(SCAITE LOGO)

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF ICHTHYOLOGICAL TAXONOMISTS AND ECOLOGISTS

12 December 2011, CMA

Attendance: Julianne Passarelli, Alfonso Montiel (CMA); Bill Power, Fred Stern, Terra Duvall, Chase McDonald, Tom Parker (LACSD); Mike Mengel (OCSD); Jim Rounds, Curtis Cash (CLA - Hyperion); Robin Gartman (CSD); Dario Diehl (SCCWRP); Edward Basmadjian (SAIC/Weston); Eric Miller (MBC); Bob Brantley (retired); Don Buth (UCLA); Kim Anthony (SCE); Michael Farris, Thomas Tiullan (CSULB); Milton Love (UCSB).

Meeting Summary:

Dr. Juli Passarelli opened the meeting by introducing the guest speaker, Dr. Milton Love from UCSB, who gave a presentation on rockfishes and oil platforms.

Milton discussed how he got started with the oil platforms project, a cold call from MMS (now BOEMRE) with money for research, and what he has learned over the last 15-20 years. One of the main goals of the studies was to look at what to do with the local offshore oil platforms after they were no longer in use. Should they be left alone, cut some depth below the waterline, tipped over, moved or completely removed (by blasting). Much of his research has involved the use of Scuba diving and the use of the two-person Delta submarine. The submarine has been used to dive on all but the shallowest parts of the platforms. Fish abundance and species diversity have been studied with the submarine. All of the platforms have different fish assemblages but there are some general trends. The surface of the platform to within a meter or so off the bottom is considered a midwater habitat. This area also serves as a nursery for rockfish with often up to 400,000 young of the year on a single platform. It is also usually more diverse and more densely populated with rockfish then natural reefs of the same depth. The area near the bottom of the platform is composed of two different habitats, the bottom and the shell mound. The bottom is right around the platform itself and up to about 1 meter up. This area also shows a greater diversity and density of fish than natural reefs. The shell mound is the bottom area that is covered in shells and is perhaps several meters or more away from the platform jacket. This area is often up to 5 feet thick with few areas for protection. Only a few species of fish are found in this area, often half banded rockfish and California scorpionfish.

Generally rockfish settle on a platform due to its greater vertical relief versus a natural relief. However using current modeling it seems that up to 70% of the juvenile rockfish on a platform would have died if they had not settled on the platform. Also the platforms often contain a large

percentage of the know stock of certain species (i.e. in 2003, 20% of the boccacio stock was found on six platforms).

What happens to the fish that are on the platforms over time was another main question of the study.

- Do the fish all die after a short period of time?
- Is their growth stunted?
- Would they have settled on a natural reef if not for the platform?
- Do they leave the platform and then die?
- Are they polluted with petroleum products?

The answer to these questions was no. Some of the platforms act as marine reserves due to the lack of recreational fishing around them. There has been a question about platforms being areas of production (good thing) or areas of aggregation (not so good thing). From Milton's studies it seems that they are areas of productions, although some platforms act as both a producer and an aggregator depending on the species.

After lunch the meeting continued with SCAITE business and announcements.

1. SCAITE logo:

Several ideas have been submitted to Juli. She will send them out to members for a vote.

2. SCAITE website:

No progress on this front, although the web address, Scaite.org, has been purchased.

Update of SCCWRP and POTW fish collections: The fish collection is in the process of being packed up and will be removed shortly. It will hopefully make its way to either LACMNH or to CMA.

Redoing and updating Miller and Lea "Guide to the coastal marine fishes of California": Juli and Milton are in the process of looking into what is required to update the guide, including looking for potential funding sources and copyright problems. Milton explained some of what was involved in the publishing of his latest book and how that experience could help with the publication of an update guide.

There was also some discussion of having a practical workshop to review commonly encountered and misidentified fish species from past Bight trawl surveys. This topic had been suggested after a recent Bight Coastal Ecology meeting where the Bight Trawl Chapter was discussed. It was decided that Bill Power would contact Ken Schiff regarding the parameters and timing of this type of a meeting.