

April 2017 Pacific Fishery Management Council Update Regional Electronic Technology Implementation Plan:

Upcoming Pacific Fishery Management Council and NMFS WCR Actions:

April 2017

Non-whiting and Bottom Trawl Fleets--On the agenda for the April 6-11 meeting, the Council will confirm or revise the final preferred alternatives for non-whiting midwater and bottom trawl fisheries electronic monitoring regulations. The Council will also receive an exempted fishing permit (EFP) update from National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) regarding activity in the non-whiting midwater trawl and bottom trawl fisheries, including an update on cost information.

Whiting and fixed gear IFQ Fleets--The final rule implementing EM for whiting midwater and fixed gear IFQ fleets will be published-effective January 1, 2018.

Sablefish Fleets--Also on the agenda is the review of existing Sablefish 24-hour electronic fish ticket reporting requirements.

June 2017

Sablefish Fleets: If the Council decides that the Sablefish electronic fish ticket reporting requirements need to be revised in April, the Council will take final action in June. NMFS WCR will then initiate the rule making process to change the regulations.

Background and Related Activities

EM: Whiting midwater and fixed gear IFQ Fleets

The final rule implementing EM for whiting midwater and fixed gear IFQ fleets will be published this spring-effective January 1, 2018. Proposed rule published September 30, 2016. Rule implements an EM program for two sectors of the limited entry trawl fishery. The regulatory amendment proposes to allow catcher vessels in the Pacific whiting fishery and fixed gear vessels in the shorebased Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) fishery to use EM in place of observers to meet the requirements of the Trawl Rationalization Program for 100-percent at-sea observer coverage. Public comment period ended October 6th, and NMFS WCR is developing final rule with expectation that final rule published this April. Rulemaking was delayed as result of higher priority needs to implement a major EFP that allows fishermen to target Widow rockfish. Fishermen will continue to fish under existing EM EFP in 2017.

EM: Non-whiting midwater trawl and midwater trawl IFQ fleets:

Pacific Fishery Management Council scheduled to select preferred alternative at its April Meeting. Goal is to have final implementing regulations for January 1, 2018.

ER: Sablefish Rule

Final rule package published November 23, 2016. Rule is effective starting January 1, 2017. This action revises fishery monitoring and equipment requirements for commercial groundfish fisheries, including a new requirement for submitting electronic fish tickets for limited entry fixed gear and open access vessels that land sablefish. It revises limited entry permitting administrative actions and provides greater flexibility and efficiencies for limited entry groundfish fishery participants. This action also makes administrative changes and clarifying edits to improve consistency of the regulations with past Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) actions and with the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP)

ER: Groundfish Observer Data Collection

The WCGOP has begun field testing our OPTECS (funded through NOP/FIS RFP) observer data collection software in the bottom trawl fishery. The fixed gear software development is nearly complete and we plan to be testing it on the water this season. We are kicking the tires on a number of ruggedized tablets before investing in a system. Fully implemented, this system has the potential to further reduce reporting timelines for fishery dependent data on the west coast.

ER-Vessel Movement Monitoring Rule

The Council adopted increased ping rates for vessels currently under regulation (groundfish, salmon troll, California halibut, ridgeback prawn, and cucumber trawl). The original goal was to have the rule published in January 2017 and final rule in April—but this rule making has been delayed because of loss of staff and current staff diverted to higher priority projects. The Council will consider the use of VMM in the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Drift Gillnet fishery when it reviews HMS regulations for 100% monitoring (through EM or observers) for 2018.

ER: Groundfish Electronic Logbooks

Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) has recently received \$100,000 for this project. PSMFC has developed Microsoft access data entry programs that can be used to as basis of E-logbook for trawlers. Converting this program to a web-enabled program would allow this program to be placed on a laptop and the laptop to capture data without being connected to the internet. The captain would use it at sea, capture the data, and then upload the data when at shore. This logbook and application can also be used for the sablefish fishery. Similarly, a disconnected application can be used for remote buyers of trawl and fixed gear fish. This project will add the trawl catch shares program and the sablefish tier fishery, and help achieve the goals of the West Coast Region (WCR)/Pacific Fishery Management Council's Regional Electronic Technologies Implementation Plan. It will also fulfill the WCR's commitment to the Pacific Fishery Management Council to implement a federal logbook in the sablefish fishery.

