



# Word on the Waves

a publication of the Fisheries Observation Science Program at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center

## Observer Spotlight:

### Brad Laird

Observing since 2009  
Currently stationed  
in Coos Bay

Brad Laird is a man of the sea. In fact, he refers to the Ocean with a capital "O",

A native of North Bend, OR, Brad graduated from the University of Oregon in Eugene with a degree in environmental science. He began observing in the North Pacific Groundfish Program right out of college because "the work sounded fun and exciting." He returned to Oregon and joined the WCGOP in 2009. He is currently the lead Non-Catch Share observer in Coos Bay where he mentors other observers (Catch Share and Non-Catch Share), helps with safety inspections, and recently acted as a liaison for Princeton students researching the dynamics of our west coast fisheries.

Brad cites sunrises and sunsets as his favorite part of observing. "Sunrises and sunsets are extremely beautiful on the Ocean. The colors change from blues, to oranges, to reds, to purples; and if you don't stop

to watch it, then you miss it as it changes constantly and rapidly." Least favorite part? The unpredictable scheduling, particularly, short notice calls (when fishermen call in with only a few hours' notice prior to a trip). "You definitely learn to take the good with the bad in this job as the good parts are amazing and the bad parts are not so good."

Brad prefers to observe in the pink shrimp fishery where discard is generally very low and he likes the boat size. It also sports his favorite species, the spot prawn, a "humongous shrimp species that has very beautiful white spots on the tail and are one of the best tasting products to come from our Ocean here in Oregon." Brad expresses admiration for the "definite sense of community in the shrimp fishery. Fishermen work together in the shrimp fishery

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## From the Program

Hello Observers!

As we come into the summer months, the days are getting longer and you are out at sea more often. As always, be safe out there. I'd also like to remind you how imperative it is to be thorough and unbiased in your data collection. Following protocols and meeting deadlines is critical to maintaining the integrity of our data as well as helping fishers stay abreast of their quota amounts, which is especially crucial during the busy season. Accurate data also allows us to contribute to the many reports our data is used in during the year, which we highlight in our **Fisheries News** section. You are doing important work. Please be diligent about maintaining high standards.

On another note, electronic monitoring (EM) continues to be a big topic at the Council, Regional and National levels. I am staying very engaged in these developments so that no one loses sight of the value of observer data and we can best respond to this changing climate around EM. Considerations are being made on its viability, how to test various proposed systems, how to regulate it and how to integrate EM and observer coverage. There are current proposals before the Council in June that could result in EM viability testing as early as next year. Many of you may have already been aboard a vessel with EM. Be aware of this as you go about your duties and behave accordingly. It wouldn't be a bad idea to assume there might be a camera on any vessel you are working on. If you have any questions regarding EM developments feel free to drop me a line or go to the PFMC website ([www.pfcouncil.org/](http://www.pfcouncil.org/)) to see how decisions are being made in regards to EM regulations and testing.

Sincerely,

Jon T. McVeigh  
Program Manager

## Knot Know How

Any sailor — or ocean-going scientist — worth their salt knows some knots. Unfortunately, in this age of electronics, instant information and motorization, simple skills like knot tying can easily get overlooked. In an effort to help you hone your knot tying skills, here are the three essential knots to learn, practice and start using. Click on the colored type to see instructions and video for each knot.



**Bowline:** Pronounced boh-lin, this knot is sometimes referred to as the King of Knots.

This knot allows you to form a fixed loop. It is quick to tie and untie and can be done one-handed if need be. It's good for numerous situations, such as fastening mooring lines to rings or posts and does not slip under a load. Its major drawbacks are coming loose after it's been under a load and the inability to tie or untie it if there's a load on the standing end.

Give it a try: [How to tie a Bowline](#)



**Sheet Bend:** A bend is a knot that joins two ropes together.

The Sheet Bend is sometimes called a weaver's knot as it is used in the textile industry to correct broken threads. Next to the bowline, it is one of the essential knots to know. Like the bowline, it is quick to tie and untie and is effective at binding ropes of different diameter and rigidity.

