



**NOAA**  
**FISHERIES**

# Cooperative Research Overview and NOAA's Cooperative Research Working Group

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# Outline

- General principles of Cooperative Research
- NOAA's Cooperative Research Working Group
  - Mission
  - Operations
  - Funding history
- Establishing research priorities
- A couple of examples
- Challenges
- Upcoming funding opportunities

# Establishing a Common Understanding

## Cooperative Research:

*... a scientific activity involving two or more partners that gain more collectively than separately in the pursuit of a shared research goal*



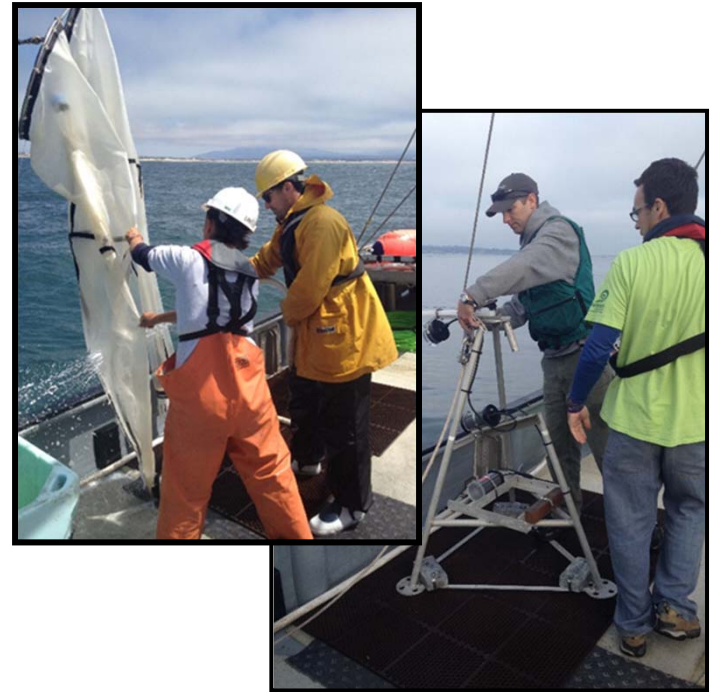
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## Broad Scope of Cooperative Activities

- Lesser stakeholder involvement (e.g., fishers keeping logbooks)
- Research designed and conducted by fishery scientists using commercial or recreational fishing vessels (enabling fishers to become involved in collecting data, depending on the interests and needs of the fishers)
- Greater involvement where stakeholders are included in all phases of the research program

# The Ideal Cooperative Research Project

- Involves all parties in all stages of the research:
  - Proposal development
  - Study/Gear design
  - Scheduling
  - Data collection
  - Data analysis
  - Communication of results
- Leverages broad range of expertise
- Leverages staff and funding
- Results adopted with little delay into assessments and/or management
- Builds greater confidence, trust and respect



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# NOAA's National Cooperative Research Working Group (CRWG)

Established by NOAA Leadership in 2001 to meet requirement for a cooperative research program as authorized under section 318 of the MS(R)A

Cooperative Research can be used to:

- increase the precision and expand the scope of resource surveys
- provide supplemental information about fishing operations
- use the knowledge gained from fishing to help design and implement research
- build mutual understanding and respect among scientists and fishing people



## Priority Areas (from the MSRA)

- Collecting data to improve, supplement, or enhance stock assessments, including the use of fishing vessels or acoustic or other marine technology
- Assessing the amount and type of bycatch or post-release mortality occurring in a fishery
- Conducting conservation engineering projects designed to reduce bycatch, including avoidance of post-release mortality, reduction of bycatch in high seas fisheries, and transfer of such fishing technologies to other nations
- Identifying habitat areas of particular concern as well as conducting projects relevant to the conservation of habitat
- Collecting and compiling economic and social data
- Conducting research on deep sea corals and related species, and on survey methods

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# CRWG Operations

14 members include NOAA employees from the 6 Science Centers and their associated Regional Offices, BREP, HMS, Protected Species, and Habitat Conservation Offices plus 1 National Coordinator

