Pacific Whiting Harvest Specifications and Management Measures

Photo: Greg Gillson. Perpetua Bank

Ben Enticknap, Oceana
Pacific Fishery Management Council Agenda Item F.3
March 2008
Stock Assessment Concerns

“The Panel failed to follow the assessment terms of reference and produced a base model for catch advice that has serious technical flaws. The ABC forecast from this base model, if implemented, has a high risk of causing serious harm to the hake stock.”

- A. Sinclair, S. Martell, C. Grandin, J. Fargo – members of the STAT Team
Stock Assessment Concerns Cont...

“...the hake population is dominated by a single year-class now 9 years old, the population biomass is declining and at its historic minimum, the exploitation rate is increasing and at its historic maximum, and there is no indication of good recruitment. Prudent management suggests catches should be reduced under these circumstances, not increased.” - Ibid.
As such, spawning biomass for the most recent years, while generally lower than predicted in the 2007 assessment, is greater relative to the estimate of SBzero and therefore results in a higher depletion estimate.

- Hesler et al. 2008
“If the United States is to manage fisheries within an ecosystem context, food-web interactions, life-history strategies, and trophic effects will need to be explicitly accounted for when developing harvesting strategies.”

Minimize Bycatch

Chinook Salmon Catch in the Pacific Whiting Fisheries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinook number</td>
<td>8,751</td>
<td>11,916</td>
<td>3,954</td>
<td>6,186</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Photo: At-sea widow rockfish discards

Troll caught chinook.
Recommendations

• Hard bycatch caps and area closures for overfished/ depleted rockfish and salmon
• Improved monitoring (address EC findings September 2007).
• Management Strategy Evaluation to determine whether the current harvest policy is appropriate for Pacific whiting and ecosystem needs.
Recommendations

“Given the current status of the stock, declining biomass, poor recruitment, spiking exploitation rates, and the high degree of uncertainty regarding key vital population parameters, it seems prudent to forecast the ABC at a lower exploitation rate than what has been estimated for the past several years.”

- A. Sinclair, S. Martell, C. Grandin, J. Fargo – members of the STAT Team
OY Recommendation

Given high degree of uncertainty in the model, declining trends, and lack of ecosystem considerations, we recommend no increase in the current catch level until a Management Strategy Evaluation is conducted evaluating the best whiting catch strategy and to account for ecosystem needs.

Risk Neutral: Status Quo OY = 328,358 mt coastwide

Risk Averse Policy = 264,000 mt (Martell, S. Feb 19, 2008)