Give it a try: [How to tie a Sheet Bend](#)



**Clove Hitch:** Along with the bowline and Sheet bend, the Clove Hitch rounds out the knot essentials. Its usefulness comes from being able to adjust the length of the running end as it can be loosened and re-tightened.



On the flip side, this also makes it a safety risk as it can come untied if overly loosened and conversely it can bind if overly tightened. Use with care.

Give it a try: [How to tie a Clove Hitch](#)

## Bonus



**Trucker's Hitch:** This knot is more advanced but extremely useful. It is commonly used to secure loads on trucks or trailers (hence the name). A knot that can be traced back to the days of

carters and hawkers who used horse-drawn conveyances, the Trucker's Hitch forms a crude block and tackle that allows tension to be effectively increased by repeatedly pulling sideways.

Give it a try: [How to tie a Trucker's Hitch](#)

**We want to see you in action!** Send photos of your knot tying experience as well as any questions or comments to Rebecca Hoch at [Rebecca.hoch@noaa.gov](mailto:Rebecca.hoch@noaa.gov). Photos will be shared in the next newsletter.

Reference: *Animated Knots* by Grog, [www.animatedknots](http://www.animatedknots)

## Observer Spotlight — continued

and I like to see their collaboration... as these behaviors help reduce top-down fishery management styles as well as protecting the shrimp stocks.”



As he's been sport fishing since he was four years old, most of Brad's leisure time involves fishing. However, those who know him say he "jars a mean pickle" and his chocolate lab, Riley, is mentioned frequently. His Bucket List is short: revisit Alaska for some sightseeing (and fishing) and acquire a jet boat (for fishing). Beyond that, he is content to keep looking for sunrises and sunsets while working to keep our fisheries viable. Thanks for your hard work and dedication Brad. It is greatly appreciated.

## Contact Us

**Word on the Waves** is published quarterly by the [Fisheries Observation Science Program](#) at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center to maintain communications with current observers and industry contacts. Please send submissions, suggestions and questions to the newsletter editor.

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## Program Snapshot

We thought you'd like to know how this season is going in terms of trips made, overall sea days, etc. Here's a snapshot for the period of January 30th to June 1st:

### Total Trips

2013: 1133	2014: 1062
Catch Share: 726	Catch Share: 702
Non-Catch Share	Non-Catch Share
Limited Entry: 97	Limited Entry: 107
Open Access: 310	Open Access: 248
EFP: 0	EFP: 5

Observer with most sea days:  
Carson Capps (81)

Observers on the most vessels:  
Steve Samana and  
Kevin Stockmann (11)

## From the Galley

John LaFargue, CA Coordinator



Heather Brown, Chef's Assistant



It's early summer and the Pacific halibut are moving up from the deeper depths onto the shelf. If you are north of San Francisco, drop a chunk of bait down 250+ feet and you have a decent chance of catching one.

The meat is everything we like in a fish: mild flavor, firm and flaky. The firm flesh is ideal for grilling or pan roasting, and its mild flavor makes it a great candidate for flavorful sauces. The best eaters

are 20-50lbs. The ones over 50 pounds tend to have a tougher texture and are best suited for ceviche or deep frying where the acid or heat can break down the texture of the meat a little.

I have been messing around with chimichurri sauces lately. Chimichurri is an Argentine sauce usually served on grilled steaks, but it's great on fish, fowl even potatoes. You can go old school and stick with parsley, garlic, salt, oil, vinegar and chili flake or go crazy and mix in other fresh herbs like cilantro, mint, and thyme. You can even use other acids like lemon, lime or try a mix of citrus and vinegar. You can't go wrong if you keep to the basic proportions and use quality ingredients.

Check out recipes online for different variations. Here is one to get you started. Mix the leftover sauce in some scrambled eggs, potato salad or even mashed potatoes.

