

## MONITORING PROGRAM ALTERNATIVES FOR THE SHORE-BASED PACIFIC WHITING FISHERY

Situation: A permanent monitoring program for the shore-based Pacific whiting fleet needs to be developed and implemented, because of the specification in the Pacific Coast salmon and groundfish fishery management plans (FMPs) and the 1992 Biological Opinion analyzing the effects of the groundfish fishery on salmon stocks listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The issue of salmon retention in the groundfish trawl fisheries was brought before the Council in 1996 in the form of Amendment 10 to the Pacific Coast Groundfish FMP and Amendment 12 to the Pacific Coast Salmon FMP. Based on an Environmental Assessment drafted to analyze these amendments, the Council recommended the exempted fishery permit (EFP) process be used temporarily until a permanent monitoring program could be developed and implemented in the shore-based Pacific whiting fishery. EFPs are intended to provide for limited testing of a fishing strategy, gear type, or monitoring program that may eventually be implemented on a larger fleet-wide scale and are not a permanent solution to the monitoring needs of the shore-based Pacific whiting fishery. Results of the shore-based Pacific whiting EFPs indicate that it is feasible to retain and appropriately monitor the incidental take of salmon and groundfish other than Pacific whiting in the shore-based Pacific whiting fishery.

The Council last considered this matter in September 2003 when the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) presented a preliminary draft Environmental Assessment which included a range of alternative monitoring systems for the shore-based Pacific whiting fishery. The Council appreciated the initial efforts of the NMFS Northwest Regional Office, but recommended postponing adoption of a preliminary range of alternatives until more public input could be garnered.

In keeping with the Council's recommendation that the range of alternatives be further developed prior to public review, NMFS held a public scoping meeting on December 8, 2003, in Newport, Oregon to further engage federal and state personnel and to involve industry in the development of alternatives. NMFS Northwest Region staff met with the three West Coast state agencies as well as individuals from the shore-based whiting industry and Archipelago Marine Research Ltd. (a world leader in the field of fisheries monitoring and marine environmental assessment) to discuss full retention and monitoring in the shore-based Pacific whiting fishery. In an effort to evaluate if electronic monitoring is an appropriate tool for full retention monitoring in the shore-based whiting fishery, NMFS recently awarded Archipelago a contract to provide electronic monitoring services for the shore-based whiting fleet during the 2004 Pacific whiting EFP. Additionally, NMFS and Archipelago Marine Research staff have been attending Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's mandatory meetings for participants in the 2004 shore-based whiting EFP to further discuss the range of alternatives with state personnel and the shore-based whiting industry. These meetings generated fruitful discussion on the range of alternatives and have helped shape the range of alternatives presented and analyzed in the Preliminary Draft Environmental Assessment.

The alternatives currently focus on the following major issues: 1) establishing retention and monitoring requirements; 2) verifying full retention of catch; 3) sampling prohibited and overfished species; 4) tracking disposition of overage or donation fish, and; 5) funding of the monitoring program.

The Council needs to consider and adopt for public review the preliminary range of alternatives for a monitoring program for the shore-based Pacific whiting fishery. Final Council action on this matter is scheduled for September, when the Council identifies a preferred alternative. NMFS will then prepare a proposed rule for public comment followed by a final rule implementing a monitoring program before the start of the 2005 primary Pacific whiting season.

**Council Action:**

**1. Adopt Alternatives for Public Review.**

**Reference Materials:**

1. Exhibit C.7.a, Attachment 1: Preliminary Draft Environmental Assessment, Establishing a Full Retention and Monitoring Program in the Shore-based Pacific Whiting Fishery, NMFS, Northwest Region.

**Agenda Order:**

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|---|----------------|
| a. Agendum Overview   | Mike Burner    |
| b. NMFS Recommendations and Environmental Assessment                              | Carrie Nordeen |
| c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies  |                |
| d. Public Comment   |                |
| e. <b>Council Action:</b> Adopt Monitoring Program Alternatives for Public Review |                |

PFMC  
05/25/04