salmon gurdy with a 20-30lb or a drop line is deployed attached to a reel. The wire or drop line is lowered to desired fishing depth.

Suggested Retrieval

Gear will be retrieved while the vessel is in gear to keep the lines taught and from tangling. Wire gurdies are raised to bring up the mainline which is retrieved by hand or reel. Innovative retrieval tools and techniques may be devised to increase speed, reduce tangling, and increase speed for subsequent deployments. Similar retrieval and storage techniques as described in the Fosmark 2009 EFP may be developed to manage gear (https://www.pccouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/bb_2009_11_G3a_ATT1_1109.pdf)

Total Duration of the EFP

This EFP proposal is for a total of 2 years (2019-2020) following the groundfish biennial management cycle.

Location of Fishing under the EFP

The research would be conducted off central California (36 to 37.50 degrees), at depths of approximately 80-120 fm, 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.

Number of Vessels Covered Under the EFP

This EFP is for a minimum of 5, not exceeding 10, fishing vessels located in the harbors of the Monterey Bay (Monterey, Moss Landing, Santa Cruz).

Vessel Selection

Vessels selected for participating in this EFP will be chosen based on their ability and willingness to install EM and vessel monitoring devices. In addition, their willingness and commitment to maintaining a detailed catch log with required data. Lastly, selection will be based on their willingness to fish during months when target species are available to this fishery. Preference will be given to fishermen demonstrating the greatest economic need and opportunity for developing their fishing career. Three fishermen located in Moss Landing and Santa Cruz are ready to participate in the EFP:

- Calder Deyerle, 30 years old, Moss Landing
- Kevin Butler, 45 years old, Santa Cruz
- David Toriumi, 35 years old, Moss Landing

- Additional fishermen will be recruited to fish remaining permits

Research Design

The applicant, contracted video analysts, and the advising scientist will be responsible for data analysis. Data analysis will consist of statistical analysis of catch and bycatch of all species by fisherman, set, trip, and month. Catch rates will be expressed as catch per hook, per set, per day, and per trip. Value and volume 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, and additional species as requested by the PFMC.

Data Sources

Data will be collected by the fisherman, Pelagic Data Systems, and video analysts for all fishing under this EFP. Attachment of depth recorders may be used, as available. If desired, incidental catch of certain species (e.g., canary and yelloweye) that cannot be released alive could be retained by the observer and provided to National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), or other researchers for biological sampling.

Precautionary Measures

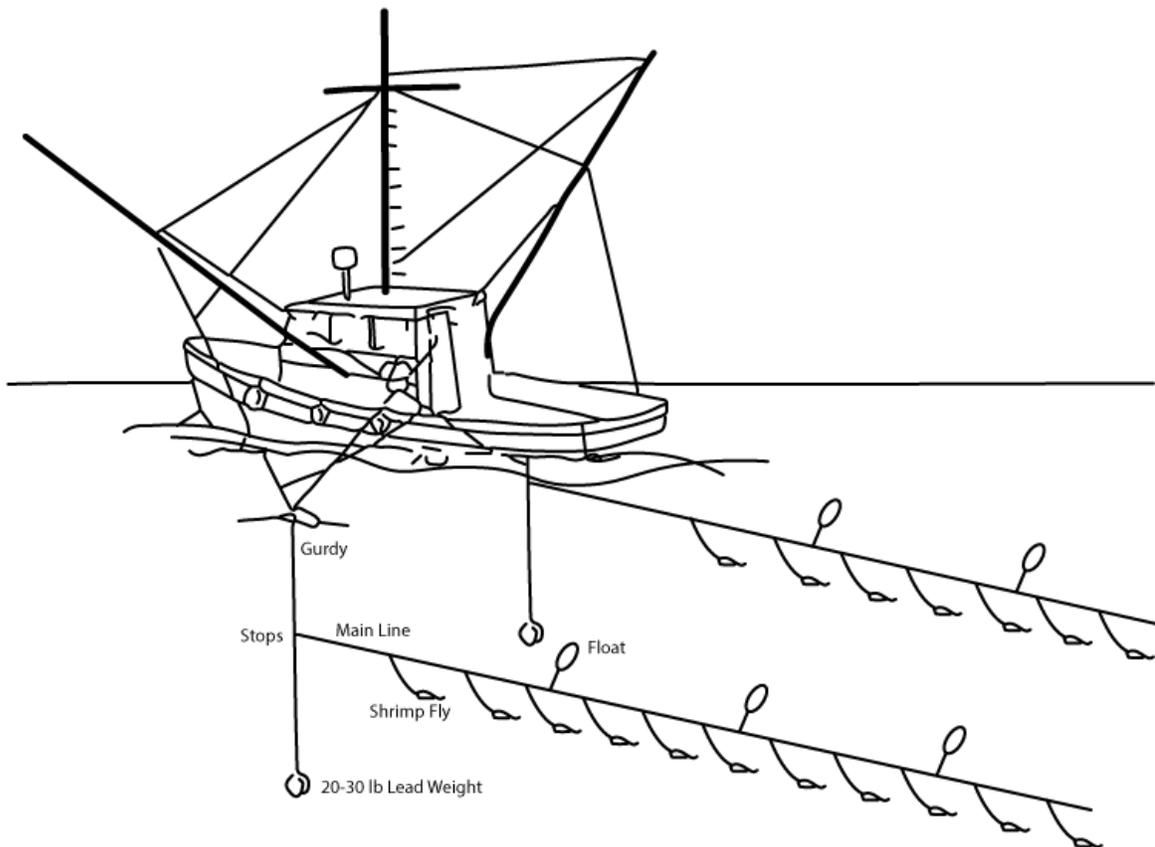
Given the potential to catch overfished species and when fishing in the RCA, the utmost caution will be taken with this experiment. The following measures are proposed and applicants are open to working with the PFMC, NMFS, and CDFG to implement others deemed necessary.

1. **Electronic monitoring** – 100% coverage. With the use of Flywire we will be able to track the catch of all fishermen. We will contract the video to be reviewed at a statistically significant rate to ensure accuracy and cost effectiveness. Rate to be determined by PFMC and science advisors.
2. **Caps** – Based on input from the PFMC and NMFS, each boat will have either a daily or trip limit/cap of canary and yelloweye. If this cap is reached, based on catch accounting reports verified by the observer, fishing will cease for that day or trip.
3. **Trip reports and catch accounting** – On a timeline agreeable to NMFS and CDFG, trip and cumulative catch reports will be provided after each trip (e.g., within 48 hours).
4. **Status and evaluation call before each trip** – Before each vessel departs on a trip, a cumulative catch accounting report (i.e., running total for the season) and evaluation of the trips taken thus far will be reviewed to determine if another trip can be made and to discuss lessons learned (e.g., float sizes, bait, etc.). If it is likely that the allocated

harvest cap would be exceeded in the upcoming trip, then all fishing under the EFP will cease for the season. Participants on each call would include the EFP participants and could include NMFS (SF & OLE), CDFG (Marine Region & Enforcement) and National Marine Sanctuaries Service.

5. **VMS and vessel marking** – Vessel required to have VMS, will call the West Coast Groundfish Declaration Line to report the trip. (This procedure should work for both the EFP and for future use of this gear type). Vessels participating in this EFP will also display a banner with “EFP Fishing” written in 2 foot high letters. Pelagic Data System VMS will also be utilized to track vessel fishing behavior and relay catch information to the fleet to flag areas of unwanted bycatch. This data will also help with spatial analysis.

Diagram



Signature

M. Alan Lovewell

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Alan Lovewell". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.