CAN TRAWLING GEAR BE MODIFIED TO CATCH FISH MORE EFFICIENTLY?

Yeandya Teklu, @YeandyaT, Program on the Environment, University of Washington

Session A, Breakout Room #3

Site Supervisor: Susan Wang, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Faculty Advisor: Tim Billo, Program on the Environment, University of Washington

Video analysis holds a great deal of information needed for researchers and scientists to understand better what improvements are needed in order to save the underwater ecosystem. With that said, bycatch is a major issue affecting marine life and negatively impacting the ecosystem. Trawl gear is largely connected to this issue, its large and aggressive net has been known to injure, kill or target species that were not meant to be caught. This has led to a decline in population, impending population recovery and harm to all kinds of species. The purpose of this study is to collect data on various marine species to better understand what it is that scientists and researchers can do to improve net function therefore improving fisheries management and decrease harm to marine life caught. To accomplish this I analyzed the video footage and categorizing the data to see what behavioral characteristics stood out most when fish interacted with the net. The longer we take to make these improvements the more environmental damage there is. Researching trawl gear and understanding the changes we can make to improve net safety for marine life is mandatory in order to improve the situation we face today.