Forage Fish in Nearshore Waters of Prince William Sound, Alaska

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Problem: Limited information on forage fish species in shallow, nearshore habitats of Prince William Sound

Objective: Identify seasonal distribution, habitat use, and relative abundance of forage fish in nearshore waters

What we did
- Sampled in 2006 (spring, summer, fall) and 2007 (mid & late summer)
- Sampled 3 habitat types
- Sampled 8 locations

Species
- Juveniles and larvae dominated catch
- 4 species accounted for 92% of catch
- Dominant species changed seasonally
- Catch (all spp.) greatest in eelgrass

Habitat
- Catch (all spp.) greater in kelp

What we found
- 119 beach seine hauls
- Whittier
- Knight Island
- Prince William Sound study area
- Gulf of Alaska

What we learned
- Catch and composition changed seasonally
- Saffron cod dominate nearshore fish community
- Vegetated habitats used by herring and capelin
- Nearshore habitats used at least 6 months a year
- Juveniles and larvae dominated catch
- 4 species accounted for 92% of catch
- Dominant species changed seasonally
- Catch (all spp.) greatest in eelgrass

Future plans
- Develop fish habitat model to predict quantity and quality of forage fish habitat in PWS
- Field verify the predictability and accuracy of the model

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