

Title: **Characterization of the California Live Bait Fishery**

Authors: James Hilger, NOAA NMFS Southwest Fishery Science Center - La Jolla (USA)

Abstract: Conservation and management of North American West Coast fisheries encompass a broad array of issues including the economic, spatial, and temporal relations between the coastal pelagic species live bait fishery and the highly migratory species recreational fishery. For the better part the century, the live bait fishery has supplied live bait to the commercial passenger fishing vessel (CPFV) fleet and private recreational anglers. Live bait consists primarily of small coastal pelagic species such as sardine, anchovy, and squid. The use of live bait in the recreational targeting of high value HMS species, such as albacore tuna, yellowtail tuna, bluefin tuna, marlin, and dolphin fish and the established nature of the live bait fishery's infrastructure differentiate the Southern California saltwater recreational fishery from other fisheries. Given its unique position on the interface between the coastal pelagic and highly migratory species fisheries, the live bait fishery finds itself at the nexus of conservation and management issues between both fisheries. Resource managers and industry have expressed interest in increasing the understanding and documentation of the fleet and in developing economic measures of the fleet's value and its contribution to the Southern California recreational fishery. This presentation lays the groundwork for economic research through the presentation of brief history and empirical characterization of the live bait fleet and its role in the recreational fishery.