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Towards Untangling Social-Ecological Choices: A Transdisciplinary Approach to Determine the Key Drivers of Fishing Effort in the US West Coast Groundfish Fishery

Kelli Johnson, University of Washington, **Sarah Klain**, University of British Columbia, Nadine Heck, UCSC and Ana Spalding, Smithsonian Institute

Abstract Text:

Understanding how a fishery responds to multiple socio-ecological drivers, including fish availability, cost of fishing and fisheries policy, plays a key role in both the development and maintenance of sustainable fisheries. An increasing number of governance organizations are advocating for or mandating decreased catches of overfished species, a goal which is often not in line with maximizing short-term profit. We present an analysis of changes in fishing activity with the inception of an Individual Transferable Quota policy within the US west coast limited entry multi-species trawl groundfish fishery. We evaluate the extent to which changes in catches of overfished species resulted from economic incentives, life-history characteristics of target or non-target species, changes in environmental drivers and/or changes in governance. This research provides insight relevant to the design and implementation of Individual Transferable Quota policies and the relationship of this type of policy to reducing catches of overfished species. We also provide an overview of the challenges and benefits of data collection and analysis across disciplines and with partners outside of academia, which has facilitated a transdisciplinary approach to fisheries management.

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I was invited to submit by a symposium organizer

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