

Pacific Whiting Conservation Cooperative
Amendment 20 Catcher/Processor Cooperative
Preliminary Annual Report 2013

Submitted to the
Pacific Fishery Management Council
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Pacific Whiting Conservation Cooperative Preliminary Annual Report for 2013

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 of the US Pacific coast 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.”

Currently, trawl rationalization regulations require a preliminary report be submitted to the Pacific Fishery Management Council in November of the current year and a final report to NMFS in March the following year.

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 individual vessel information). 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 workload 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

In May 2013, NMFS issued the C/P cooperative permit, which was effective on May 15, 2013. 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 2013, the C/P sector amounts of Pacific whiting and non-whiting groundfish species with allocations are as follows (per NMFS, :Initial Administrative Determination Notice of Right to Appeal, May 7, 2013):

2013 C/P sector allocations	mt	pounds
Pacific whiting	69,373	152,939,715
Pacific ocean perch	10.2	22,486
Widow rockfish	170.0	374,782
Darkblotched rockfish	8.6	18,959
Canary rockfish	7.4	16,314

In July 2013, Glacier Fish Company LLC transferred permit number GF0030 from the Alaska Ocean (USCG# 637856) to the Northern Glacier (USCG# 663457) for a temporary period to allow harvest of whiting by the Northern Glacier during calendar year 2013. Therefore, the Northern Glacier was added to the list of vessels in the C/P cooperative agreement and the Alaska Ocean was removed from the list for the duration of the temporary period. Permit number GF0030 will be transferred back to the Alaska Ocean prior for the 2014 fishing season. NMFS issued a revised C/P cooperative permit on July 26, 2013 incorporating this action.

On September 16, 2013, NMFS re-apportioned 30,000 mt of whiting from the Tribal Set Aside to the non-tribal fishery sectors. This action increased the 2013 C/P sector allocation from 69,373 to 79,573 mt.

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 2014. 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 2013, 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. Regulations at 50 CFR 660.15(b)(3) state that the vessel operator is responsible for ensuring the vessel crew performs daily testing of all at-sea scales (belt and/or platform). 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 2013, 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. Minor adjustments to the C/P cooperative harvest schedule may be made to accommodate the inseason needs of member vessels.

E. Plans for the 2014 C/P Cooperative Fishery, Including the Companies Participating in the Cooperative, the Harvest Agreement, and Catch Monitoring and Reporting Requirements

For 2014, companies participating in the C/P Cooperative include:

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

2014 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%

2014 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 daily catch to the NMFS Observer Program in Seattle and to Sea State.

For 2014, 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.

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Table 1. Preliminary C/P Cooperative 2013 Catch by Vessel, totals as of October 17, 2013

Species	Alaska Ocean	American Dynasty	American Triumph	Island Enterprise	Kodiak Enterprise	Northern Eagle	Northern Jaeger	Pacific Glacier	Seattle Enterprise	Total 10/17/2013
ROUND FISH (mt)										
Whiting	7,154.374	10,185.339	13,210.910	1,006.934	2,377.897	4,776.165	12,477.428	2,522.855	2,889.680	56,601.581
Pacific Cod	0.002									0.002
Lingcod	0.016	0.033	0.013	0.042			0.046			0.150
Sablefish	0.126	2.329	1.219		0.116	0.225	1.093	0.386		5.495
FLATFISH (mt)										
Arrowtooth Flounder	0.076	1.047	2.414	0.062	0.006	0.119	0.594	0.278	0.081	4.676
Dover Sole	0.010	0.133	0.342		0.006	0.009	0.023	0.063		0.586
English Sole		0.002	0.006							0.008
Petrale Sole										
Starry Flounder										
Other Flatfish										
Rex Sole	0.100	2.446	3.037		0.072	0.496	0.758	0.504		7.414
Pacific Sanddab	0.000									0.000
ROCKFISH (mt)										
Pacific Ocean Perch	0.678	0.172	0.029	0.406	1.105	0.047	0.169	0.009	1.324	3.939
Shortbelly Rockfish	0.000				0.000					0.001
Widow Rockfish	0.400	0.241	4.389	3.796	0.231	0.280	2.737		1.239	13.314
Canary Rockfish	0.020	0.003	0.014	0.009	0.026	0.022	0.019		0.064	0.176
Chilipepper										
Splitnose Rockfish	0.096	2.770	4.072		0.006	0.232	0.846	1.098	0.008	9.129
Yellowtail Rockfish	10.453	0.113	7.929	12.682	15.694	7.394	19.052		4.808	78.125
Thornyhead Rockfish Unidentified			0.142							0.142
Shortspine Thornyhead	0.100	2.867	3.611		0.049	0.342	3.408	0.259	0.054	10.690
Longspine Thornyhead Rockfish		0.000								0.000
Dark Blotched Rockfish	0.228	0.368	0.575	0.002	0.097	0.189	0.032	0.001	0.021	1.512
Yelloweye Rockfish										
Minor Shelf Rockfish North	0.043		0.036	0.001	0.075	0.075	0.137		0.797	1.164
Minor Slope Rockfish North	0.841	0.908	0.663	0.566	0.053	0.789	1.745	0.590	0.627	6.783
REMAINING GROUND FISH (mt)										
Spiny Dogfish Shark	1.032	0.549	1.281	0.359	0.159	0.826	2.309	0.623	0.554	7.691
Longnose Skate		0.045								0.045
Other Groundfish	2.833	3.213	5.896	0.011	1.534	2.410	2.699	0.428	0.001	19.026
PROHIBITED and PROTECTED SPP										
Chinook Salmon (numbers of fish)	22	8	16	15	0	24	28	4	0	118
Chum Salmon (numbers of fish)	4	0	3	0	9	0	10	0	0	26
Coho Salmon (numbers of fish)	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Pink Salmon (numbers of fish)	0	0	16	2	1	12	3	0	0	34
Sockeye Salmon (numbers of fish)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Steelhead (numbers of fish)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Salmon Unidentified (numbers of fish)						0				0
Pacific Halibut (mt)	0.175	0.000	0.154	0.000	0.000	0.166	0.208	0.000	0.000	0.703
Dungeness Crab (numbers of fish)										
Eulachon (mt)	0.001			0.000			0.001			0.002
NON-GROUND FISH SPP (mt)										
American Shad	0.003					0.008	0.000		0.004	0.015
Pacific Herring	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001
Humboldt Squid				0.002						0.002
Squid Unidentified	4.221	29.732	58.335	2.463	2.668	2.616	31.369	3.962	3.947	139.313
Jack Mackerel		0.921	0.090		0.002	1.830	0.061		0.290	3.193
Pacific Mackerel			0.001			0.002				0.003
Pacific Sardine		0.001								0.001
All Other Non-Groundfish	0.195	0.204	0.432	0.035	0.268	0.126	0.409	0.093	0.068	1.828