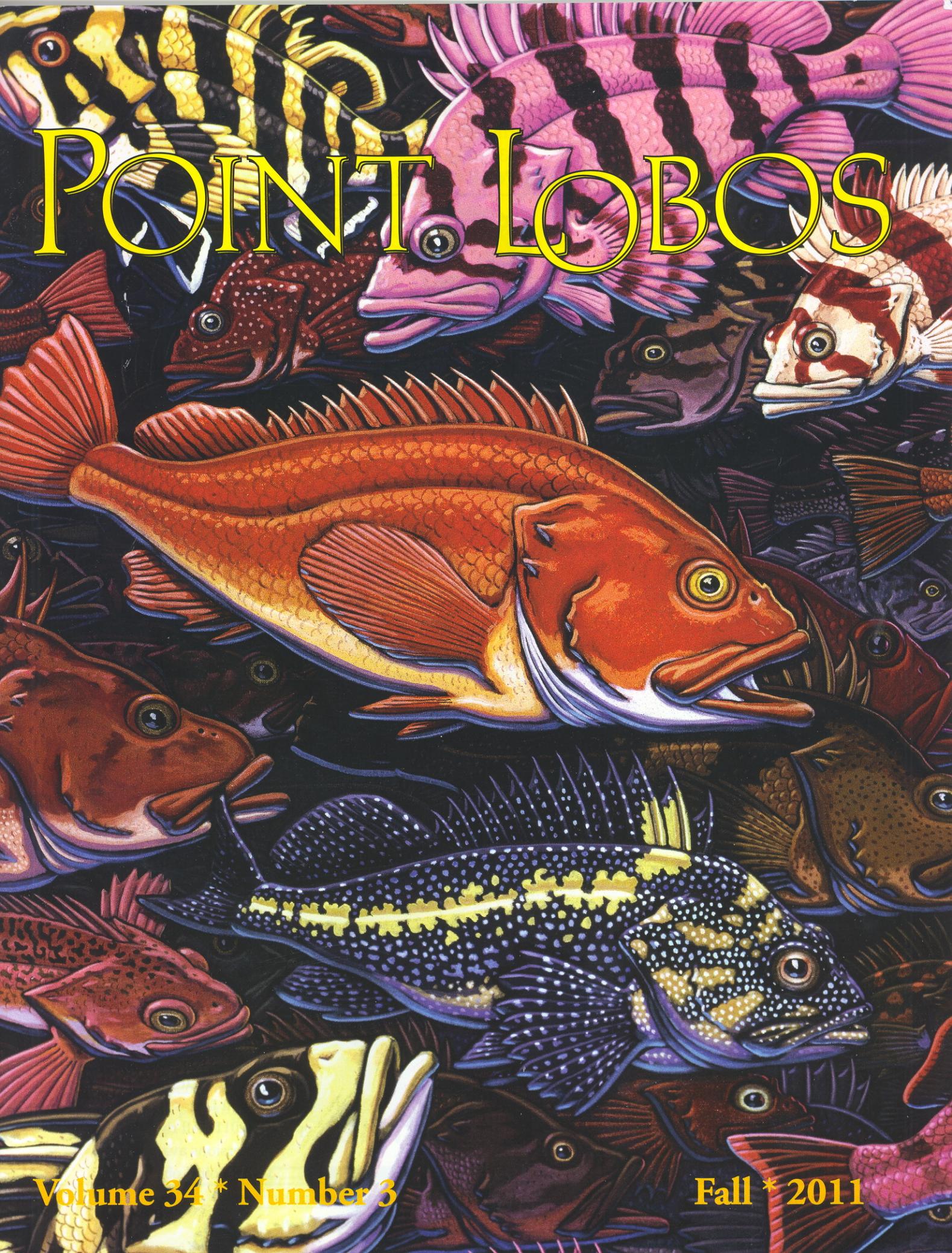


# POINT LOBOS

The background of the entire cover is a dense, colorful illustration of various marine fish species swimming in a dark ocean environment. The fish are depicted in a variety of colors including reds, blues, yellows, and purples, with intricate patterns on their scales and fins. They are shown in different orientations, some facing left, some right, creating a sense of movement and depth.

