

**Alaska Fisheries Science Center  
Resource Assessment Conservation Engineering Division  
7600 Sand Point Way Northeast  
Seattle, Washington 98115-6349**

**14 May 2012**

## **CRUISE ANNOUNCEMENT**

2012 Biennial Bottom Trawl Survey of  
Aleutian Islands Groundfish Resources

Chartered Vessels *Ocean Explorer* and *Sea Storm* (Cruise 2012-01)

## **AREA AND PERIOD OF OPERATION**

The fishing vessels *Ocean Explorer* and *Sea Storm* have been chartered to conduct the 2012 biennial bottom trawl survey of groundfish resources in the Aleutian Islands region. Both vessels will be chartered for 72 days beginning in Dutch Harbor, Alaska on 4 June 2012. Following final preparations in Dutch Harbor, the vessels will undergo up to 2 days of sea trials for a new (to the survey) net measurement system and will then conduct standardization exercises before beginning the survey. Sampling will begin near Dutch Harbor in the eastern Aleutian Islands (longitude 165°W) and will proceed westward to Stalemate Bank (longitude 170°E), west of Attu Island (Figure 1). Both vessel charters will end in Dutch Harbor on 14 August 2012.

## **OBJECTIVES**

A primary objective of this survey is to continue the data time series begun in 1980 to monitor trends in distribution and abundance of important groundfish species. During these surveys we measure a variety of physical, oceanographic, and environmental parameters while identifying and enumerating the fishes and invertebrates collected in the trawls. Specific objectives of the 2012 survey include:

1. defining the distribution and relative abundance of the principal groundfish and commercially important invertebrate species that inhabit the Aleutian archipelago;
2. collecting catch and effort data used to estimate the abundance of groundfish species;
3. measuring biological parameters such as size, sex, age, growth, length-weight relationships, feeding habits, and spawning condition for selected species;
4. monitoring and recording trawl performance information; and
5. collecting samples and data requested by other researchers or research groups.

## METHODS AND GEAR

The survey design is a stratified random sampling scheme consisting of 420 stations selected randomly from a combination of successful tows completed during previous surveys and sites not previously trawled. The selected sampling sites are allocated to 45 sampling strata defined by geographical location, depth, and regulatory area, ranging from shallow, nearshore depths to approximately 500 m on the continental slope.

Whenever possible, the charter vessels will conduct survey operations in close proximity to each other with each vessel attempting 15-minute trawls at pre-assigned stations. Catches will be sorted, weighed, and enumerated by species. Biological information (sex, length, age structures, individual weights, stomach contents, etc.) will be collected for major groundfish species. Specimens and data for special studies (e.g., maturity observations, tissue samples, photo vouchers) will also be collected for various species, as requested by researchers at AFSC and other cooperating agencies and institutions. Specimens of rare fishes or invertebrates, including corals, sponges, and other sessile organisms will be collected on an opportunistic basis.

Stations will be sampled with the RACE Division's standard four-seam, high-opening Poly Nor'Eastern survey trawl equipped with rubber bobbin roller gear. This trawl has a 27.2 m headrope and 36.75 m footrope consisting of a 24.9 m center section with adjacent 5.9 m "flying wing" extensions. Accessory gear for the Poly Nor'Eastern trawl includes 54.9 m triple dandyines and  $1.8 \times 2.7$  m steel V-doors weighing approximately 850 kg each.

## **ITINERARY**

- June 4            First day of the charter – Begin setup in Dutch Harbor, AK
- June 4-6        Begin Leg 1 – Conduct sea trials, measure and mark trawl warps, conduct scope experiment. Begin trawl survey sampling operations when preliminary work is completed.
- June 28        End of Leg 1 in Adak - Resupply vessels, exchange personnel
- June 29        Begin Leg 2 - Resume survey
- July 22        End Leg 2 in Adak - Resupply vessels, exchange personnel
- July 23        Begin Leg 3 - Resume survey, conduct net measurement studies as needed.
- August 12-14   End Leg 3 – Pack and offload in Dutch Harbor, AK
- August 14      End of Charter

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For further information, please contact Mr. Russ Nelson, Director, Resource Assessment and Conservation Engineering Division, Alaska Fisheries Science Center, National Marine Fisheries Service, 7600 Sand Point Way NE., Building 4, BIN C15700, Seattle, WA 98115-6349, Telephone (206) 526-4170, email [Russ.Nelson@noaa.gov](mailto:Russ.Nelson@noaa.gov).

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**SCIENTIFIC STAFF AND AFFILIATIONS  
ALEUTIAN ISLANDS BIENNIAL BOTTOM TRAWL SURVEY, 2012**

**SEA STORM - LEG 1**

DATES: 4 June – 28 June  
PORTS: Dutch Harbor – Adak

FPC	Paul von Szalay	AFSC
DB	Christina Conrath	AFSC
	Nate Raring	AFSC
	Robin Harrison	AFSC
	David Drumm	AFSC
	Rick Hibpshman	AFSC

**SEA STORM - LEG 2**

DATES: 28 June – 22 July  
PORTS: Adak – Adak

FPC	Nate Raring	AFSC
DB	Bill Flerx	AFSC
	Wayne Palsson	AFSC
	Jon Short	AFSC
	Adriana Santacruz	Volunteer
	Caroline Robinson	AFSC

**SEA STORM - LEG 3**

DATES: 22 July – 14 August  
PORTS: Adak – Dutch Harbor

FPC	Wayne Palsson	AFSC
DB	Jim Stark	AFSC
	Erika Acuna	AFSC
	Jenny Gardner	UW
	Melissa Johnson	UAF
	Rick Hibpshman	AFSC