## Fisheries News

There have been a number of interesting reports released lately, directly related to the fishing industry. Check out the recently released [Fisheries Economics of the United States 2012](#). This compiles economic information about US commercial and recreational fishing activities and their related industries from 2003 to 2012. It is chock full of descriptive statistics for an array of categories. The Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN also released [The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture](#) report for 2014 which is quite interesting. And finally, we'd also like to share [Oceana's Bycatch Report and Media Coverage Ignores Key Successes in U.S. Fisheries](#) by Saving Seafood. It provides a counter view to Oceana's *Wasted Catch* report. Your data feeds directly into many of these types of reports cited here, namely the [National Bycatch Report](#). As always, keep our [Fisheries Observation Science](#) (FOS) web address on hand for current briefing schedules, updated manuals and other observer-related information.

## Pan Roasted Halibut with Chimichurri Sauce

### Chimichurri sauce

2 c packed fresh Italian parsley leaves  
4-6 garlic cloves peeled  
1/4 c packed fresh oregano, mint or cilantro  
1/4 c red wine vinegar or lemon/lime juice  
1 tsp red pepper flakes  
1/2 tsp kosher salt  
Freshly ground black pepper  
1 c extra-virgin, the best you have.  
*It makes a difference!*

Chop everything really fine by hand for a rustic sauce or pulse it in a food processor. I usually add the first three ingredients to the processor, pulse it a couple of times until coarsely chopped. Add the rest of the ingredients and pulse a few times until everything is incorporated, but not emulsified. Adjust salt and vinegar to taste. If it's too acidic, add a little more oil. You can use it right away or tuck it in the fridge for a few days and let the flavors meld.

### Pan Roasted Halibut

A quarter to half pound halibut or other firm fish per person

Salt  
Pepper  
Vegetable oil

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Season the fish with salt and pepper. Preheat an oven proof pan on the stove top, add a couple of tablespoons of oil. Sear fish on one side 3-4 min, flip fish, transfer pan to oven for 5-8 min until the fish is just cooked through. Remove fish from oven, plate sauce with fish on top. You can finish with some kosher salt, chopped herbs and lemon.

# Morro Bay Fixed Gear Sablefish: Expanding Fishing Efforts

Eli Coplen, Morro Bay debriefer and Marlene Bellman, NOAA Analyst

We are happy to showcase a poster by long-time debriefer Eli Coplen and senior analyst Marlene Bellman. Eli presented their work at this year's Science Symposium held at NOAA's Western Region Headquarter's at Sandpoint. (The poster's format has been altered to fit this newsletter.) If you have any questions for Eli, please contact your debriefer or Rebecca Hoch and we will put you in touch with him.

Morro Bay, California is at the southernmost range of significant sablefish (*Anoplopoma fimbria*) landings and the commercial groundfish trawl grounds. Since 2008, the Morro Bay sablefish fixed gear fishery has seen a dramatic rise in the number of participants. At least ten new participants have been added to the local fleet, including vessels moving south from Moss Landing (north of 36° N latitude) to take advantage of the large landing limit difference south of 36° N latitude. Five Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) groundfish pot vessels from Oregon also come down for a few months each year to fish sablefish quota.

According to the Morro Bay 2013 Commercial Fisheries Economic Impact Report by Lisa Wise Consulting Inc., "In 2012, commercial fishermen in Morro Bay generated over \$6.3 million in earnings at the docks, ex-vessel value (EVV), the second highest level since 1997 and a continued upward trend from a twenty-year low in 2007." Sablefish made up 30% of these landings in 2012. While this may seem like good news, observers and fishermen

have reported more hooks being fished in deeper waters with less catch each year. These signs concern local fishermen, biologists, samplers, and observers as they typically indicate localized depletion in the sablefish population.

## Methods

Observer data was analyzed from Limited Entry (LE), Open Access (OA), Exempted Fishing Permit, and IFQ fixed gear vessels that delivered catch to Morro Bay and examined changes over time in fishing depth, catch per unit effort (CPUE) using weight of sablefish per gear unit (hook/pot), and changes in areas fished.

