

**Testimony of Mike McCorkle to the California Fish and Game Commission on  
December 11, 2013 in San Diego, California**

I'm here today on behalf of the Southern California Trawlers Association and we have a problem. When the live fish nearshore fishery started up, it was basically a hook and line fishery. And it caught big real fast and there were some concerns that there could be some overfishing. So the Department and the Commission put together a limited access permit called "nearshore bycatch permit" and that permit was only available to gillnetters and non-groundfish trawlers--which is the category that our association fishes in. To obtain that permit you had to land a certain amount of pounds of certain groundfish to get the permit. Some of our fishermen in our group didn't do that because basically the only fish we caught was sculpin. And at that time, sculpin was kind of on the... Like the recreational fishery was a few months a year, was closed down. They weren't too sure about sculpin. So a lot of our fishermen and some of the gillnetters couldn't get that permit because they didn't land a lot of sculpin because actually where gillnets fish and we fish is in the mud. The sculpin live in the rocks but they come out into the mud at certain times of year and we do catch them. So over the years we developed a really good [unintelligible] market for them.

What's happened is that when that permit came up to be implemented by the Commission, I was there and I asked that this permit should be transferrable. "Oh no, it can't be transferable", Traci Bishop at that time, she said, "We can't transfer it. We have to get the numbers down before, but then we'll transfer it." I'd say the numbers are down. I'd say myself and maybe one other person in Santa Barbara has one of those permits. The rest of the boats don't. So what they're doing is they're throwing these fish back, they're all alive, every day.

So what's the answer? To make the permit transferable, so that I have a transferable permit? It doesn't solve the problem for other fishermen. I talked to Marci about this about three years ago and we came up with some ideas. Why not give an individual quota to the fisherman, do away with the permit and just have the fisherman ....We're allowed ... With the permit, I'm allowed so many pounds a month or so many pounds every two months of sculpin. Now, since then, there's been a stock assessment on sculpin come out and they found out it's a lot bigger and it's in good condition. The sport fishermen are fishing 12 months a year on five fish a day no matter how many people go on the boat, no limit on how many people fish, and we're over there throwing a few fish over every day which could add to our income.

So what I'm asking the Commission (and the Department) is to help us work this out. We'd be glad to work with the Department on this and I think a good idea would be to do away with that permit and just come out with a monthly/weekly catch limit.