

SEMIANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
DEMERSAL SHELF ROCKFISH STOCK ASSESSMENT
IN THE EASTERN GULF OF ALASKA
JULY 1, 2000 – DECEMBER 31, 2000
NOAA Award: NA07FN0076



Submitted to:

Program Office
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
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Division of Commercial Fisheries

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A. Project Identifiers

1. NOAA Award NA07FN0076
2. Grantee: Alaska Department of Fish and Game
3. Principal Investigator: Victoria O'Connell
4. Project Title: Demersal Shelf Rockfish Stock Assessment in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska
5. Funding: Federal: \$237,500 Match: \$0
6. Award Period: July 1, 2000 – June 30, 2001
7. Period Covered by this Report: July 1, 2000 – December 31, 2000

B. Project Summary

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 overharvest. The focus this year is to survey a portion of seafloor using a multibeam echosounder in the important commercial fishing grounds offshore of Prince of Wales Island, Southeast Alaska. This information will allow improvements in estimates of rockfish biomass.

C. Summary of Progress and Results

- 1) Tasks scheduled for this period.
Contract development for a multibeam echosounder survey was scheduled for this period. Also scheduled for this period was the survey and creation of a mosaic bathymetric map of the seafloor.

Activities.

A bid packet was developed for securing a contract for a multibeam echosounder survey of the Southern Southeast Outside Section of southeast Alaska in August 2000. The contract was to be jointly funded with the US Geological Survey (USGS), which was interested in conducting a multibeam survey in Glacier Bay. The purpose of joint contracting was to save substantially on mobilization costs for ADF&G and USGS.

The annual stock assessment for Demersal Shelf Rockfish was revised, and included an updated discussion of fishery indicators. Yelloweye average weight and standard error data were updated using 1999 port samples, and new age data from the 1998 and 1999 fishery were included.

Staff presented a talk entitled "Demersal Shelf Rockfish: Can a slow growing, long-lived marine species complex be managed for sustainability?" at the American Fisheries Society, Alaska Chapter Annual Meeting, Fairbanks, AK.

Staff also presented research results as co-authors on a paper entitled "Mapping and Classification of Deep Seafloor Habitats" presented at the Annual Science Conference in Brugges, Belgium.

2) Changes.

The survey and the other tasks dependent on the survey were rescheduled to the second half of the contract year. This was made necessary due to difficulties in finalizing the joint funding from the USGS for their portion of the contract (see below).

3) Results. Publications and presentations:

O'Connell, V. M., D. Carlile, and C. Brylinsky. 2001. Demersal Shelf Rockfish Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Report for 2001. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries. RIR 1J00-36. 42 pp.

O'Connell, V. and M. Cartwright. 2000. Demersal Shelf Rockfish: Can a slow growing, long-lived marine species complex be managed for sustainability. Abstract American Fisheries Society, Alaska Chapter Annual Meeting. Fairbanks, AK.

Greene, H. G., M. M. Yoklavich, V. M. O'Connell, R. M. Starr, W. W. Wakefield, C. K. Brylinsky, J. J. Bizzarro, and G. M. Cailliet. Mapping and classification of deep seafloor habitats. 2000. ICES Annual Science Conference. 11 pp.

D. Problems

- 1) There were unexpected delays in finalizing the USGS portion of the joint survey contract. For this reason, the contract was not issued for survey completion in August, 2000. The consequence of this failure was to delay the survey, but to still have it completed in the contract year. Final mapping products will not be available until September 2001 however these data will be included in the 2002 stock assessment for DSR. There are not expected to be any consequences on the quality of the research results due to the delay.
- 2) Contracting for the survey was rescheduled to be completed in the second half of the project year, with the survey to be completed in May, 2001, and most other tasks by end of June, 2001. The final mapping product will not be available until September, 2001.
- 3) There were no special problems associated with budgeted expenditures.

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