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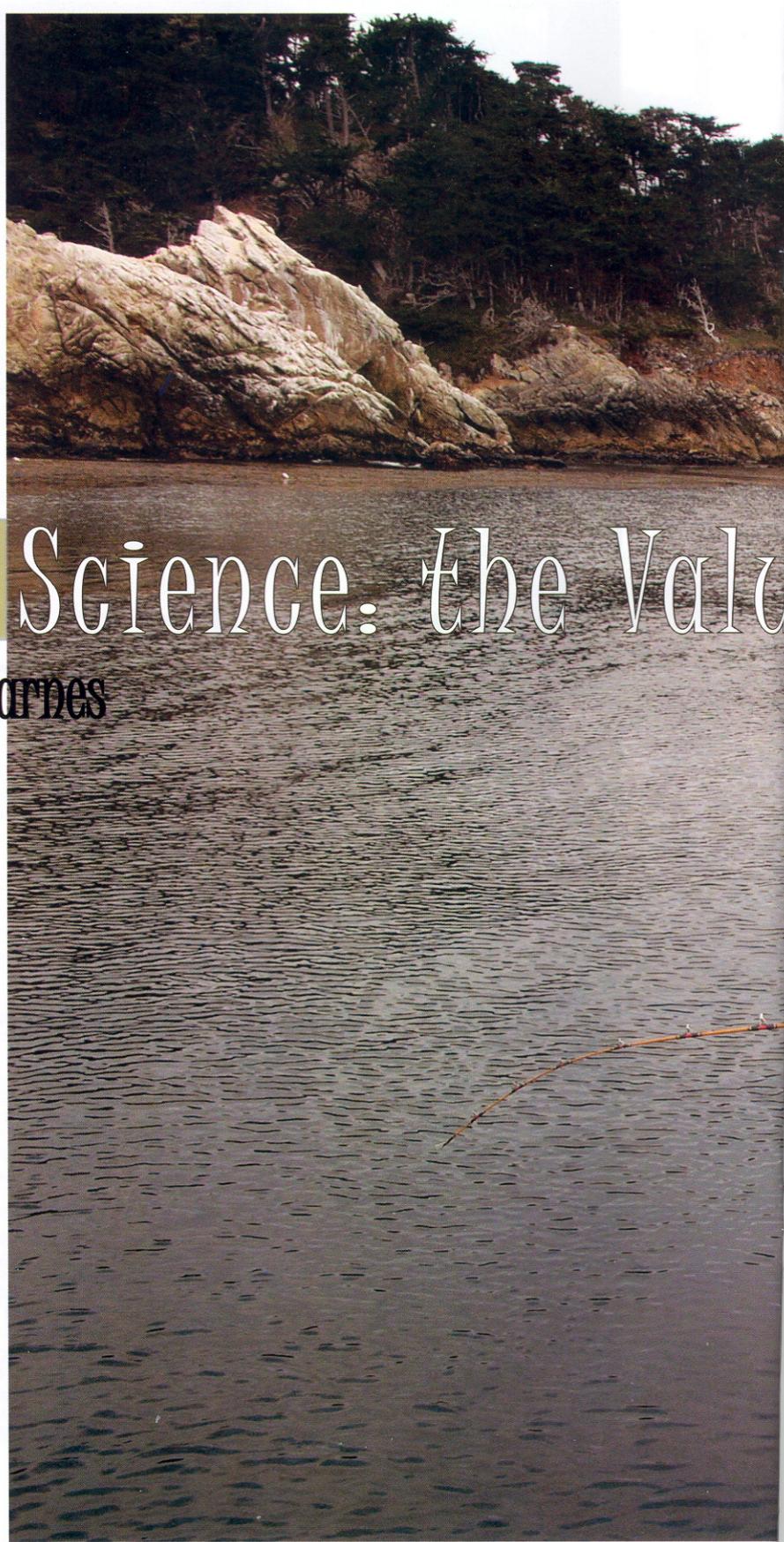
Fall \* 2011

