

Amendment 15

Pacific Whiting Limitation

(Agenda Item G.5.b Attachment 1)



Draft environmental assessment prepared by
ODFW, NMFS, WDFW, and PFMC

Background

- The Council began work on Amendment 15 following the passage of the American Fisheries Act (AFA), suspending efforts in 2001.
- **March 2006-** Legislative Committee
- **June 2006-** Council heard public comment
- **September 2006-** Council approved emergency rule limiting AFA participation in the Pacific whiting fishery

Background Cont.

- **March 2007-** Council approved emergency rule limiting all participation in the Pacific whiting fishery
- **April 2007-** Council adopted Purpose and Need and range of alternatives
- **June 2007-** Council refined Purpose and Need and range of alternatives.

Goal of Proposed Action

Restrict introduction of additional harvest and at-sea processing capital in the fisheries, which could result in an accelerated race for fish.

Limitations of Proposed Action

- Entry limitations alone will not stop the current race for fish, but will prevent accelerated race
- Amendment 15 would be an interim measure until Amendment 20 or other consolidation program is implemented

Need for Action

New entry into all harvesting sectors of the directed Pacific whiting fishery and increased processing capacity is likely and has been observed in recent years

Analysis: General Information

- Analysis of shore-based sector conducted by ODFW
- Analysis of at-sea sectors conducted by NMFS
- Numbers differ in analyses conducted in other initiatives (e.g. Amendment 10, 2007 emergency rule, Intersector Allocation, Trawl Rationalization) due to criteria used in querying data

Defining Shore-based Catcher Vessel Participation

A vessel with a limited entry trawl-endorsed permit and using mid-water trawl gear made at least one whiting delivery to a shoreside whiting processor during the primary whiting season.

Defining Catcher Vessel Mothership Participation

A vessel made at least one delivery to a mothership whiting processor during the at-sea processing season.

Defining Catcher/Processor Participation

- **Significant** participation: A vessel caught and processed whiting at least 1,000 metric tons (mt) of whiting in any one qualifying year

Defining Mothership Vessel Participation

- **Significant** participation: A vessel received and processed at least 1,000 mt of whiting in any one qualifying year.

Qualifying Start Dates

- 1994 – First year of the West Coast limited entry program
- 1997 – Represents the year in which the at-sea allocation was specifically divided into catcher/processor and mothership allocations.

Qualifying End Dates

- **January 1, 2006** reflects the fishery through the 2005 season
- **January 1, 2007** reflects the fishery through the 2006 season

Alternatives

Table 1 (page 13)

Status quo (No Action)

- Any vessel with a West Coast limited entry groundfish permit with a trawl endorsement (176 existing permits) could participate
- New un-permitted vessels would need to purchase trawl endorsement permit(s) adequate to the size of the vessel

Alternative 1A

Includes participation through the 2005 season

All vessels required to have sector specific participation between January 1 1994 & January 1, 2006

Catcher/processor & motherships required to have **significant** participation*

* **Significant**: For catcher/processors having caught and processed at least 1,000 mt of whiting in any one qualifying year. For motherships, having received at least 1,000 mt of whiting in any one qualifying year.

Alternative 1B

Includes participation through the 2005 season

Shore-based and mothership catcher vessels required to have sector specific participation between January 1 1994 & January 1, 2006

Catcher/processor & mothership vessels required to have **significant** sector specific history of participation between January 1, 1997 & January 1, 2006*

* **Significant:** 1,000 mt criteria

Alternative 2A

Includes participation through the 2006 season

All vessels required to have sector specific participation between January 1, 1994 & January 1, 2007

Catcher/processor & motherships required to have **significant** participation*

* **Significant:** 1,000 mt criteria

Alternative 2B

Includes participation through the 2006 season

Shore-based and mothership catcher vessels required to have sector specific participation between January 1, 1994 & January 1, 2007

Catcher/processor & mothership vessels required to have significant sector history of participation between January 1, 1997 & January 1, 2007*

* **Significant:** 1,000 mt criteria

Alternative 3

*Includes participation through the 2006 season
2007 E-Rule (72 CFR 27759) criteria*

All vessels required to have sector specific participation between January 1, 1997 & January 1, 2007

Note: For catcher/processors and motherships no significant historical criteria required

Alternatives Considered But Rejected

- Only restrict participation by AFA-permitted vessels in the whiting fishery
- Restrict participation by AFA-permitted vessels in the non-whiting groundfish fisheries

Alternative Results

Table 2. Number of eligible vessels by sector and alternative

Vessel Category	Alternative 1A 1/1/94-1/1/06	Alternative 2A 1/1/94-1/1/07	Alternative 3 1/1/97-1/1/07
Shore-based catcher vessels	56	63	56
Mothership catcher vessels	64	64	39
Catcher/processor	11	11	10
Mothership	10 7	11 8	7
	Alternative 1B 1/1/97-1/1/06	Alternative 2B 1/1/97-1/1/07	
Catcher/processor	10	10	
Mothership	6	7	

Alternative Results Cont.

Modified Table 2. Summary of participation levels by sector and alternatives, compared to recent season participation

Vessel Category	ACTION ALTERNATIVES			RECENT SEASON PARTICIPATION	
	Alternative 1A 1/1/94-1/1/06	Alternative 2A 1/1/94-1/1/07	Alternative 3 1/1/97-1/1/07	2005	2006
Shore-based catcher vessels	56	63	56	29	37
Mothership catcher vessels	64	64	39	18	20
Catcher/processor	11	11	10	6	9
Mothership	10 7	11 8	7	5	6
	Alternative 1B 1/1/97-1/1/06	Alternative 2B 1/1/97-1/1/07			
Catcher/processor	10	10		6	9
Mothership	6	7		5	6

Consequences of Status quo

Increased harvest and at-sea processing capital could

- reduce the per vessel value for the historical participants,
- have undesirable consequences on overfished and protected species, and
- result in a fishery that is more costly and difficult to manage in an effective manner.