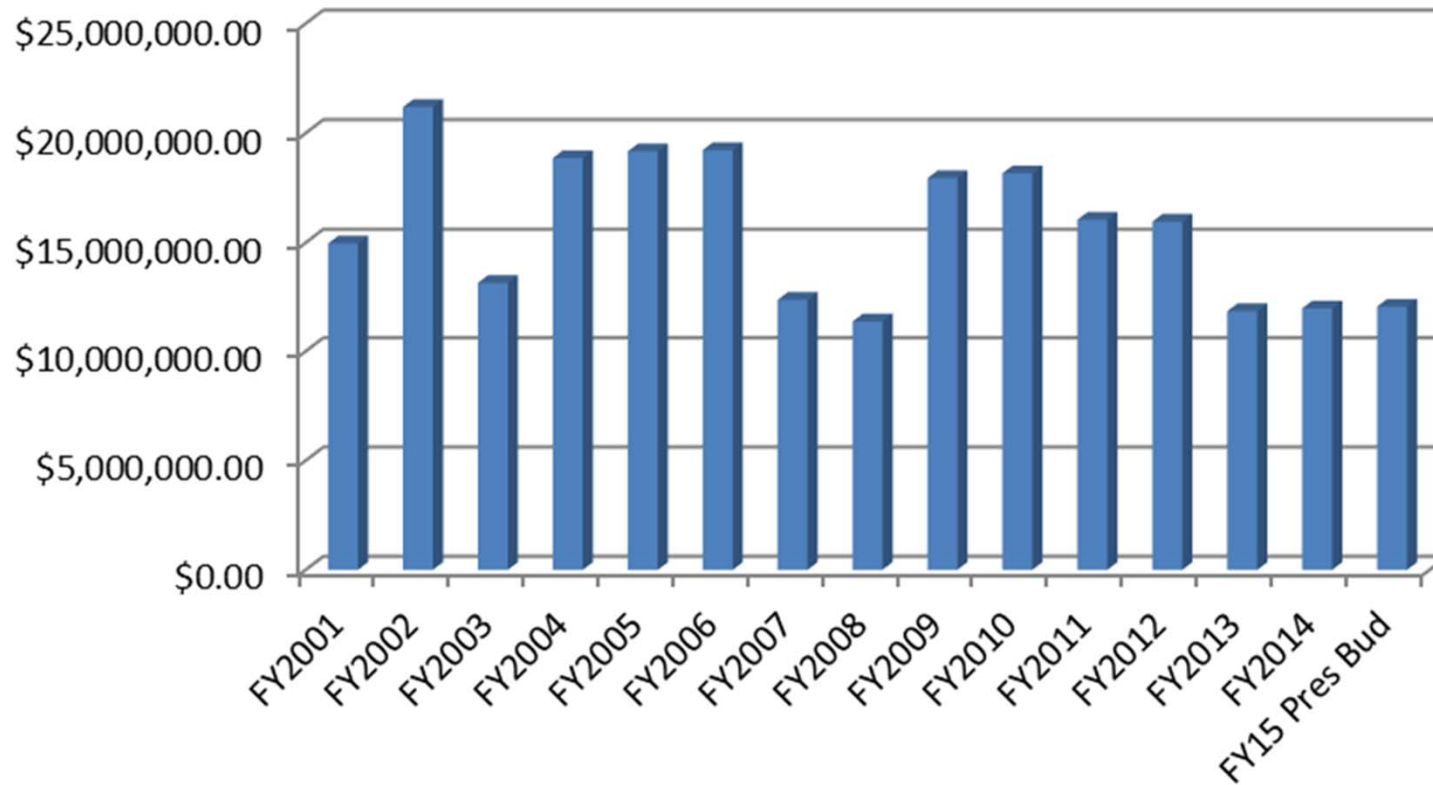
Responsibilities include

- Providing national coordination and oversight
- Developing funding allocations including coordination a competitive award process
- Coordinating policy development
- Enhancing communication
- Conducting outreach activities

One annual meeting (recently rotated among Science Centers) and ongoing intercessional work

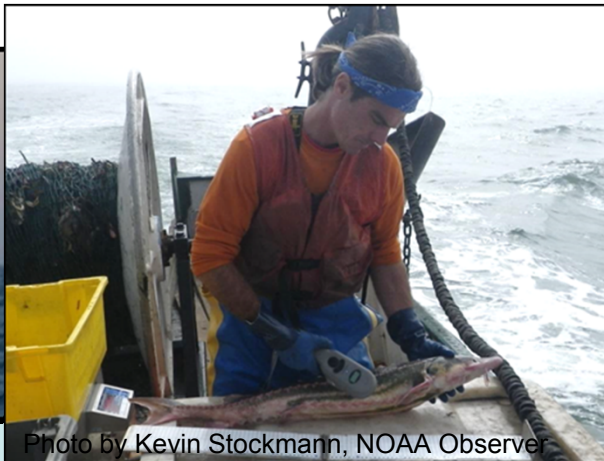


## Cooperative Research Funding History



# Establishing Priorities

- Region-specific
- Address stakeholder needs and requests
- Address a research or management priority identified by the Councils or assessment teams
- Fall within Science Center strategic plan
- Linkage with the MSRA priority needs



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Photo by Kevin Stockmann, NOAA Observer

# Sablefish Logbook Program (2002-present)

## Problem:

- Survey data alone may not fully capture relative sablefish abundance between areas

