

SIO No.: 75-7
 State or Country: California Station: _____
 County: _____ Map: _____, 1
 Locality: Monterey submarine canyon, ~~sub~~

 Lat. 36°47.6' N., Long. 121°50.6' W
 Water: _____
 Vegetation: Gift from Moss Landing Marine Lab Fish Coll
 Bottom: Eric Anderson
 Temp.: _____ Sal.: _____ Current: _____
 Dist. offshore: _____ Tide: _____
 Depth of capture: 156 fathoms Depth of water: _____
 Collected by R. Kliever

 Time: _____
 Method of capture: 4' sq "habitat trap" of drift kelp
 Orig. preserv.: _____ Date: 10 Jan 1975
Eueryphycus
61 ~~Maynea~~ californica ^{us} 3(140-173.5)

RARE FISH IN DRIFT EELGRASS

On December 1, 1972, while sampling in the Monterey Bay, Dr. Greg Cailliet and his class were hauling in a gill net, set in the Monterey Submarine Canyon on the 400-foot deep bottom. A clump of eelgrass was snarled in the net and seven unusual fish were nestled in the eelgrass. The discovery of the six-inch reddish "eelpouts" has already generated a semester of study for an undergrad, a scientific paper soon to be submitted for publication by Dr. Cailliet, and a thesis topic for a grad student.

The fish, Maynea californica, were thought to exist south of Pt. Conception only, and to be very rare. Only 16 had ever been reported. Significantly, investigators noted in the few trawl reports that pieces of kelp holdfasts were found in the same hauls that produced this rare species. Dr. Cailliet and undergrad

Ed O'Connor designed and built a "seaweed habitat trap" and placed it on the bottom in deep water. The first trial caught one eelpout plus one octopus. The second attempt yielded 84 eelpouts and 3 octopi.

Dr. Cailliet is writing a brief paper on the range extension and known distribution of the fish. Grad Rich Kliever is probing the ecology of the fish for a master's thesis. Does the eelpout use the weed as a food source or a habitat? Do other organisms? O'Connor determined that amphipods are the primary food of eelpouts; do amphipods use the drift weed? These studies will uncover new information on the ecology of drift seaweed as a temporary habitat. Organisms occupying kelp drifts on beaches and floating kelp in the Pacific Ocean and the Sargasso Sea are well studied. Submerged seaweed drifts are a wide open subject for study.