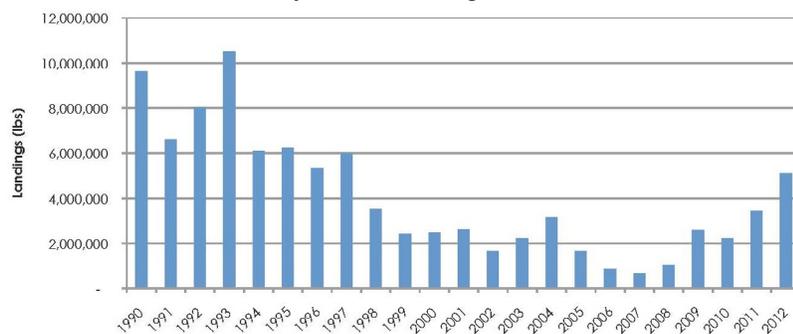


## Results

- Sablefish CPUE is decreasing with longline gear
- Average depth of fixed gear sets is increasing
- Fishing grounds are moving deeper and expanding

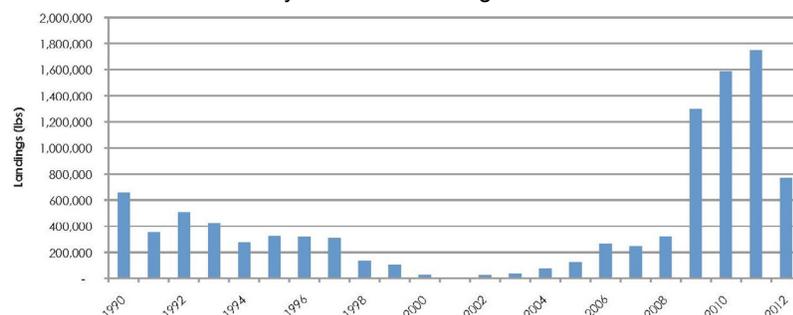
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Morro Bay Overall Landings 1990-2012



Source: Morro Bay 2013 Commercial Fisheries Economic Impact Report, Figure 4.1

Morro Bay Sablefish Landings 1990-2012



Source: Morro Bay 2013 Commercial Fisheries Economic Impact Report, Figure 5.15

## Morro Bay Fixed Gear Sablefish — continued

### Conclusion

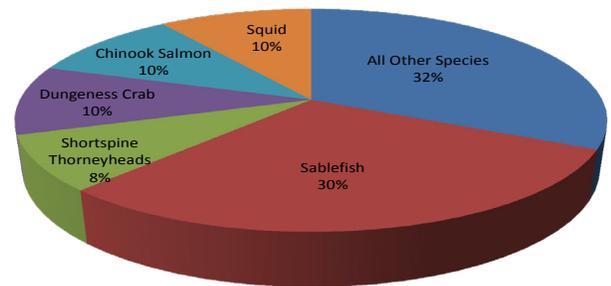
Observer data show a declining trend in the pounds of sablefish caught per gear unit fished from Morro Bay. Fishing has occurred in deeper waters each year, as well as expanded into new areas further away from the port. Some of this effort may be reduced by creating a better balance in sablefish catch limits and quotas for north and south of 36° N latitude. A coast-wide sablefish stock assessment was prepared in 2011, and the annual catch limit (ACL) was apportioned to these two latitudinal areas based on the NWFSC trawl survey average of annual swept area biomass (2003-2010). There remains a drastic difference in landing limits and IFQ quotas between these two areas, which influences the location of fishing pressure.

Fixed gear has been shown to catch other target species, but the higher price of sablefish has kept efforts focused on the more cost effective fishing.

In the overall groundfish fishery, it has also recently been harder for fishermen to attain sablefish harvest goals. In 2012, estimated fishing mortality for sablefish relative to ACL was 88% north of 36° and 56% south of 36° N lat. (Bellman et al. 2013).

This research shows an interesting trend in the sablefish fishery in Morro Bay. As a next step, this type of an analysis of observer data could be done to determine if this is a coast-wide trend or just a localized one.

