

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
FINAL REPORT ON 2021-2022 EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) was issued a 2021-2022 Exempted Fishery Permit (EFP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service for the purpose of collecting fishery-dependent biological data for cowcod. Cowcod is a stock determined to be rebuilt, although retention in the non-trawl fishery remains prohibited, making the collection of biological samples more challenging. This is the final report for the 2021-2022 biennium.

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, EFP collection efforts did not commence until the summer of 2021 when participating vessels resumed more normal operations and CDFW was able to undertake EFP coordination and project administration activities. Four CPFV's participated during the initial year of the EFP and operated out of ports from Moss Landing (near Monterey, CA) south to Oceanside (north of San Diego, CA). Three of these vessels continued in 2022, along with five new CPFVs that joined the EFP in the spring of 2022. The eight participating vessels in 2022 operated out of ports south of 34° 27' N. lat., from Santa Barbara to Oceanside.

Over the term of the 2021-2022 EFP, nine specimens from the ports of Moss Landing and Marina Del Rey were collected. Information taken includes date, latitude/longitude, depth, fork length, weight, sex, maturity, and condition (fresh/frozen). CDFW has processed the specimens and is maintaining the otoliths in our data repository until arrangements are made with partnering agencies for ageing work to commence.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Although the 2021-2022 EFP cowcod specimens were few in number, collections have increased in 2023. It is CDFW's recommendation that this EFP continue in the 2025-26 biennium, and that consideration be given toward expanding the species for which collection activities are authorized.