

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON EXEMPTED FISHING
PERMITS FOR 2013-2014 FISHERIES

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviewed the revised the Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) application “Supporting a spatial analysis of the distribution and size of rebuilding stocks in the Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) through directed fishing surveys” (Agenda Item D.4.a, Attachment 3). The main goal of the proposed project is to synthesize fishery-dependent and fishery-independent information to generate spatial distribution maps of rebuilding stocks within the RCA, in order to help inform bycatch avoidance and increase fishing opportunity for healthy stocks.

The SSC first reviewed this EFP application at its March 2012 meeting, and suggested a number of issues to be addressed. At this meeting, Ms. Mary Gleason and Dr. Rick Starr presented an overview of a revision that was done in accordance with the SSC comments, and answered further questions regarding the application. The revised application addressed issues identified by the SSC at the March meeting to some degree. The application, however, is still lacking a detailed description of methods to be used for compiling species distribution maps.

The SSC supports an effort to build more information on spatial distribution and habitat association of rebuilding stocks, but is concerned with potential challenges in identifying areas of high, medium, and low catch rates of rebuilding stocks (“hot,” “medium,” and “cold” spots, as they were referred to in the application), given temporal variability in species occurrence, though it is less of a concern for yelloweye rockfish and cowcod, the most sedentary species out of those listed in the application. The SSC also suggests using results from camera and hook-and-line surveys (to be conducted as part of the proposed project) to not only “ground truth” information synthesized from different sources, but also to quantitatively evaluate predictive power of the species distribution maps, in order to help evaluate usefulness of the results for the Council management process.

PFMC
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