

# Permit Buy-outs & Conservation Leasing in CA

Presented at: A Private Sector Approach –  
Conservation Agreements in support of Marine Protection



**Michael Bell**  
(The Nature Conservancy)

## Same Goal, New Strategy

**Objective:** Abate threat of trawl fishing in project area

**Strategy:** Use TNC assets and methods to collaborate with local partners in establishing a more sustainable Groundfish Fishery in California's Central Coast.

### Action Steps:

1. Secure approval for EFP - gear switching experiment (6 TNC permits)\*
2. Launch Conservation Fishing Agreement (trawl BMPs - 1 permit)\*
3. Acquire 6+ Phase 2 trawl permits (reduce trawl effort)
4. Work with fishermen and communities to build a new way of doing business in the Central Coast (a Regional Fishing Association?)
5. Determine how to best transition TNC permits

- ### TNC Marine Plan
- 2005 TNC completes Marine Ecoregional Assessment
  - Bottom Trawling - threat to sensitive marine habitats
  - TNC acquires 4 years of trawl track data
  - High level by catch
  - Large biomass removed
  - Gear crushes corals, sponges, anemones



## Conservation Fishing Agreement

### "Conservation Easement in the Ocean"

To test the concept and effectiveness of new marine conservation tool - under which TNC would lease a fishing permit to a local fisherman subject to certain restrictions/conditions designed to reduce environmental impacts of the fishing operation.

### Terms of CFA:

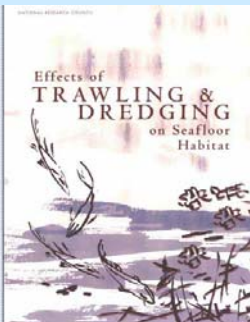
1. Geographic restrictions\*
2. Monitoring protocol
3. Gear design
4. TNC ability to make changes/adaptively manage

### Restricted Fishing Area

- 3 separate areas
- ~1600 sq. miles
- Communication Efforts

### Recommendations:

- ✓ Establish closures
- ✓ Reduce trawl effort
- ✓ Modify gear



NRC (2002) Effects of trawling and dredging  
Nature Conservancy Confidential

## Original Strategic Approach

**Objective -** Abate threat of trawl fishing in project area

**Strategy -** Work with fishermen to identify areas to be off limits to trawling, in exchange for TNC agreeing to buy back permits and vessels to reduce trawling efforts.

### Action Steps

1. Enter into Options to purchase permits/vessels
2. Design EFH closures with fishermen
3. Petition Council for adoption of closures with fishermen
4. Exercise Options – Acquire permits/vessels

## Outcomes

- Trawling banned in 3.8 million acres
- Closures protect 67% of our offshore portfolio
- TNC acquired 6 of 6 permits = 100% effort reduction

## Central Coast No-Trawl Zones