**OCEAN EXPLORER - LEG 1**

DATES: 4 June – 28 June  
PORTS: Dutch Harbor – Adak

FPC	Mark Zimmermann	AFSC
DB	Brian Knoth	AFSC
	Lyle Britt	AFSC
	Ned Laman	AFSC
	Paul Logan	IPHC
	Caroline Robinson	AFSC

**OCEAN EXPLORER- LEG 2**

DATES: 28 June – 22 July  
PORTS: Adak – Adak

FPC	Ned Laman	AFSC
DB	Jay Orr	AFSC
	Jim Stark	AFSC
	Lorin Anderson	AFSC
	Paul Logan	IPHC
	Kim Sawyer	AFSC

**OCEAN EXPLORER- LEG 3**

DATES: 22 July – 14 August  
PORTS: Adak – Dutch Harbor

FPC	Paul von Szalay	AFSC
DB	Bill Flerx	AFSC
	Colin Sayre	FMA
	Megan Burwell	CMB
	Paul Logan	IPHC
	Kim Sawyer	AFSC

**Acronyms**

FPC	Field Party Chief
DB	Deck Boss
AFSC	Alaska Fisheries Science Center
IPHC	International Pacific Halibut Commission
UW	University of Washington
UAF	University of Alaska Fairbanks
CMB	Coastal Marine BioLabs

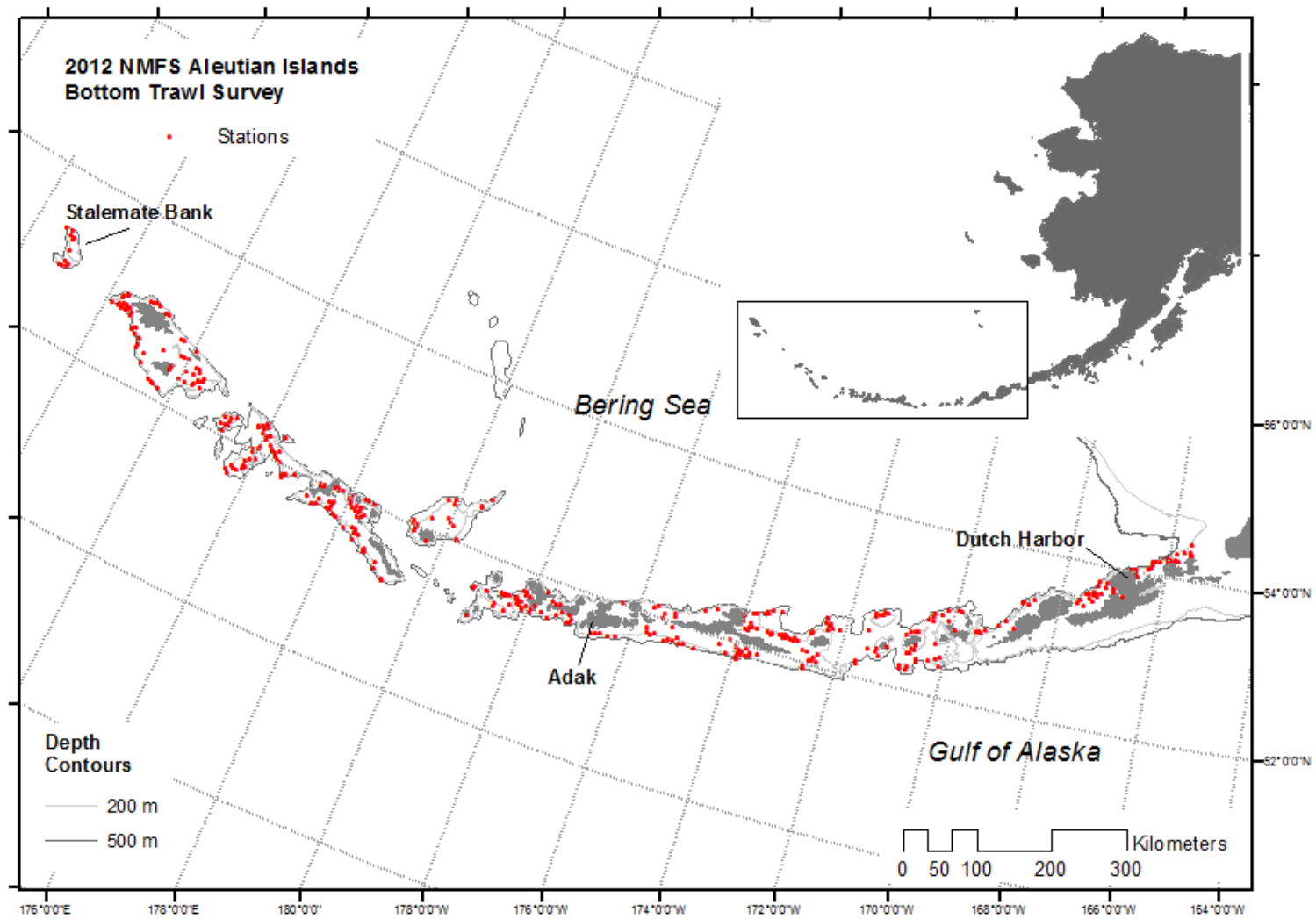


Figure 1. Stations to be completed during the AFSC 2012 Aleutian Islands bottom trawl Survey (N = 420).