

Pacific Whiting Conservation Cooperative
Amendment 20 Catcher/Processor Cooperative
Preliminary Annual Report 2011

Submitted to the
Pacific Fishery Management Council
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Pacific Whiting Conservation Cooperative Preliminary Annual Report for 2011

Introduction

In 1997, the owners of the catcher/processor (C/P) vessels operating in the Pacific whiting fishery formed a fishing cooperative to coordinate harvesting efforts. This research and harvesting cooperative is the Pacific Whiting Conservation Cooperative (PWCC). A private contract dictates the activities of the PWCC and a harvest agreement facilitates efficient management and accurate accounting of harvest by the PWCC and PWCC member companies.

In 2011, rationalization for the groundfish trawl fishery was implemented via Amendments 20 and 21 to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) summarized the significant effects of Amendment 20 on the shoreside groundfish trawl and mothership whiting fisheries, as well as the effect on the C/P fishery in the September 2, 2011 proposed rule for the Program Improvement and Enhancement (PIE) Rule:

“In January 2011, NMFS and the Pacific Fishery Management Council set up a new management program called the trawl rationalization program. This program significantly changes how two of these groups work. Shore trawlers now fish under their own set of individual species quotas by vessel.... [T]he mothership fishery works as a coop where catcher-vessels and motherships work together collectively. The catcher-processor fleet continues as a single coop.”

Amendment 20 requires a preliminary report be submitted to the Pacific Fishery Management Council in November of the current year and a final report to NMFS the following March.

Purpose of Report

This report is intended to disclose all information required or identified in Federal Regulations at 50 CFR 660.113(d)(3). The table in this report is largely self-explanatory. The catch data in this report was provided by Sea State, Inc. and was obtained from the NMFS – At-Sea Hake Observer Program. Prior to trawl rationalization, NMFS provided a similar report, but with catch information at the sector level (rather than vessel-by-vessel). Catch information at the C/P-vessel level was and is known by NMFS. Therefore, production of this more detailed report by the PWCC should reduce NMFS work load and cost burden.

Reporting Requirements

Federal regulations (50CFR660.113(d)(3)) detail the report requirements:

“(3) Annual coop report - (i) The designated coop manager for the C/P coop must submit an annual report to the Council for its November meeting each year. The annual coop report will contain information about the current year's fishery, including:

“(A) The C/P sector's annual allocation of Pacific whiting;

“(B) The C/P coop's actual retained and discarded catch of Pacific whiting, salmon, Pacific halibut, rockfish, groundfish, and other species on a vessel-by-vessel basis;

“(C) A description of the method used by the C/P coop to monitor performance of cooperative vessels that participated in the fishery;

“(D) A description of any actions taken by the C/P coop in response to any vessels that exceed their allowed catch and bycatch; and

“(E) Plans for the next year's C/P coop fishery, including the companies participating in the cooperative, the harvest agreement, and catch monitoring and reporting requirements.”

A. C/P Sector's Annual Allocation of Pacific Whiting

On May 11, 2011, NMFS issued the C/P cooperative permit, which was effective on the date of issue. As specified at 50 CFR 660.160(c), the C/P cooperative permit authorized the PWCC to harvest 100 percent of the Pacific whiting and non-whiting groundfish allocated to the C/P sector. For 2011, the C/P sector amounts of Pacific whiting and non-whiting groundfish species with allocations are as follows:

2011 C/P sector allocations	mt	pounds
Pacific whiting	75,138.30	165,651,596
Pacific ocean perch	10.20	22,487
Widow rockfish	86.73	191,217
Darkblotched rockfish	8.50	18,739
Canary rockfish	4.79	10,569

B. C/P Cooperative's Actual Retained and Discarded Catch of Pacific Whiting, Salmon, Pacific Halibut, Rockfish, Groundfish, and Other Species on a Vessel-by-Vessel Basis

See Table 1. Catch data is current to the time this report was produced. A final C/P Cooperative Annual Report, with complete catch data, will be provided to NMFS in March 2012. Species are grouped per the advice of NMFS.

C. Description of the Method Used by the C/P Cooperative to Monitor Performance of Cooperative Vessels that Participated in the Fishery

Each vessel in the C/P Cooperative carries two NMFS-certified observers to monitor and account for the catch of Pacific whiting and non-whiting groundfish allocations (i.e., canary rockfish, widow rockfish, darkblotched rockfish, and Pacific ocean perch), and to monitor and account for the catch of prohibited species. Observers report each vessel's catch on a daily basis to both the NMFS Observer Program in Seattle and to Sea State, Inc. (a private, third-party catch monitoring firm).

