Essential Fish Habitat project status report

Reporting date: August 23, 2010

Project number: 4

Title: Nearshore Fish Assemblages in Coastal Areas Facing Development in upper Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound, Alaska

PIs: Johnson, Eagleton

Funding year: FY10

Funding amount: $9.5K

Status: [X] Complete [ ] Incomplete, on schedule [ ] Incomplete, behind schedule

Planned completion date if incomplete:

Reporting: Have the project results been reported? If yes, state where the results were reported and attach an electronic copy of the report.

Results have been reported to AKRO:
Auke Bay Laboratories. Nearshore fish assemblages in Upper Cook Inlet, Alaska. Trip report for July 14, 2010. (attached)

Auke Bay Laboratories. Fish fauna in nearshore waters of Port Valdez, Alaska. Trip report for 12-13 July 2010. (attached)

Results: What is the most important result of the study?

The presence of longfin smelt and juvenile salmon in August 2009 and July 2010, suggests that these species may occupy nearshore waters of Upper Cook Inlet for several weeks during the summer, and be important prey for other fish, seabirds, and marine mammals.

In Port Valdez, the abundance of saffron cod in nearshore waters was noteworthy. Saffron cod have not been reported in Prince William Sound (PWS) until recently in the western Sound. In western PWS, saffron cod are a dominant species in nearshore waters. The abundance of saffron cod in Port Valdez (central PWS) is evidence that this species is likely widely distributed throughout PWS. Possible ecological implications of saffron cod in nearshore waters include competition for food and space and increased predation risk to commercially important and forage fish species.