# Fishing for

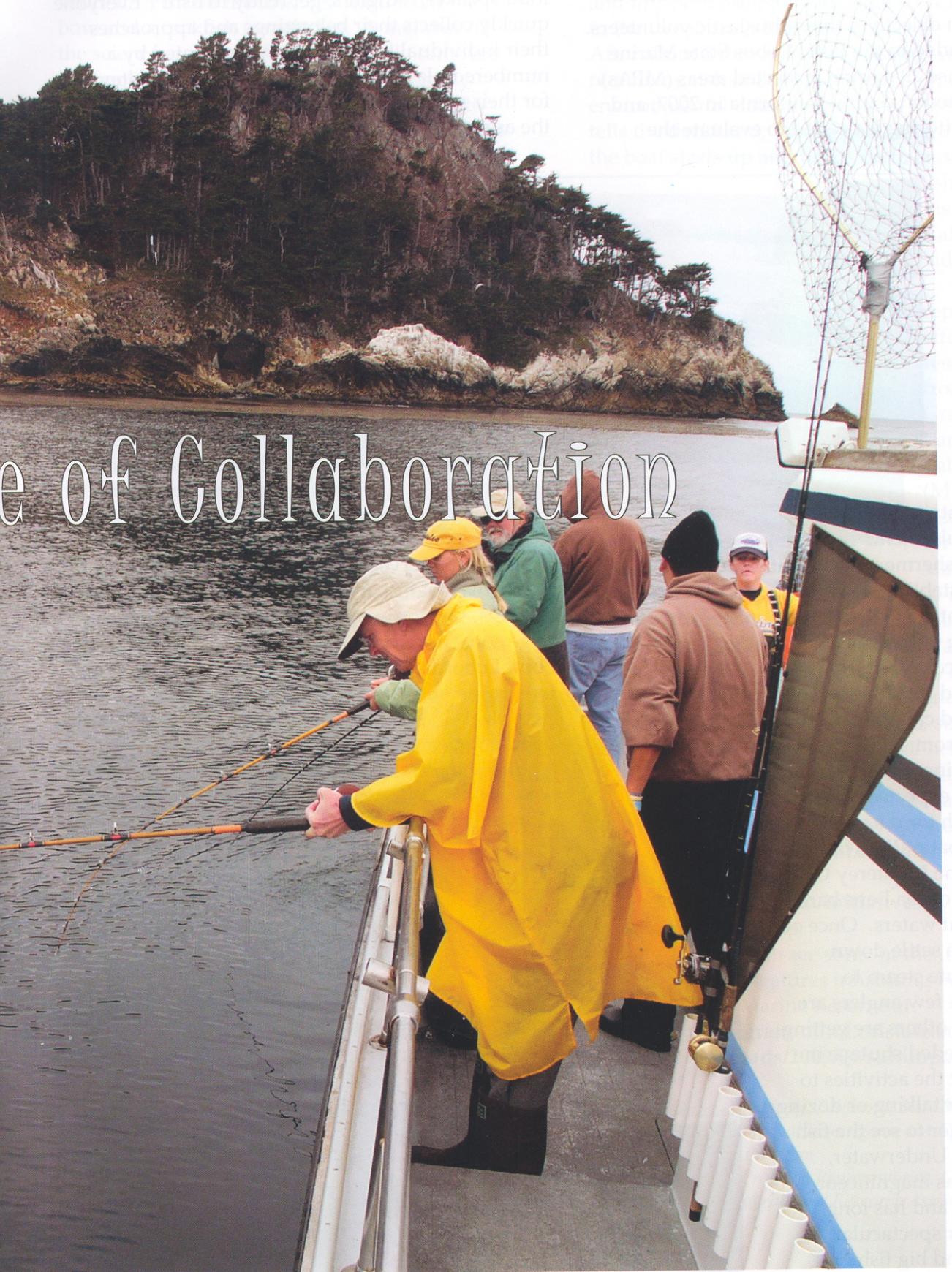
by Rick Starr and Cheryl Barnes

*photos by Robin Robinson*

**I**t's an early summer morning at Fisherman's Wharf in Monterey, CA. The streets are quiet and the fog thick while a dozen anglers carrying sack lunches and sipping hot coffee stumble aboard the sport-fishing vessel F/V Caroline. Graduate students from Moss Landing Marine Laboratories (MLML) quickly shuffle around the deck, setting up fishing tubs and tagging stations while welcoming volunteers. The captain and crew are preparing for departure when Katie Schmidt, MLML grad student and today's chief scientist, yells over the engine, "We're heading out to the Point Lobos



# e of Collaboration



Fishing in the name of science in Bluefish Cove.

State Marine Reserve today!" She continues by providing information about trip logistics and the day's research objectives for enthusiastic volunteers.

We are headed to the Point Lobos State Marine Reserve because 29 marine protected areas (MPAs) were established in central California in 2007, and scientific monitoring is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the newly implemented MPAs. The California Collaborative Fisheries Research Program (CCFRP), a partnership of people and communities interested

in fisheries sustainability, was formed in part to fulfill this requirement. By combining the expertise and ideas of fishermen and scientists, CCFRP has successfully established standardized protocols to gather information for fisheries management and the monitoring of Central Coast MPAs. To date, CCFRP has successfully completed 148 days of fishing, enjoyed 15,070 volunteer hours from 467 individuals and caught, tagged, and released a total of 27,441 fish from 43 different species. 2011 marks the fifth sampling season for the project, and 150 volunteers are expected to join forces with local scientists to fish for data collection purposes.

