

WIDOW ROCKFISH WORKSHOP: Introduction

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INTRODUCTION

This workshop was organized because of the increase between 1978 and 1980 in coastwide landings of widow rockfish, from less than 1,000 mt to more than 20,000 mt, and because of scientists' concern with the lack of knowledge both of the fishery and biology of the species. Most scientists active in research on Pacific groundfish, as well as some members of the fishing industry and fishery managers, attended the workshop.

These proceedings contain the report of the workshop discussion panel, status reports on California, Oregon, and Washington fisheries through 1980, and a collection of seven papers presented at the workshop. The status reports provide an historical perspective of the development of an important fishery. The papers present a fairly complete survey of biological knowledge of widow rockfish, economic status of the fishery, and fishery-independent methods for estimation of abundance. The papers also contain some information developed after the workshop.

Since the workshop, the fishery has matured. Largest landings were made in 1981, when more than 28,000 mt were landed. Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) is estimated to be slightly less than 10,000 mt, and the stock appeared to be at about the MSY level in 1985. The Pacific Fishery Management Council and National Marine Fisheries Service have implemented regulations that have maintained landings since 1983 at approximately the maximum sustainable yield level. Fishery-dependent stock assessments are being made on an annual basis for the Pacific Fishery Management Council. While these assessments are considered to be the best possible with available data, scientists responsible for the assessment have chosen to delay their publication in the formal scientific literature until more data are obtained. However, the stock assessment reports are available from the Pacific Fishery Management Council.

In addition to the papers in this collection, three papers have been published on widow rockfish since 1980. Boehlert, Barss, and Lamberson (1982) estimate fecundity of the species off Oregon; Gunderson (1984) describes the fishery and management actions; and Laroche and Richardson (1981) describe the morphology and distribution of juvenile widow rockfish off Oregon.

During the past decade, the fishery for widow rockfish has developed from a minor fishery to one of the more important on the Pacific Coast. Our knowledge of the biology and dynamics of the species has progressed from minimal to relatively extensive for a groundfish species. It is our intention in preparing this collection of papers to make this knowledge readily available to the scientific community.

CITATIONS

- BOEHLERT, G., W. BARSS, and P. LAMBERSON.
1982. Fecundity of the widow rockfish, *Sebastes entomelas*, off the coast of Oregon. Fish. Bull., U.S. 80:881-884.
- GUNDERSON, D. R.
1984. The great widow rockfish hunt of 1980-1982. N. Am. J. Fish. Manage. 4:465-468.
- LAROCHE, W., and S. RICHARDSON.
1981. Development of larvae and juveniles of the rockfishes *Sebastes entomelas* and *S. zacentrus* (Family Scorpaenidae) and occurrence off Oregon, with notes on head spines of *S. mystinus*, *S. flavidus* and *S. melanops*. Fish. Bull., U.S. 79:231-257.