For 2011, the C/P Cooperative contracted with Sea State, Inc. to process the catch data provided by the observer program and to provide in-season management support. Sea State regularly provides catch reports to each C/P vessel, the C/P fleet, and the C/P Cooperative. These reports may include cumulative fleet-wide and vessel-level catch data as well as tow-by-tow summaries. Fleet managers are able to reconcile the tow-by-tow catch information provided by Sea State against their own catch records to identify possible data errors and ensure accurate catch accounting throughout the fishing season. Sea State reports also provide a mechanism to identify and avoid fishing areas where incidental catch of overfished species and/or prohibited species is occurring. The C/P Cooperative has authorized Sea State, Inc. to identify specific fishing areas to be avoided as a mechanism to reduce catch of overfished species and/or prohibited species.

Catch aboard C/P vessels is weighed using flow scales and motion-compensated platform scales. The flow scale is tested daily by the vessel to ensure the accuracy of the data collected by the NMFS-certified observer. The motion compensated platform scale (or “observer scale”) is also tested every 24 hours, which (as specified in the 2011 NMFS At-Sea Hake Observer Manual) is the responsibility of the NMFS-certified observer. The species composition of the catch is determined by the NMFS-certified observer. Because two observers are aboard each vessel the number of hauls sampled are high, at or near 100 percent. C/P vessels endeavor to provide conditions that facilitate large samples of individual hauls. The use of two observers, flow and platform scales, and high rates of sampling leads to very accurate catch accounting for Pacific whiting, non-whiting groundfish, and prohibited species.

The C/P Cooperative acknowledges and agrees that minimizing incidental catch of overfished species to the extent practicable is a primary objective of the C/P Cooperative. In general, incidental catch of overfished species in the C/P sector is very low. For 2011, each C/P Cooperative member agreed to employ bycatch avoidance techniques recommended by the PWCC Board of Directors and Sea State, Inc. Non-whiting groundfish species amounts (functionally, “bycatch limits”) allocated by NMFS to the C/P sector were assigned to C/P Cooperative members proportional to their Pacific whiting allocations. These hard caps on incidental catch, if exceeded, would cause the C/P sector to cease fishing, thereby ensuring that C/P Cooperative catch of overfished species is minimized to the extent practicable.

D. Description of Any Actions Taken by the C/P Cooperative in Response to Any Vessels that Exceed Their Allowed Catch and Bycatch

As of the date this preliminary report was submitted, no vessels exceeded their allowed catch or bycatch amounts.

E. Plans for the 2012 C/P Cooperative Fishery, Including the Companies Participating in the Cooperative, the Harvest Agreement, and Catch Monitoring and Reporting Requirements

For 2012, companies participating in the C/P Cooperative include:

AMERICAN SEAFOODS COMPANY LLC; GLACIER FISH COMPANY LLC;
TRIDENT SEAFOODS CORPORATION

2012 C/P Cooperative Pacific Whiting Harvest Schedule:

Member	Percentage of Annual Catcher Processor Allocation
American Seafoods Company LLC	49.4%
Trident Seafoods Corporation	29.6%
Glacier Fish Company LLC	21.0%

2012 C/P Cooperative Catch Monitoring and Reporting Requirements:

Each member of the C/P Cooperative carries two NMFS-certified observers aboard each of its vessels to monitor and account for total catch, including catch of prohibited species. Observers report each vessel's catch on a daily basis to both the NMFS Observer Program in Seattle and to Sea State.

For 2012, the C/P Cooperative will contract with Sea State, Inc. to process the catch data provided by the observer program and to provide in-season management support. Sea State regularly provides catch reports to each C/P vessel, the C/P fleet, and the C/P Cooperative. These reports may include cumulative fleet-wide and vessel-level catch data as well as tow-by-tow summaries. Fleet managers are able to reconcile the tow-by-tow catch information provided by Sea State against their own catch records to identify possible data errors and ensure accurate catch accounting throughout the fishing season.