Consequences of Action Alternatives

- Catcher vessels without history may be excluded
- Catcher-processors and motherships without significant participation may be excluded
- Vessels that did not qualify for a particular sector would be ineligible to participate in that sector in the future.
- Hardships in contracting with additional catcher vessels in the future.

Effects

- Physical Environment
- Biological Environment
- Management Structure
- Economic (Changes in Fishery Harvests and Values)

Effects on the Physical Environment

- Actions are administrative in nature (i.e., limiting entry) are not expected to change current fishing areas (i.e., pelagic water) or gear used (i.e., midwater gear).

Effects on the Biological Environment

Direct effects resulting from action may include changes in species mortality levels resulting from implementation of the alternatives.

Biological Effects – Status Quo

- The fishery would likely occur earlier in the year:
 - Smaller fish, more scattered
- Overfishing could result
- Increased interactions between fishing vessels and protected species

Biological Effects – Action Alternatives

- Additional protection to overfished species of rockfish and salmon
- Reduction in bycatch likely
- Increased fishery stability
- Reduced likelihood of high salmon bycatch.
- Less likelihood of an early closure of the whiting fishery

Non-Groundfish Species

The alternative actions are not expected to affect non-groundfish species in any way.

Protected Species

The alternative actions are expected to minimize the risk of excessive bycatch of salmon in the whiting fishery, by reducing pressure to fish early in the season when salmon bycatch is highest.

Changes in Management Structure of the Fishery

None of the alternatives would revise whiting harvest levels, monitoring procedures, season dates, inseason management processes, or inter-sector allocations.

Changes in Fishery Harvests and Values

- Pacific whiting fishery is in overcapacity status (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2006).
- Action alternatives provide an opportunity to avoid additional capacity.

Changes in Fishery Harvests and Values – Status quo

New entry encourages more intensive fishing (i.e., accelerated race for fish)

- greater likelihood of intensive fishing occurring early in the season and resulting in higher bycatch rates (PFMC and NMFS, 2006).
- Can cause substantial economic waste in the form of higher than necessary costs of production and reduced net benefits to society (Department of Commerce, 2006).

Summary of Benefits of Alternatives

To the extent that further limiting entry in the whiting fishery provides biological, economic, and environmental benefits, alternatives with the fewest number of participants likely have the greatest amount of benefit

Modified Table 2. Summary of the likelihood of providing biological or economic benefits and the numbers of eligible vessels by sector and alternative.

Vessel Category	Status Quo	Alternative 1A 1/1/94-1/1/06	Alternative 2A 1/1/94-1/1/07	Alternative 3 1/1/97-1/1/07
Shore-based catcher vessels	Least (Unlimited ¹)	Most (56)	Moderate (63)	Most (56)
Mothership catcher vessels	Least (Unlimited ¹)	Moderate (64)	Moderate (64)	Most (39)
Catcher/processor	Least (Unlimited ¹)	Moderate (11)	Moderate (11)	Most (10)
Mothership	Least (Unlimited ¹)	Moderate (7)	Moderate (8)	Moderate (7)
		Alternative 1B 1/1/97-1/1/06	Alternative 2B 1/1/97-1/1/07	
Catcher/processor		Most (10)	Most (10)	
Mothership		Most (6)	Moderate (7)	

¹Unlimited means that participation limitation is not specified in rule. Participation may realistically be limited by other factors such as infrastructure requirements or permit restrictions.

Council Action

- Council Action: Review the draft EA and adopt a final preferred alternative on participation limitation in the Pacific whiting fishery

End of
Presentation

Status quo (No action)	Alternative 1 (includes participation through the 2005 season)	Alternative 2 (includes participation through the 2006 season)	Alternative 3 (2007 E-Rule 72 CFR 27759)
<p>Harvest capacity limited only by the number and availability of limited entry permits with trawl endorsements: Catcher vessels in the shore-based and mothership sectors and catcher/processors must be registered to a Pacific coast groundfish limited entry permit with a trawl endorsement</p> <p>Processing capacity in the mothership and shore-based sectors are not limited.</p>	<p>Alternative 1A- All vessels required to have sector specific participation between January 1 1994 & January 1, 2006</p> <p>Catcher/processor & motherships required to have significant participation a/</p> <hr/> <p>Alternative 1B – Shore-based and mothership catcher vessels required to have sector specific participation between January 1 1994 & January 1, 2006</p> <p>Catcher/processor & mothership Vessels required to have significant sector specific history of participation between January 1, 1997 & January 1, 2006 a/</p>	<p>Alternative 2A- All vessels required to have sector specific participation between January 1, 1994 & January 1, 2007</p> <p>Catcher/processor & motherships required to have significant participation a/</p> <hr/> <p>Alternative 2B - Shore-based and mothership catcher vessels required to have sector specific participation between January 1, 1994 & January 1, 2007</p> <p>Catcher/processor & mothership Vessels required to have significant sector history of participation between January 1, 1997 & January 1, 2007 a/</p>	<p>All vessels required to have sector specific participation between January 1, 1997 & January 1, 2007</p>

a/ Significant participation means that at least 1,000 metric tons were processed by a mothership or caught and processed by a catcher/processor in any one qualifying year