# FY 2012-2013
# Annual Accounting for the Nearshore Fishery Permit Fund from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife

## October 25, 2013


# FY 2012 – 2013 Annual Accounting from the Department of Fish and Wildlife of the Deposits into, and Expenditures from, the Fish and Game Preservation Fund, as Related to the Revenues Generated Pursuant to Section 8587, Fish and Game Code, as required by Section 8589.7, Fish and Game Code

The Nearshore Fisheries Management Act, passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor during the 1998 legislative session, required that a permit be established for commercial fishermen who take, possess, or land nearshore fish stocks. In 2003, the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) expanded this permit program into nine permits, including area permits, for effective regional management within the State. The annual fees for these permits ranged from $102.00 to $681.00 in 2012, and pursuant to Section 8589.7(a), were deposited into the Fish and Game Preservation Fund (Fund) to implement the Nearshore Fisheries Management Plan (NFMP). On June 30, 2012, the Fund had a remaining balance of $328,000**.** During fiscal year 2012-2013 (July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013), a total of $151,000 was deposited into the Fund. Expenditures and encumbrances during the fiscal year were $253,000 and were used to fund two Marine Region staff positions needed to assess, monitor and manage nearshore fish populations important to California's recreational and commercial state fisheries. The Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) and Commission use population assessments to actively manage nearshore fisheries within State waters. On June 30, 2013, the Fund had a remaining balance of $226,000**.**

Pursuant to Section 8589.7(b) the Department must maintain internal accounts that ensure these fees are disbursed only for the following purposes:

1. For research, including field work and statistical modeling, and management of nearshore fish stocks and nearshore habitat;

2. For supplementary funding of allocations for the enforcement of statutes and regulations applicable to nearshore fish stocks, including, but not limited to, the acquisition of special equipment and the production and dissemination of printed material, such as pamphlets, booklets, and posters aimed at compliance with the nearshore fishing regulations; and,

3. For the direction of volunteer groups assisting with nearshore fish stocks and nearshore habitat management, for presentations of related matters at scientific conferences and educational institutions, and for publication of related material.

The following primary activities were completed during the 2012-2013 fiscal year:

Inseason monitoring of commercial fisheries continued on a regular basis for nearshore species in the NFMP (cabezon, California scorpionfish, California sheephead, kelp and rock greenlings, monkeyface prickleback, and black, black-and-yellow, blue, brown,

calico, China, copper, gopher, grass, kelp, olive, quillback and treefish rockfishes). Inseason adjustments were analyzed as necessary to increase opportunities where possible or to prevent exceeding harvest limits. One nearshore trip limit increase was submitted by the commercial industry and analyzed by staff. However, because of the projected increase to canary rockfish[1] bycatch associated with California's nearshore fishery, the request was denied. Harvests remained within annual catch limits for recreational and commercial fisheries for all monitored nearshore species.

Staff completed revisions to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP). The final plan was adopted at the Council's April 2013 meeting and provides guidance for jointly managed fisheries occurring along the entire U.S. west coast and identified in federal fishery management plans, including those in the nearshore ecosystem. It is intended to help inform fishery managers how best to ensure that marine ecosystems are sustainably managed and the needs of fishery participants and communities are considered when making management decisions. Since 16 of the 19 NFMP species are also included in the federal Pacific coast groundfish fishery management plan, the FEP is expected to benefit sustainable management of NFMP species and the fisheries they support.

Staff continued collaborative work with NOAA Fisheries staff to evaluate the historical patterns of California fisheries, including their development, exploitation, and habitat usage in nearshore waters. These efforts will contribute to the improvement of stock assessments for groundfish stocks in California waters, including NFMP species, by testing assumptions made in the assessment models. A publication pertaining to this work was also completed: *Miller, R.; J. Field, J. Santora, I. Schroeder, D. Huff, M. Key, D. Pearson, A. MacCall, (Aug. 2013 in review) "A spatially distinct history of the development of California Groundfish Fisheries." Fish and Fisheries Journal.* Spatial displays are being developed that include historical catches to inform management decisions related to area closures (e.g. rockfish conservation areas).

Investigations continued on best methods for assessing nearshore stocks with limited information (those without sufficient information for traditional age-based stock assessments). In April 2013, a Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel was held for Data-Moderate Assessments in Santa Cruz, CA. Stock status of the following NFMP species was evaluated during the review: brown rockfish, China rockfish and copper rockfish. Staff helped gather historical commercial passenger fishing vessel (CPFV) data to calculate catch per unit effort (CPUE) estimates to use as a relative index of abundance in these data-moderate assessments. Other staff participated in the STAR panel as reviewers of the assessments. Currently, catch and effort information is aggregated at a site and trip level; staff is coordinating with NOAA Fisheries to digitize more specific location information from historic CPFV surveys for future use in nearshore species management and assessment.

Staff reviewed Scientific Collecting Permit (SCP) applications including those for which collecting activities included nearshore species. The disposition of species collected under the authority of a SCP can include capture and release on site, display at public aquariums or educational institutions, use as educational aids in classrooms, sacrifice

[1] an overfished groundfish species that constrains other fisheries

for environmental quality monitoring, and various studies conducted by academia. Some SCPs included requests for take of nearshore species related to planned research in or near marine protected areas to help understand if or how these areas are a benefit to nearshore species. Staff reviewed SCP requests to ensure that planned research is in line with the goals and objectives of the NFMP.

The Department anticipates that management of the nearshore fishery will require the expenditure of monies for additional research on nearshore stocks and habitats during the 2013-2014 and subsequent fiscal years.