Essential Fish Habitat project status report

Reporting date: August 12, 2008

Project number: EFH 2007-5

Title: Habitat Specific Production of Pacific Ocean Perch in the Aleutian Islands

PIs: Rooper, Heintz

Funding year: 2007

Funding amount: 52,700

Status: ☒ Complete ☐ Incomplete, on schedule ☐ Incomplete, behind schedule

Planned completion date if incomplete:

Reporting: Have the project results been reported? If yes, where were the results reported? Not reported

Results:

Juvenile Pacific ocean perch (POP; *Sebastes alutus*) were collected from two sites near the Islands of Four Mountains during early June 2008 and in August 2008. The two sites were sampled over two days using an AFSC bottom trawl and plankton net to collect both juvenile POP and their zooplankton prey. Juvenile POP were found at both locations in high abundances, with > 650 individuals captured during four tows of less than 5 minutes each in June, and similar abundances in August. This is the fourth year since 2003 that juvenile POP sampling has occurred at these sites and rockfish densities were higher in 2008 at the nursery sites than in preceding years. Fish dissections and analysis of stomach contents and fish condition are expected to take place during FY2009.

Six successful drop camera deployments (3 at each study site) using a stereo video drop camera system were also conducted over the two days in June. The video captured during the Islands of Four Mountains study shows many juvenile POP and other rockfish inhabiting boulder fields at the study site. There were significant amounts of coral and sponge observed in the study areas. Additionally, adult dusky rockfish (*S. variabilis*) and northern rockfish (*S. polyspinis*) schools were observed at one site. Analysis of the 6 hours of video collected at the study sites will be completed this fall.