EM: Cost Analysis

Cost estimates on fixed gear and whiting show industry cost savings. Cost analysis for bottom trawl fleet also shows cost savings, but we are not as confident about these estimates. Few bottom trawl vessels participated in the 2015 EM EFP, and cost estimates are sensitive to assumptions about the number of participants, the number of trips, and various fixed costs

categories, such as storage and service fees. There has been limited participation by bottom trawl vessels thus far, because retaining species that can't be identified on camera has been burdensome at the volumes caught by this gear. We are continuing to work with participations to reduce this burden and expect increased participation in 2017. For the April 2017 Council Meeting, NMFS WCR and Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission staff are updating estimates for bottom trawl vessels while developing new estimates for the non-whiting midwater trawl fleet.

EM: Groundfish Electronic Monitoring Statistical Research

Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission has recently received \$100,000 to analyze EM data for purposes of supporting upcoming regulations concerning the whiting, bottom trawl, and fixed gear fisheries. Subprojects include comparison of observer to EM data for those trips that carried observers in the 2015 Exempted Fishing Permit, analysis to support less than 100% video review, analysis that supports the development of EM auditing standards for when the responsibility for video review is transferred to the industry, comparisons of retained catch on whiting trips to fish tickets to verify captains' estimates of cod-end capacity, and developing new camera/sensor/fish handling processes that reduce the amount of video recording needed and improve estimates of catch.

EM: Pacific Groundfish Total Catch Accounting using Electronic Monitoring on Fixed Gear Vessels

Pacific States has recently received about \$50K for this project. Vessels participating in the Pacific Groundfish Trawl Catch Share Program are required to have 100 percent monitoring, but the cost of human observers at-sea and human compliance monitors dockside continues to climb. As these costs transition from federal subsidies to industry funding, the industry seeks less costly and more flexible methods to monitor catch and bycatch. EM with video cameras on fishing vessels has proven a viable, potentially cost saving, alternative for monitoring discards the fixed gear fleet, but vessels are still required to use a dockside catch monitor. Dockside monitoring generates logistical issues when vessels land at small ports and contributes to the high cost associated with the current catch monitoring program. This project will test the viability of EM as a data source for total catch accounting at-sea and dockside for fixed gear vessels as part of the West Coast Catch Share Program. In other words, can EM serve as replacement for both human observer on the vessel and the human compliance monitors that observe a vessel's offloads into the fish plant?

EM: Renewal of Groundfish EM EFPs for 2017

The WCR issued EFPs to 45 vessels, including 24 whiting, 14 bottom trawl, and 7 fixed gear vessels. The research priority will be to see if revised retention policies can allow for IFQ species to be discarded. EFPs will continue until replaced by implementing regulations.

EM: WCR/GARFO EM Study Group

August 2017 workshop was held which included representatives from some of the other regions. Workshop also included several lawyers from HQs, WCR, AKR, and OLE—Issues such as confidentiality were discussed. Differences in implementation/council/industry views were also discussed. WCR cost analysis presented.

EM: Swordfish Management and Monitoring Plan

This plan, which the Council is still developing, could include EM and may be discussed at the upcoming Council meetings. A recent drift gillnet EM research project was cancelled due to lack of industry participation.

ER: HMS and CPS Implementation Plan

WCR has recently received funds to explore with the States and PSMFC the development of draft implementation for the implementation of electronic logbook and fish tickets for the West Coast highly migratory and coastal pelagic species fisheries.

ER: Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQ) Electronic Reporting

The NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center is working on adapting an ITQ accounting system for use with smartphones and tablets, project is nearing completion.

ER: Recreational Logbook

All of the SAC (Sportfishing Association of California) vessels are now using the e logbook with no major problems. The e logbook went live in August 2015 and has improved speed the speed of logbook submission. Effects on logbook compliance have not yet been analyzed. There will be an effort made to increase use of the e logbook system to the CPFVs in Central and Northern California. The increased submission speed should increase the accuracy of preliminary catch and effort estimates.

ER: Tribal E-tickets

NWIFC Tribes are developing a e-fish ticket system.