

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON WHITING ELECTRONIC MONITORING FINAL ALTERNATIVES AND REGULATIONS

Following review of the Groundfish Electronic Monitoring Policy Advisory Committee (GEMPAC) draft report and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) electronic monitoring (EM) performance report (i.e., costs and accuracy of EM as opposed to audited logbooks; [Agenda Item I.5.a, Supplemental NMFS Report 2](#)), the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) believes that both the Council preferred Alternative 2 (camera recordings used to estimate discards with 100 percent video review) and the GEMPAC recommended Alternative 3 (use logbooks to estimate discards with logbook audits with camera) are viable methods to accurately monitor discards in the Pacific whiting fisheries, in lieu of human observers.

In the NMFS performance report ([Agenda Item I.5.a, Supplemental NMFS Report 2](#)), differences in quantities of discards between camera estimates and audited logbooks were similar for both the shoreside Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) and mothership sectors (i.e., 80 percent and 84 percent of estimates were within 1,000 lbs, respectively). Further, while there were differences, they were generally non-directional (i.e., frequency and magnitude of differences were relatively balanced in terms of over- or under-estimates).

If the Council chooses the audited logbook approach, the **GMT recommends a performance driven audit rate to increase the incentive for accurate reporting of logbook discards.** For example, start with a greater audit rate initially (e.g., 40 percent), and then decreasing the rate if the fleet performs well. Given the reduced costs associated with the partial video review associated with audited logbooks (as opposed to 100 percent under Alternative 2), this performance driven audit rate should provide industry an incentive to maintain or improve the accuracy of their logbook discards.

Finally, **the GMT supports the recommendations in the draft GEMPAC report.** The GMT believes that by delaying the regulations deeming, and allowing for additional discussion and suggested webinars during the deeming process to work out various concerns and business rules would be beneficial. Several questions regarding regulations still exist, such as: If camera and logbook discard estimations differ by a certain level, which source of discard is used for removing from the IFQ vessel accounts? Should a logbook be developed (or amended) to create a single source of landings and discard? Who keeps the record of those discard logs? However, the GMT would like to remind the Council that if the regulations are delayed for deeming until March or April 2016 (as recommended in the GEMPAC report), this may cause some potential issues, and will require some decisions by NMFS/Council. First, whiting vessels under the EM EFP could either continue fishing under the EFP through 2017 or could switch over from operating under EFP to operating under regulations. This may cause some limited disruptions with regards to having to stop fishing and complete any required paperwork. An additional consideration for the Council is that the EM rulemaking for the fixed gear sector is slated to be in place by 2017. If the whiting fleet continued to operate under EFPs until the end of 2016, it is the GMT's understand that this could result in a delay in the fixed gear EM rulemaking. On the other hand, discussions with industry and recommendations from the GEMPAC report have

alluded to a preference for waiting to ensure that regulations are developed that resolve current issues or uncertainties rather than getting them in place just for the start of the season.

PFMC
11/16/15