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Pacific Fishery Management Council
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Public Comment for the March 5-10, 2011 Council Meeting in Vancouver, WA:

I am a biologist and statistician living in Morro Bay, CA and I am concerned with preserving the California Central Coast fleet of small family owned fishing boats which contribute greatly to the economy and human ecology of my region, and to the food security of our nation. I am concerned by the possibility of small boats, in various fisheries, being displaced by larger boats which fish in a manner comparable to clearcut logging. By harvesting small spots here and there, the small boats allow for quicker recovery and open up mini territories in which nearby young fish may readily settle. Their effect is like selective logging which takes a few trees here and there, leaving the forest environment intact, complete with nearby seed trees.

This comment specifically targets ill advised regulatory actions and the quality of the data upon which such decisions are being made. For instance, consider the sablefish; according to the NOAA Fish Watch, females mature at 2.1 feet and 6.5 years of age; males mature at 1.9 feet and 5 years of age. It has a very long lifespan, potentially over 90 years, and high egg production. Although not classified as highly migratory, NOAA reports that some juveniles have been found to migrate over 2,000 miles in 6 or 7 years and that the adults are found on mud bottoms to depths of 9800 ft. This is far below where either commercial or sport gear can reach, and it is also beyond the reach of the presently used survey methods. So, a vast inaccessible part of its range adjoins the coastal fishing area and extends beyond the fishing grounds for this species and is likely to account for the majority of its biomass. Thus NOAA's and the Council's population and biomass estimates of this potentially very stable population are unsupported; the estimates are obviously much smaller than reality. Recruitment is just a swim away and this species appears to disperse.

Despite apparently limited and untimely data, last season the Council increased the sablefish quota far beyond what they have permitted before. Boats came here from far and wide within the tristate region. Now the Council is threatening to reduce it drastically below what it was before this chaos. In addition to the overall permitted take now being too small, some proposed daily limits are too small to pay for the fuel required for even our smallest boats to go out for sablefish. This fishery maintains the fishing families and boats during the off season for other fisheries. Therefore these actions threaten the survival of their small fishing businesses.

The numbers of sablefish do not fluctuate in such a manner that great increases and decreases in the allowable take make sense, as they would for salmon. Surely this confused regulatory activity was not an attempt to stimulate overfishing of this species, in our area in one season, while, all along, planning to essentially slam it closed the next. What kind of sustainable fishery regulation would that be? How can the family boats which are individual small businesses survive under such conditions?

Unfortunately sablefish is just one example of the need, across all fisheries involved, for more scientific input and less unjustifiable action against the small boat fleet. Perhaps the Council should put less effort into making so many adjustments and expend more effort on monitoring to see if and when adjustment is necessary.

The Council is neglecting to use the best available scientific information. For instance **many buyers are being allowed to submit the landing tickets long after they are legally due.** This is despite the fact that vessel operators are severely penalized for any lateness of any kind regarding paper work and reports required of them. **Timely reception and analysis of buyer's landing tickets would potentially allow the Council to have more adequate information with which to make timely regulatory decisions.**

Not enforcing the time requirement with respect to buyer's landing tickets violates the MSA mandated requirement of best available scientific information. It does so by failing to enforce the regulations and by failing to use the information that is already available, since it is required by the regulations to be available.

Finally I am concerned about the continuing use of Bayesian statistics for regulation. Fisheries involves many conflicting environmental and business interests. Sad to say, the latter are even sometimes disguised as the former. At any time when profits are to be made or when emotion is running high, as with environmental issues, it is difficult for people to avoid bias and even injustice. Analyses and models founded on Bayesian statistics invariably contain numerical values chosen by the practitioner when the needed data is not at hand. The temptation to insert guesses is even greater when the receipt and processing of data is months, if not years behind. It would be much better to use frequentist statistical analysis as much as possible, seeking further funding to achieve this.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L.E. MacCarter". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

L.E. (Mac) MacCarter, PhD

02/02/2011

----- Original Message -----

Subject:Recreational Rockfish Regulations for 2011 and 2012

Date:Tue, 14 Dec 2010 16:26:01 -0800

From:Tim <reelsteel@humboldt1.com>

To:pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

CC:JRSmith@co.humboldt.ca.us, Phil Glenn <celtic4@suddenlink.net>, Flatland@mcn.org, Tom & Mary Marking <tmmarking@sbcglobal.net>

Dear Sirs, I am a charter boat operator in Eureka Ca. I am concerned that the 2011 and 2012 regulations for California will not go into effect on January 1 because the PFMC has not completed their review. The new California rockfish regulations allow for a slightly longer season in parts of Northern California. This added season length will increase the number of trips that we can make next year. I am already seeing interest from customers. Depending on weather , the longer season should help the local charter boats see a revenue increase of 15 to 20%. It is very important to us to know what our season length is so that we can book trips during the Sportsman Shows in January and February. Since we don't know what the salmon season will be like, we need to know what will be open during the season. I have hope that the longer season and relaxed restrictions on ling cod will provide increased business opportunities for recreational fishing based businesses like mine. Thank you, Tim Klassen REEL STEEL SPORTFISHING Eureka Ca 707-499-5509