

Monterey Bay Regional Chilipepper Rockfish Preliminary EFP Report

EFP Holder: Real Good Fish, a Community Supported Fishery
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Council EFP approval in [June 2018](#) (two years starting January 2019)

Summary of Fishing Activity

Two fishermen made three EFP trips between May through October, 2019 (Table 1). In total, these trips yielded 2,310 pounds (lbs) of target species, with 0 lbs of discard and no catch of species of concern (yelloweye or cowcod). The most common species landed was chilipepper rockfish (1,445 lbs), followed by bocaccio rockfish (480 lbs), and widow rockfish (375 lbs; Table 2).

Table 1: Fishing activity for EFP between May - October 2019

| Trip # | F/V | Vessel ID | State Reg. # | Date of Trip | Landing Location |
|--------|---------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
| 1 | Sea Harvest 3 | ##### | ##### | 5/8/19 | Moss Landing |
| 2 | Grinder | ##### | ##### | 9/26/19 | Santa Cruz |
| 3 | Grinder | ##### | ##### | 10/7/19 | Santa Cruz |

Table 2: Pounds (lbs) landed and discards on each trip, and CPUE by trip (lbs/hook)

| Trip # | Chilipepper | Bocaccio | Widow | Vermillion | Discard | Total Landings | CPUE |
|------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|----------------|-------------|
| 1 | 1,170 | 390 | 371 | 4 | 0 | 1,935 | 0.6 |
| 2 | 269 | 5 | 4 | - | 0 | 278 | 0.3 |
| 3 | 6.4 | 85 | - | 6 | 0 | 97 | 0.2 |
| TOT | 1,445 | 480 | 375 | 10 | 0 | 2,310 | 0.49 |

Catch per unit effort (CPUE) varied considerably, mostly due to technical difficulties with the gear and other unexpected issues. The weighted average CPUE was 0.49lbs per hook.

Participation

The initial list of participants changed after the first few meetings as some fishermen decided not to pursue it for various reasons. We know there was significant interest because the project team held six fishermen meetings that were well attended to review project goals and solicit their input, interest, and feedback. However, a smaller group of fishermen who were relatively new to rockfish fishing ended up being the ones to fish. Participation was slow to start, partially due to obligations in other fisheries, specifically salmon, and some reluctance for fishermen to commit time and resources away from other activities towards testing new gear. The risk of catching one or two sensitive species and shutting down the whole EFP was significant concern for some.

Gear building

Given that more experienced flyline fishermen chose not to participate over the winter and some new/younger fishermen who did not have previous experience with the gear did, the project team had to invest more resources (time, organizational effort, funding) to help fishermen design and build sets of flyline gear. To date two sets of differing designs have been built and tested. One fishermen used an existing set of flyline gear (what we might call the 1980s set up).



Market activity



All of the fish landed (2,310 lbs) went to local markets, split between a local wholesaler, retailer and restaurant, and Real Good Fish. Real Good Fish sold 300lbs of chilipepper rockfish that landed on trip #1 to a seafood restaurant and retailer in San Francisco, and the feedback was extremely positive. The San Francisco retailer was excited to have new access to local, hook and line

rockfish, compared to trawl-caught rockfish from local boats in northern California, or hook and line rockfish from farther, southern ports like Santa Barbara. The positive feedback indicates the potential growth for a consistent hook and line rockfish market sourced from landings in northern and central California, especially at the price points observed thus far in this EFP (Table 3).

Table 3: Average ex-vessel price/lb for each species.

| Chilipepper | Bocaccio | Widow | Vermillion |
|-------------|----------|--------|------------|
| \$2.33 | \$2.25 | \$2.38 | \$2.38 |

Due to the nature of the gear and how the hooks catch in the mouths of the rockfish, the EFP fishermen reported that they were able to remove the hooks without harming the mouth of the fish. This resulted in a pristine looking product that we believe would be perfect for buyers looking for a whole fish preparation, and other premium markets.

EFP Monitoring activity

The fishermen were able to get human observers by contacting the West Coast Groundfish Observer Program (WCGOP); availability was not an issue. One fisherman was able to test out an electronic monitoring (EM) camera system aboard two trips. Currently two Shellcatch cameras are in use and three EFP vessels have mounting brackets installed with optional solar panels for additional power supply. The cameras are transferred to whichever vessel is taking a trip. Once the trip is complete, the fishermen returns the camera to the RGF office for uploading to a server where it can be viewed by the project team. We are working with Shellcatch to verify video

placement and data quality before moving toward the next phase of comparing video review to observer data to assess accuracy in discard estimates.



Conclusions

Participation was less than anticipated due to changes in fleet dynamics and priorities, which is largely a factor of other fishing opportunities and other personal or business decisions around investing time/resources in a new fishery that presents some level of risk. We are optimistic that more effort will occur in the next fishing year in between salmon and crab seasons, now that some fishermen have the gear built and understand how it performs best on the water, offering local fishermen additional activity and revenue to support their annual round. We appreciate the support of the Pacific Council and Advisory bodies and express our intent to continue this EFP into 2020.