

Pelagic Fisheries Research Program

Project Management Report
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Overview

The FY1999 appropriation for Pacific tuna management was the same as for FY1998. This level of funding combined with savings from projects that were completed in FY1998 enabled the Program to conduct a proposal solicitation and fund seven new projects. Funding for most of the new projects is expected to become available to the University in August.

Output by PFRP affiliated scientists remains high. Roughly eighteen publications appeared in print or were submitted for publication in the past twelve months, and six of the forty-eight of the scientific presentations at the 1999 Lake Arrowhead Tuna Conference were authored by PFRP affiliated scientists. The role of the PFRP in international scientific research Pacific appears to be growing. Eight presentations of PFRP-related research were made to the 1999 meeting of the Standing Committee on Tunas and Billfish, including a one-day workshop on model specifications of the bigeye stock assessment project. A considerable number of PFRP projects have made it into the peer-reviewed literature in 1999. A list of recent publications is attached.

Continuing Activities

Quarterly publication of the PFRP Newsletter continues to be a major activity. Unfortunately, it appears that we will be losing the services of our editor, Sylvia Spalding, and will be searching for a replacement.

Production of an "International Module" for the WPRFMC Pelagics Annual Report has become an on-going activity. The module is a brief summary of the current status of the major tuna stocks in the Pacific Ocean culled from many sources. It contains maps of the annual distribution of catch of the major species by gear type at 5° longitude and latitude resolution. Coverage of the module will be expanded to include the entire Pacific Ocean from shore to shore, 40°S to 40°N. Most of the work is done by Dodie Lau with assistance from Johnnoel Ancheta. Starting with the 1999 module, Keith Bigelow of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) will also assist and coverage of the 1999 module will include the 1998 fishing year.

Progress on Specific 1998-1999 Project Management Goals:

1. Conduct a new round of project solicitations.

Several on-going projects will be concluding in the current funding cycle. Anticipated commitments for 1999 total about \$1,300,000, so at normal levels of funding in FY1999, there should be approximately \$500,000 available for new projects.

2. Coordinate an international Pacific-wide research project on bigeye tuna.

A research coordination workshop was convened in Honolulu in November, 1998 to discuss plans for an international research effort on bigeye tuna. The original draft prospectus was revised and circulated to various private funding agencies. To date there have been no responses (negative or positive). The revised prospectus was tabled at twelfth meeting of the Standing Committee on Tunas and Billfish (SCTB) and was strongly endorsed by the Committee.

3. Improve funding procedures.

A thorough review of PFRP research priorities and procedures was conducted in July 1999. The review panel recommended several changes to PFRP operations that will improve the process of project selection and funding.

Financial Status

Program expenditures by project are summarize and projected through FY2000 in the accompanying spreadsheet entitled "PFRP Budget Projections for FY2000". At normal funding levels, it will be possible to solicit some new projects

Problems

The NMFS "headquarters tax" continues to be a source of irritation. The dollar amount of the "tax" is roughly equivalent to the cost of the average PFRP project. In other words, this "tax" represents the potential loss of one project each year.

The difference between the NOAA budget line "Pacific tuna management" and the amount allocated to the PFRP has been \$400,000 for the past three years. It is not clear whether these funds area intended for PFRP expenditure, nor is it clear how to account for their expenditure.

Project Management Goals for 1999-2000:

1. Conduct a new round of project solicitations.

Several on-going projects will be concluding in the current funding cycle. Anticipated commitments for FY2000 total about \$1,300,000, so at normal levels of funding in FY2000, there should be approximately \$500,000 available for new projects.

2. Implement recommendations of 1999 PFRP review panel.

The Panel made numerous recommendations for setting research priorities, reviewing proposals, and communication of results. Most of these recommendations can be relatively easily implemented over the next 12 months. An implementation plan is in preparation.

3. Facilitate international collaboration in research on pelagic fisheries.