PERFORMANCE REPORT

STATE: Alaska **GRANT NO.:** F-10-33

GRANT TITLE: Sport Fish Investigations in Alaska

PERIOD COVERED: July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018

STUDY NO. AND TITLE: B-2-1 Assessment of the Recreational Groundfish Fishery in Southcentral Alaska

STUDY OBJECTIVES:

1. Estimate the species composition of rockfishes landed at Kodiak, Homer, Seward, Whittier, and Valdez;
2. Estimate the age, length, and sex composition of the principal rockfish species landed at Kodiak, Homer, Seward, Whittier, and Valdez;
3. Estimate the age, length, and sex composition of lingcod landed at Kodiak, Homer, Seward, Whittier, and Valdez; and
4. Estimate the geographic distribution of bottom fishing effort and harvest for each user group from Kodiak, Homer, Seward, Whittier, and Valdez.

RESULTS/DISCUSSIONS:

All objectives, with the exception of lingcod aging, were addressed during the contract period, and all data were collected following procedures specified in the operational plan. Sampling at various ports took place between July 1 and early September 2017. Likewise, sampling took place between mid May and June 30 of 2018. The results presented in this report are for the 2017 field season (May – September).

Objective 1: Three thousand four hundred and forty seven (3,447) rockfish of thirteen species were sampled for length, sex, and age. Rockfish weights were collected opportunistically as time permitted. Black and yelloweye rockfish were the most common species sampled at each port. Black rockfish comprised 55-75% of the samples among ports and yelloweye rockfish comprised 2-24% of the samples among ports. Yelloweye rockfish comprised less than 10% of samples in each port except Whittier, where they comprised 25%.

Objective 2: Ages have been assigned to all readable otoliths from black (2,248) and yelloweye (366) rockfish. Less common rockfish species such as dark, dusky, quillback, and copper rockfish were aged as time permitted. Black rockfish ages ranged from 3 to 45 years (mean 16±9 years). Yelloweye rockfish ages ranged from 5 to 84 years (mean 31±12 years). Length measurements were obtained from 3,457 rockfish, with black rockfish lengths ranging from 25-68cm (mean 48.7±6.1cm) and yelloweye rockfish lengths ranging from 28-90 cm (56.7±9.0cm). Sex ratios among ports for black and yelloweye rockfish were 33-66% female and 29-61% female, respectively.

Objective 3: Biological data were collected from a sample of 387 lingcod. Charter anglers accounted for 82% of the sample. Age data for lingcod will be unavailable

until the spring of 2019 due to transition in project personnel and training requirements. Length measurements were obtained from 385 lingcod. Lengths of harvested fish ranged from 44 to 168 cm. All regulatory areas but Kodiak are constrained by an 89 cm (35 inch) minimum size limit. In areas with a size limit, 5% of the lingcod sampled were under the minimum size limit, with 43% of the undersized lingcod being males.

Objective 4: Data on the geographic distribution of effort and harvest were collected from a sample of 2,222 vessel-trip interviews representing 11,525 angler-days of effort. Interviewed anglers harvested 10,269 rockfish and 652 lingcod. Preliminary analyses of effort and harvest by stat area and user group have been completed but they are more meaningful in the context of historical changes. Spatial effort and harvest data may be useful for evaluating regulatory proposals and stock assessments.

FINAL REPORT STATUS:

This performance report is the final report for these project objectives.

Objectives 1, 2, and 4; Rockfish data from 2017 will be presented in an ADF&G Fishery Data Series Report in fall of 2018. Objective 3 and 4; Lingcod data through 2017 will be presented in an ADF&G Fishery Data Series Report in the winter of 2018. Effort and harvest distribution estimates for rockfish and lingcod will be incorporated into the reports listed above.

PREPARED BY: Martin Schuster **DATE**: August 06, 2018