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# Technical Announcement

U. S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement  
Pacific OCS Region

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## ***Fish Assemblages Associated with Offshore Platforms and Natural Reefs in Areas Where Data are Non-Existent or Limited***

### **OCS Study BOEMRE 2010-012**

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE), Pacific OCS Region, announces the availability of a new environmental study report, *Fish Assemblages Associated with Platforms and Natural Reefs in Areas Where Data are Non-Existent or Limited*.

Oil and gas platforms offshore southern California have finite economic lives, and some may be nearing the end of that life span. Existing BOEMRE regulations require complete removal of the 23 platforms in federal waters at the end of their productive life. Complete removal will have effects on the lives of organisms living on and around these structures. The process by which decisions are made as to the disposition of these platforms is called decommissioning, and in federal waters, these decisions involve detailed environmental reviews by the BOEMRE.

At this time, there are several key issues in discussion of Pacific OCS platform decommissioning. Among these issues is the ecological performance and role that platforms may play in the recovery of important groundfish populations (such as bocaccio, *Sebastes paucispinis*, and cowcod, *Sebastes levis*) in southern California. The Secretary of the Department of Commerce in January 2000 declared the West Coast groundfish fishery a disaster with extremely small populations remaining. Recent BOEMRE-funded studies have revealed that some of the platforms hold large numbers of both juvenile and reproductively mature rockfishes in numbers far greater than any natural reef that has been surveyed.

The primary goal of the study was to continue to fill gaps in information about the importance of federal oil and gas platforms as habitats and the importance of their associated fish assemblages offshore southern and central California compared to those of nearby natural reefs on a regional scale. In this study, the fish assemblages were observed from the surface to the seafloor on platforms and natural reefs over a 6-year period, from 2004-2009. The analyses were based on at least 40 submersible and hundreds of SCUBA dives on platforms and on 133 submersible and hundreds of SCUBA dives on natural outcrops located throughout southern California, the Santa Barbara Channel, and off Pt. Conception and Pt. Arguello.

This report is available from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement Pacific OCS Region by referencing OCS Study BOEMRE 2010-012.

(MORE)

The report may be downloaded from the BOEMRE website through the [Environmental Studies Program Information System \(ESPIS\)](#) and is also available in PDF at <http://www.boemre.gov/omm/pacific/enviro/Enviro-Studies/2010-012-fish-assemblages.pdf>. The report is available for viewing in PDF on the University of California at Santa Barbara's Marine Science Institute website at: [www.lovelab.id.ucsb.edu](http://www.lovelab.id.ucsb.edu). Additionally, requests for the report can be made through the following contacts:

BOEMRE  
Pacific OCS Region  
Public Information Office  
770 Paseo Camarillo  
Camarillo, CA 93010  
Telephone requests may be placed at  
(805) 389-7612, 1-800-672-2627, or  
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**BOEMRE Pacific Region Website: [www.boemre/omm/pacific.gov](http://www.boemre/omm/pacific.gov)**