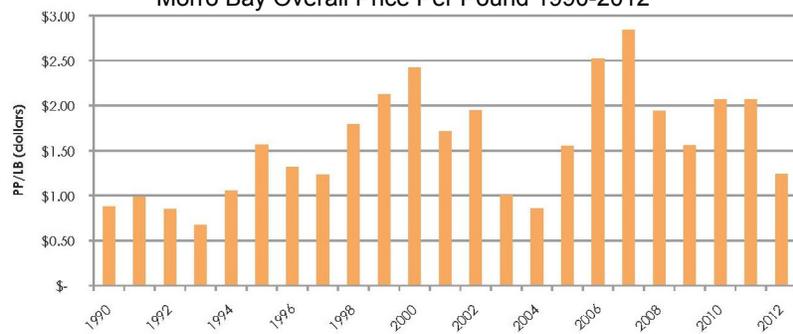
All Species as Share of Total Ex-Vessel Value  
Morro Bay 2012



Source: Morro Bay 2013 Commercial Fisheries Economic Impact Report, Figure 5.1

*continued on page 6*

Morro Bay Overall Price Per Pound 1990-2012



Source: Morro Bay 2013 Commercial Fisheries Economic Impact Report, Figure 4.3

### Where Does the Data Go?

You go to sea, fill out your data sheets, submit them to your debriefer and diligently make your edits. You submit the files to your debriefer and move on to the next trip. Multiply this process by the 100+ catch share and non-catch share observers participating in the Program each year. That's approximately 3000 data files per year. Where does all that information go? Initially it goes to our Seattle office where it is kept onsite until the data is finalized and closed. Then, Rebecca goes to work checking that all the files are accounted for, cataloging them so they can be found later if needed and boxing them up. Finally, the boxes are taken to the local National Archives building where they are stored on a permanent basis, indefinitely.



### How Old is that Otolith??

Want to try your hand at aging fish? Check out this interactive [Age Reading Demonstration](#) on NOAA's Alaska Fisheries Science Center web page. They have a variety of species to choose from and allow you to compare your results with the pros.



# Morro Bay Fixed Gear Sablefish — continued

## References

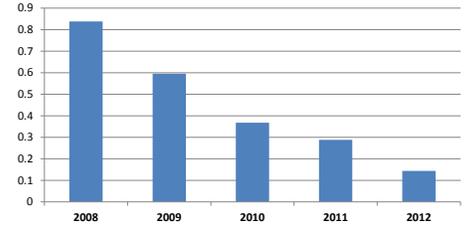
Morro Bay 2013 Commercial Fisheries Economic Impact Report, Lisa Wise Consulting, Inc. 2013

Bellman, M.A., J. Jannot, M. Mandrup, J. McVeigh. 2013. Estimated discard and catch of groundfish species in the 2012 U.S. west coast fisheries. NOAA Fisheries, NWFSO Observer Program, 2725 Montlake Blvd E., Seattle, WA 98112.

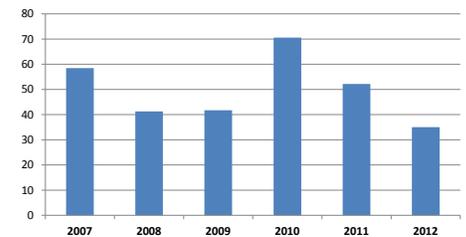
## Acknowledgments

U.S. West Coast Groundfish Observers  
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Lisa Wise Consulting, Inc.  
Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

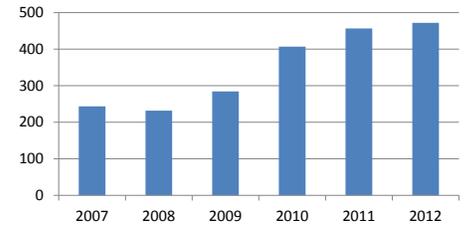
Morro Bay Longline Gear CPUE (Sablefish Pounds per Hook)



Morro Bay Pot Gear CPUE (Sablefish Pounds Per Pot)



Average Depth of Fixed Gear Sets (fm)



LE and OA Fixed Gear Monthly Trip Limits – Relative to North and South of 36°N Latitude

