Essential Fish Habitat project status report

Reporting date: October 2, 2012

Project number: 2009-2

Title: Invertebrate colonization of PMEL moorings

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Funding year: Funding provided in 2009.

Funding amount: So far $12,000 has been spent out of a budget total of $12,000.

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

Planned completion date if incomplete:

Reporting:
All field work and lab analysis is complete.
A final report describing the colonizing of mooring substrates has been submitted by the California Academy of Sciences to NMFS.
We are examining the results to determine if we can submit a Note about the colonization results to a peer-reviewed journal.

Results:
We have attempted to quantify colonization of benthic substrates as a proxy for estimating the recovery of damaged seafloor areas. Our project has been hampered by difficulties with the substrates and a conflict between the industrial nature of the mooring recoveries and the extremely delicate nature of the colonizing benthos.

This was an extremely low budget effort to tackle a difficult scientific question. I am hopeful that we can distill our results into something that advances our understanding of this topic.

The most interesting result of the project is the variability in colonization per substrate, with recruitment of individual taxa ranging up to >30,000 recruits, surface area ranging from <1 mm to approximately half of a substrate, and sometimes large number of encrusting taxa (eg. 16) and non-encrusting taxa (7) occurring on the same substrate.