

## FMP AMENDMENT 10 (SHORE-BASED WHITING MONITORING)

A permanent monitoring program for the shore-based Pacific whiting fleet needs to be developed and implemented. This program would meet the requirements to monitor incidental catches of salmon in the whiting fishery, as stipulated in the 1992 Biological Opinion that analyzed effects of the Pacific Coast groundfish fishery on Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed salmon stocks. Such a program would also allow for accurate tracking of depleted groundfish species mortality.

The issue of salmon retention in the groundfish trawl fisheries was first brought before the Council in 1996 in the form of Amendment 10 to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and Amendment 12 to the Pacific Coast Salmon FMP. Based on an Environmental Assessment drafted to analyze these amendments, the Council recommended the temporary use of the exempted fishery permit (EFP) process until a permanent monitoring program could be developed and implemented in the shore-based Pacific whiting fishery. Since that time, the EFP process has been employed each year to monitor this sector. However, 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 this monitoring issue. 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 has considered this monitoring issue at a number of meetings since 1996. At the September 2003 meeting, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) presented a preliminary draft Environmental Assessment that included a range of alternative monitoring systems for the shore-based Pacific whiting fishery. The Council recommended postponing adoption of a preliminary range of alternatives until more public input could be collected. Following a public scoping meeting convened in Newport, Oregon, the Council again considered the alternatives and adopted a preliminary range at the June 2004 meeting. However, a number of issues concerning how the monitoring program would operate to meet analytical requirements under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and the ESA were still unresolved at that time, and the Council again postponed taking final action.

From 2004 to the present, NMFS and the states have operated the fishery under an EFP using an electronic monitoring system to verify maximized retention at sea. Amendment 18 adopted electronic monitoring as a potential fishery monitoring tool, in Section 6.4.1.1 of the FMP:

*Electronic monitoring is an automated alternative to some human data collection systems. Electronic monitoring equipment may provide accurate, timely, and verifiable information on some elements of fishing operations at a lower cost than that provided by an at-sea observer. Electronic monitoring is an integrated assortment of electronic components combined with a software operating system. An electronic monitoring system typically includes one or more video cameras, a CPU with removable hard drive, and software that can integrate data from other components of a vessel's electronic equipment. The system autonomously logs*

*video and vessel sensor data during the fishing trip without human intervention. When the vessel has completed its fishing operations and returned to port, the video and other data are transferred to a separate computer system for analysis. Video records are typically reviewed by human samplers on shore, but electronic techniques are being developed to automate some of this activity.*

At its June 2006 meeting, under Agenda Item B.6., “Workload Priorities,” the Council asked that the three State agencies and NMFS meet over the summer to discuss next steps in a monitoring and management program for the shore-based whiting fishery. The Council also asked that the agencies discuss the analysis that would be needed to implement sector bycatch caps for overfished species and/or salmon taken in the three non-tribal whiting sectors.

State and Federal agency technical staff met with each other via conference call on Monday, July 31, 2006. Technical staff then reported to and met with State and Federal agency policy staff on Wednesday, August 2, 2006. A joint agency report summarizing those meetings is provided as an attachment for this agenda item.

**Council Task:**

- 1. Provide comment on joint agency report and recommendations for further issue development.**

**Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item C.8.b, Summary of Joint Agency Meeting: Report on Joint State-Federal Discussion on Whiting Fishery Monitoring and Management, Particularly for the Shore-Based Whiting Fishery.
2. Agenda Item C.8.b, Example EFP: Example of a 2006 Pacific Groundfish Exempted Fishing Permit for Monitoring Incidental Catch in the Shore-Based Pacific Whiting Fishery.

**Agenda Order:**

- a. Agendum Overview
  - b. Joint Agency Meeting Review
  - c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
  - d. Public Comment
  - e. **Council Action:** Assess Current Status and Recommend Future Action.
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Agency Staff

PFMC  
8/28/06