

ENFORCMENT CONSULTANTS REPORT ON PACIFIC WHITING HARVEST
SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR 2009

The 2008 shoreside Pacific whiting fishery took place in three separate openings throughout the year, as was done in 2007. The duration of each opening was as follows:

Early: May 1-May 21, 2008

Main: June 15- August 19, 2008

Late: October 12-December 21, 2008

The number of participating vessels remained the same in 2008, halting a trend of slight increases since 2004. A total of 36 vessels completed 609 trips and 1248 sets, compared with 820 trips and 1796 sets by 36 vessels in 2007.

Data collection success rates were very high in 2008. There were 568 trips with 100 percent sensor data and 566 trips with 100 percent video data (includes trip with insignificant losses of 0.2 percent or less). Overall, sensor data was more than 98 percent complete and video data was 96.5 percent complete. The largest single loss of video data represents more than half of the total hours of video lost. If this is removed from the totals, the video data success rate jumps to more than 98 percent.

The biggest change in fleet behavior for the 2008 season was the decrease in discarding activity. The total volume of discards dropped from 770 mt in 2007 (1 percent of total catch) to 125 mt (0.25 percent of total catch) in 2008. The percentage of discarding events showed substantial drops in key areas, such as a percentage of total sets (15 percent to 4 percent), and medium and large volume discards (53 percent to 36 percent). Discards on sets other than the last set of a trip also dropped sharply (2007:49; 2008:7), indicating vessels mostly followed the regulation of returning to port after discards occurred. The comparison also shows that the number of vessels with discards decreased. In 2004, 23 of 24 vessels discarded; in 2005, 27 of 28 vessels discarded; in 2006, 31 of 35 discarded; and in 2007, 33 of 36 vessels discarded a percentage of their catch. Discards were confined to 18 of the 36 vessels that participated in the 2008 fishery.

Looking at the 18 vessels with discards, 13 discarded less than 1 percent of their total catch. Three vessels discarded 50 percent of the total discard volume. There were 52 sets with discards, and only seven of those events on sets other than the last set of a trip.

Of the 18 vessels with discard event(s), 9 vessels self reported. Two self reported investigations have been concluded with verbal warnings. The other 16 violations remain under investigation.