

DEMERSAL SHELF ROCKFISH STOCK ASSESSMENT
IN THE EASTERN GULF OF ALASKA:

A SEMI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT FOR
JANUARY 1 TO JUNE 30, 2000

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Introduction

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has immediate responsibility for management of demersal shelf rockfish under North Pacific Fisheries Management Council guidelines. The objective of this project is to continue a habitat-based method of estimating rockfish abundance as a means to improve rockfish management and to reduce the risk of over harvest in Southeast Alaska. This objective will be met through the use submersible-based surveys and improved technology. Stock assessment methods for this assemblage are made based on an estimation of rockfish density per unit of habitat and an area estimate of rockfish habitat.

Four goals were scheduled for the January 1 through June 30, 2000 period: (1) complete a longline survey of the Fairweather Grounds; (2) apply GIS applications with mapping data, survey data, and fishery data; (3) participate in the Western Groundfish Conference; and (4) develop a work plan and grant applications for FY 2001.

Goal 1: Complete a longline survey of the Fairweather Grounds.

Work Accomplishments

The fishing vessel *Ida June* was chartered to set longline gear and collect yelloweye rockfish specimens from permanent survey sets. We have a time series of data from this vessel that has allowed us to track CPUE using the same equipment, exact location, and method of operation to minimize variance. Yelloweye were subsampled for age, length, sex, and maturity. All lingcod caught were also sampled for sex, length, maturity, and otoliths. We set 7 of our permanent survey stations and 3 more sets that were selected using the sidescan sonar mosaic from the Fairweather Grounds. Data from the survey is currently being entered into the database. These data will be analyzed and results detailed in the final report.

A manuscript for review by Marine Geology Journal, detailing our Edgecumbe habitat study, has been finalized.

Goal 2: Application of GIS mapping data, survey data, and fishery data.

Work Accomplishments

Development of GIS applications is ongoing. This work involves development of maps from the sidescan sonar data, from survey data, and from commercial fishery harvest locations, which serve as indicators of rocky habitat.

Goal 3: Participate in the Western Groundfish Conference.

Work Accomplishments

Several ADF&G staff participated in the 11th Western Groundfish Conference held April of 2000 in Sitka, Alaska. An abstract and poster entitled "A large rockfish habitat on Fairweather Ground, SE Alaska, 2000" was presented by ADF&G staff members Victoria M. O'Connell and Cleo Brylinsky along

with H. G. Greene, W. W. Wakefield, and J. Bizzaro. This poster presentation detailed the submersible and sidescan surveys we have conducted on Fairweather Ground and compared commercial fishing CPUE data with line transect densities and habitat characteristics.

Goal 4: Develop a work plan and grant applications for FY 2001.

The workplan and budget requests were completed for the 2001 grant proposal in order to continue our DSR stock assessment work.

Publications and Presentations

O'Connell, V. M., D. Carlile, and C. Brylinsky. 2000. Summary of changes in the 2000 demersal shelf rockfish stock assessment. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries. RIR 1J00-15. 36 pp.

Greene, H. G., V. M. O'Connell, W. W. Wakefield, C. Brylinsky, and J. Bizzaro. A large rockfish habitat on Fairweather Ground, SE Alaska. 2000. Eleventh Western Groundfish Conference Abstracts. 124 pp.

O'Connell, V., M. Ruccio, D. Urban, C. Trowbridge, T. Brookover, M. Cartwright, C. Brylinsky, S. Myers, K. Munk, B. Frenette, B. Piorkowski, B. Bechtol, and R. Bentz. 2000. State of Alaska Groundfish Fisheries Associated Investigations in 1999. Prepared for the Forty First Annual Meeting of the Technical Sub-committee of the Canada-United States Groundfish Committee. Nanaimo, B. C.

Expenditures

By the end of the reporting period the full project budget was expended, and no line item totals differed by more than 10% of the proposed amounts. During the reporting period the following expenditures have been paid: \$7,992 in personnel costs (including sea duty), \$2,197 in travel costs, \$77,222 in contractual fees including vessels charters, and \$1,093 in supplies.

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