

## **Shorebased Whiting Cooperative**

Salmon Mitigation Plan Postseason Report on the 2022 Pacific Whiting Fishery

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## **Purpose of Report**

The Shorebased Whiting Cooperative is submitting a Salmon Mitigation Plan (SMP) Report for the 2022 season on behalf of its membership, all of whom are party to SMP-2022-02. This report is intended to disclose all information required or identified in 50 CFR 660.113(e)(6).

## **SMP Report Requirements**

(6) ***SMP postseason report.*** The designated SMP representative for an approved SMP must submit a written postseason report to NMFS and the Council for the year in which the SMP was approved.

(i) ***Submission deadline.*** The SMP postseason report must be received by NMFS and the Council no later than March 31 of the year following that in which the SMP was approved.

(ii) ***Information requirements.*** The SMP postseason report must contain, at a minimum, the following information:

(A) Name of the SMP and SMP identification number.

(B) A comprehensive description of Chinook salmon bycatch avoidance measures used in the fishing year in which the SMP was approved, including but not limited to, information sharing, area closures, movement rules, salmon excluder use, and internal bycatch guidelines.

(C) An evaluation of the effectiveness of these avoidance measures in minimizing Chinook salmon bycatch.

(D) A description of any amendments to the terms of the SMP that were approved by NMFS during the fishing year in which the SMP was approved and the reasons the amendments to the SMP were made.

### **(A) Name of the SMP and SMP identification number.**

Salmon Mitigation Plan for the Shorebased Whiting Cooperative. SMP identification number: SMP-2022-02

### **(B) A comprehensive description of Chinook salmon bycatch avoidance measures used in the fishing year in which the SMP was approved, including but not limited to, information sharing, area closures, movement rules, salmon excluder use, and internal bycatch guidelines.**

The Shorebased Whiting Cooperative relied on timely information sharing to minimize encounters with Chinook salmon in 2022. Near real time catch data was shared with Cooperative members and the At-sea Cooperatives. The effective sharing of information provided key data

for members to move away from hot-spots, mitigating further salmon encounters. The SWC also utilized salmon excluders and internal bycatch guidelines to avoid Chinook.

**(C) An evaluation of the effectiveness of these avoidance measures in minimizing Chinook salmon bycatch.**

The SWC members caught 1,810 Chinook, 16% of the Chinook cap, while landing 169,895,463 lbs of whiting. The cooperative encountered more Chinook than last year, however the catch numbers were similar to those observed in pre-COVID19 years. The increase in Chinook was primarily due to the overlap of whiting aggregations and Chinook migrations, likely driven by environmental conditions. The mitigation tools described in section B were effective as the Cooperative experienced very few 'lightning strikes.' Recent EFP studies in the Bering Sea Pollock fishery have found salmon excluders to have a 15-30% escapement rate when used by vessels with similar horsepower and gear configurations to SWC members. The effectiveness of salmon excluders is largely dependent on the individual vessel; however, these studies support the cooperative's use of excluders as an effective mitigation tool. Additionally, the cooperative's communication was instrumental in minimizing Chinook encounters, prompting members to move from fishing grounds when elevated Chinook were present.

**(D) A description of any amendments to the terms of the SMP that were approved by NMFS during the fishing year in which the SMP was approved and the reasons the amendments to the SMP were made.**

No amendments to the SMP were made in 2022.