## Partners:

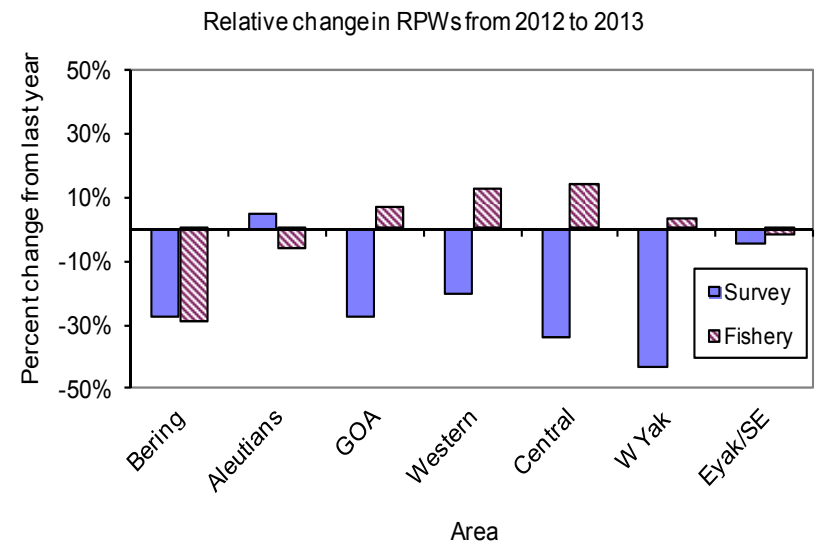
- Alaska Longline Fishermen's Assn., NMFS Auke Bay Lab, Petersburg Vessel Owners Assn., International Pacific Halibut Commission & volunteer fishermen

## Approach:

- Cooperative effort to collect logbook data to improve apportionment formula.

## Outcomes:

- Sablefish apportionment formula was revised to include both survey and logbook data; improved catch/effort data for assessment



# Spatial Analysis of the Distribution and Size of Rebuilding Stocks in the Rockfish Conservation Area through Directed Fishing Surveys

## Problem:

- Effectiveness of Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs) on rebuilding stocks unknown

## Partners:

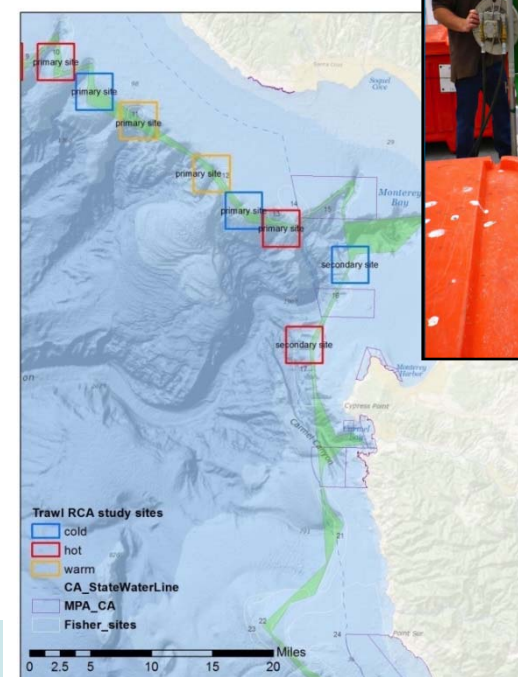
- NMFS SWFSC, Commercial fishermen in Morro Bay, Port San Luis, and Monterey, Nature Conservancy and others

## Approach:

- PFMC approved EFP to use vertical hook and line in the RCAs; catch rates compared with visual surveys and predictive models to determine hotspots and coldspots for stocks

## Outcomes (2013):

- Over 1100 fish (>4000 lbs) caught, most from healthy stocks; catch of highly constraining stocks low or zero; study continuing in 2014



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# Challenges

- Industry interest and involvement varies across regions
- Limited staff time for analysis and synthesis delays dissemination of results
- The need to fund core research and surveys with limited budgets draws some focus away from innovative projects
- Some projects use fishing platforms to achieve research objectives with limited stakeholder involvement



# Upcoming Funding Opportunities

- CRWG Competitive *Internal* Call for Proposals – \$1.5M
- Saltonstall-Kennedy (S-K) Program – anticipated greater than \$15M
  - ...to assist persons in carrying out research and development projects addressed to any aspect of United States fisheries, including, but not limited to, harvesting, processing, marketing, and associated infrastructures
- Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program (BREP) – \$2.5M
  - ...for non-Federal researchers working with U.S. fishermen to develop technological devices and other conservation engineering changes designed to minimize bycatch, seabird interactions, bycatch mortality and post-release mortality in federally managed fisheries

A high-action photograph of a large shark, likely a Great White, breaching the ocean's surface. The shark is captured mid-leap, with its body arched and its head and front fins visible above the water. A massive splash of white water and foam surrounds the point of exit from the water. The water is a deep, vibrant blue. The word "Questions?" is superimposed in white, bold, sans-serif font over the upper right portion of the image.

# Questions?



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