



Photo credit: NMFS.

KEY INFORMATION

Area of Concern

Central Oregon to central Baja California and Guadalupe Island, Mexico.

Year Identified as “Species of Concern”
2004

Factors for Decline

- Overfishing
- Bycatch

Conservation Designations

IUCN: Critically Not Evaluated
American Fisheries Society: Vulnerable

Current Status:

Demographic and Genetic Diversity Concerns:

Peak catch was in 1976 and was about 194 mt (biomass was ~1665 mt). In 1998 catch was 19 mt (biomass was ~238 mt). The species is estimated to be at 4 to 7% of its unfished biomass in 2000. They cannot be caught and released due to swimbladder damage and mortality. They were declared overfished in 2000. At current population levels, it will take on the order of 75 to 100+ years to recover the species (with a modest 2-4 mt of harvest/bycatch per year).

Existing Protections and Conservation Actions:

California Fish & Game has closed 5,100 square nautical miles off southern California to all bottomfishing as a cowcod conservation area, and prohibited all cowcod catch. There are stringent catch regulations.

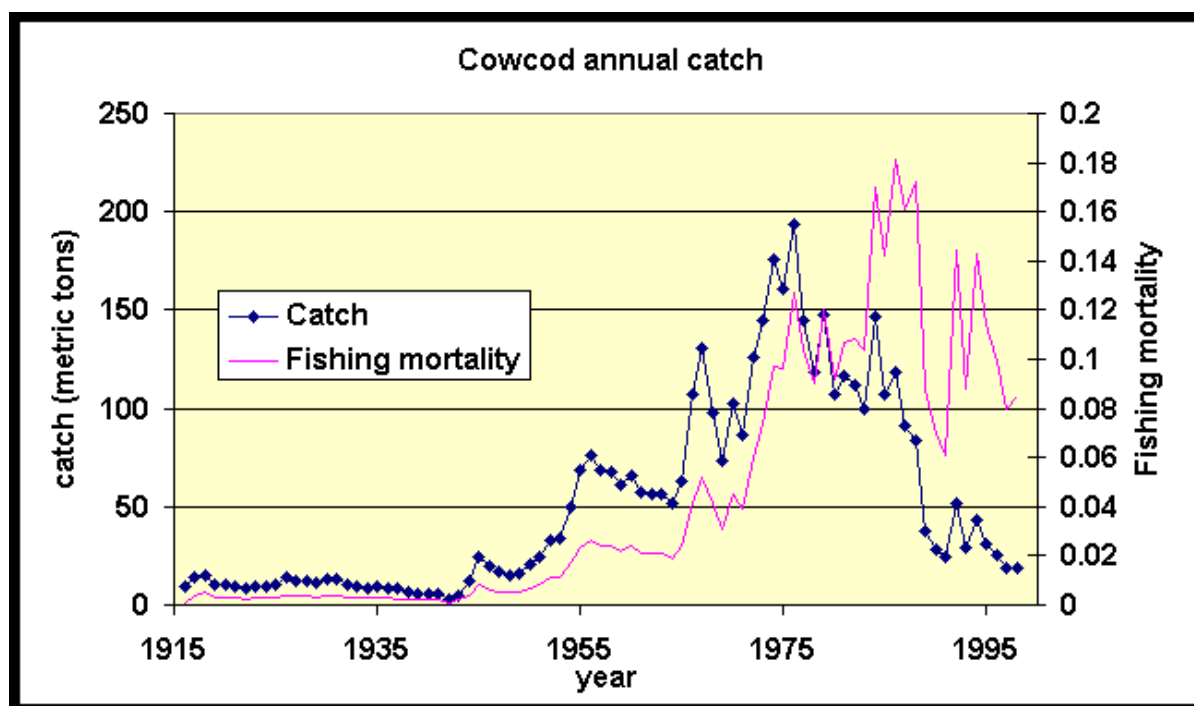


Species of Concern

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service

Brief Species Description:

The cowcod is one of the largest rockfish species, reaching almost 39 inches (1 m) in total length and may live up to 55 years (Butler et al. 2003). It is an ambush predator of the deep shelf and upper slope, living in depths of 65 to 1600 feet (20 to 500 m). Females mature at 13 inches (32cm). Southern California has been recognized as the center of distribution of the species since the 1880s. Oil platforms have become somewhat important artificial habitats for this species (Love and York 2006). Like other species of their genus, cowcod are internal fertilizers. Reproduction occurs in winter an early spring, and larvae spend about 100 days as plankton.



Contact Information

For cowcod, contact:

Dr. Scott Rumsey
NOAA Fisheries, Northwest Region
Protected Resources Division
1201 NE Lloyd, Blvd, #1100
Portland, OR 97232
(503) 872-2791

Scott.Rumsey@noaa.gov

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/concern>

For Species of Concern, contact

NOAA Fisheries
Office of Protected Resources
1315 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 713-1401

soc.list@noaa.gov

References:

- Butler, J.L., et al. 2003. Fishery Bulletin (Seattle) 101:260-280.
- Love, M.S. and A. York. 2006. Fishery Bulletin (Seattle) 104:542-549.