A case study in successful fishery management: The Atlantic deep sea red crab fishery

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Abstract

The Atlantic deep sea red crab (Chaceon quinquedens) is the target of a small, directed fishery in the Northeast US, which has been managed using total allowable annual catches (TACs) at the fleet level since 2002. Although not a catch share fishery, it shares many of the same features, behaviors, and advantages, which are summarized here. In an examination of the fishery, vessel trip reports and dealer data were analyzed to assess fleet behavior and evaluate changes in the industry. The five vessels in the fishery established a cooperative, and share profits and coordinate landings. Rather than export their landings to a single buyer in Canada, as has been the practice in the past, the industry invested in a shore side processing facility, enabling the development and marketing of products to serve a wider range of buyers. Vessel trips are coordinated and staggered so that crab catches are continuously provided to the processing facility, guaranteeing a steady supply of fresh products. In 2009, the industry obtained certification from the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) in an effort to improve marketability and appeal to consumers. In 2010, the industry began collaboration with Slade Gorton to handle all sales and improve access to a wider range of international markets.