After the boat pulls away from the dock, we approach the Monterey Coast Guard Jetty and the sound of sea lions barking breaks the otherwise silent waters. Once out of the harbor, people begin to settle down for the 60-minute steam to Point Lobos. A few anglers are chatting, while others are getting some much-needed shuteye in preparation for the activities to come. Whether talking or dozing, everyone is eager to see the fish at Point Lobos. Underwater, Point Lobos is as magnificent as it is on land, and has long been known for spectacular scuba diving and big fish.

Arriving on station, the skipper calls out over the loud speaker, "Anglers, get ready to fish!" Everyone quickly collects their belongings and approaches their individual fishing stations, indicated by a numbered plastic tub filled with fresh seawater for their prospective catch. Within 45 seconds of the announcement, twelve lines are hovering just above the water's surface, waiting for instructions to..."Start fishing!"

MPAs are defined as regions of the nearshore environment where extractive activities, such as sportfishing and commercial harvest, are either restricted or prohibited in an effort to maintain ecosystem structure and function. It is a special treat for many

CCFRP volunteer anglers to have an opportunity to fish in such an area. The original Point Lobos Ecological Reserve, created in 1973, is one of California's oldest and most well known no-take reserves, supporting high levels of biodiversity and large concentrations of fishes. Because of this, the Point Lobos Ecological Reserve was a prime target for expansion as part of the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA). The MLPA, designed to protect marine populations and preserve ecosystem health by requiring the creation of a well-managed, statewide network of MPAs, was enacted in 1999. Through years of collaborative planning, stakeholders worked to produce a network of MPAs that would both maximize conservation benefits and minimize economic impacts on the fishing industry.

Two whole minutes have passed in silence since



the order was given to begin fishing. All of a sudden, "Fish on the line!" is heard from the bow and a rockfish is reeled in. A member of the science crew briskly and carefully removes the hook from the rockfish's mouth. Firmly grasping the lip of the fish, he transports it to the stern where it is measured and tagged with a dart tag that looks like it should be attached to clothing sold by retail stores across America. Written on the tag are an ID and the phone number of Moss Landing Marine Labs so we can learn about fish that are tagged and recaptured outside the reserve. "Vermilion rockfish, good condition...44 cm total length," says the tagger to someone recording data nearby. "Tag number 14353," she continues. Only 2½ minutes after the initial bite, this fish is quickly placed overboard and swims off. The tagger looks down to make sure the fish has made it to deeper water and returns to find another that has just arrived from Angler #7. Before that fish has arrived to the tagging station, five more shouts of "Fish on!" are heard and the boat and science

final catches. Angler #10 shouts, "Double header!" and lifts both a copper and canary rockfish attached to the two shrimp flies tied to his line over the rail. After about 5 minutes of processing, releasing the remaining fish onboard, and taking the necessary environmental data, a member of the science crew tells the deckhand, "We're good to go." With this, the boat starts up and heads on to another promising

fishing spot inside central California's oldest MPA.

CCFRP represents a joint effort among researchers from CA Sea Grant at Moss Landing Marine Laboratories (MLML) and SLOSEA/Center for Coastal Marine Sciences

at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo as well as the captains and crew of F/Vs Admiral, Caroline, Fiesta, Huli Cat, New Captain Pete, Pacific Horizon,

Patriot, Princess, Queen of Hearts, Rita G, Salty Lady, and Tigerfish. The data collected regarding species compositions, sizes, and catch rates of fishes in the region will help resource managers to evaluate the effectiveness of MPAs and can be used for fisheries management. For more information, visit our web sites at:

<http://seagrant.mlml.calstate.edu/research/ccfrp/>

<http://slosea.com/initiatives/sf/sustainfish.php>

Also, you can see some of the incredible underwater creatures inhabiting Point Lobos State Marine Reserve at:

<http://seagrant.mlml.calstate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/subimpactreport.pdf>

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crew are scrambling to keep up with the incoming fish. Sometimes in Point Lobos we have to stop fishing because our science crew is overwhelmed with fish and we need to slow down so we make sure that fish are released unharmed.

"Time's up...reel 'em in!" calls the captain over the loud speaker. The 15-minute drift has concluded and anglers begin to bring in their