Catch aboard each C/P is weighed using flow scales and motion-compensated platform scales. The flow scale is tested daily to ensure the accuracy of the data collected by the NMFS-certified observer. Testing the flow scale is the vessel's responsibility. The motion-compensated platform scale (or "observer scale") must also be tested every 24 hours, which (as specified in the 2011 NMFS At-Sea Hake Observer Manual) is the responsibility of the NMFS-certified observer. The species composition of the catch is determined by the NMFS-certified observer. Because two observers are aboard each vessel the number of hauls sampled are high, at or near 100 percent. The observer sampling rate is subject to the observer program sampling protocols. C/P vessels endeavor to provide conditions that facilitate large samples of individual hauls. The use of two observers, flow and platform scales, and high rates of sampling leads to very accurate catch accounting for Pacific whiting, non-whiting groundfish, and prohibited species.

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Table 1. 2011 C/P Cooperative's Catch on a Vessel-by-Vessel Basis

Species name	Alaska Ocean	American Dynasty	American Triumph	Island Enterprise	Kodiak Enterprise	Northern Jaeger	Seattle Enterprise
Roundfish (mt)							
PACIFIC WHITING	4,680.89	3,095.30	3,167.70	6,789.84	2,595.68	3,495.38	7,421.63
PACIFIC COD		0.00					0.00
LINGCOD			0.01		0.01		
SABLEFISH (BLACK COD)	0.06	0.01	0.02	0.08	0.02	0.02	0.04
Flatfish (mt)							
ARROWTOOTH FLOUNDER (TURBOT)	0.38	0.41	0.46	1.11	0.15	0.29	1.48
DOVER SOLE				0.01			0.00
ENGLISH SOLE (LEMON SOLE)			0.01				0.00
PETRALE SOLE							
STARRY FLOUNDER							
OTHER FLATFISH				0.02			
Rockfish (mt)							
CANARY	0.04	0.02	0.01	0.18		0.03	0.16
CHILIPEPPER							
BLACK							
DARKBLOTCHED	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.37	0.02	0.06	0.25
LONGSPINE THORNYHEAD							
PACIFIC OCEAN PERCH	0.07	0.05	0.04	0.45	0.01	0.50	1.20
SHORTSPINE THORNYHEAD				0.29	0.00	0.01	0.00
SHORTBELLY							
SPLITNOSE			0.00	1.79			0.88
WIDOW	0.14	0.83	3.43	0.41	0.04	2.61	2.09
YELLOWEYE							
YELLOWTAIL	1.18	0.79	0.63	5.62	0.04	1.95	3.89
ALL OTHER ROCKFISH	4.76	6.39	4.65	13.51	4.62	4.42	4.57
Remaining groundfish (mt)							
SPINY DOGFISH SHARK	0.92	1.28	0.69	1.71	0.59	0.74	28.95
ALL OTHER GROUND FISH	1.67	0.50	3.16	3.61	0.16	1.13	1.42
Prohibited species (mt)							
CHUM SALMON (DOG)	0.01	0.00		0.03	0.01	0.01	0.03
COHO SALMON							
KING SALMON (CHINOOK)	0.02	0.09	0.11	0.10	0.05	0.10	0.17
PINK SALMON (HUMPBACK)	0.00	0.00		0.00		0.00	0.00
SALMON - UNIDENT_				0.02			
SOCKEYE SALMON							
STEELHEAD							
PACIFIC HALIBUT	0.09	0.01		0.21	0.03	0.02	0.06
DUNGENESS CRAB							
Non-groundfish species (mt)							
AMERICAN SHAD		12.18	0.06	0.07		0.02	3.34
FISH - UNIDENT_			0.01			0.00	
FISH WASTE (HEADS, DECOMP,ETC)		0.01		0.08		0.02	
JACK MACKEREL							0.01
JELLYFISH - UNIDENT_	0.00	0.00		0.01		0.01	0.01
MISC - UNIDENT_	0.01	0.03	0.00	0.04			
OCTOPUS - UNIDENT_		0.01		0.02	0.00		
PACIFIC SARDINE	0.00			0.00			0.00
PELAGIC OCTOPUS	0.03						
SQUID - UNIDENT_	4.16	5.41	3.84	8.21	1.91	5.45	4.08
ALL OTHER NON-GROUND FISH	12.59	7.22	12.07	24.23	3.03	14.71	9.93
Total Weight (mt)	4,707.04	3,130.58	3,196.89	6,852.05	2,606.38	3,527.48	7,484.18

note: A cell with 0.00 mt indicates at least a trace amount of this species was caught; a blank cell indicates no amount of that species was caught.