



## New England Fishery Management Council

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John Pappalardo, *Chairman* | Paul J. Howard, *Executive Director*

### FINAL MEETING SUMMARY

Pelagics Committee (Whiting)

Holiday Inn, Mansfield, MA

May 3, 2007

The Pelagics Committee met on May 3, 2007 to continue the development of alternatives for consideration in an amendment to the Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to address the management of small mesh multispecies (silver hake/whiting, red hake, offshore hake) and to develop recommendations related to observer coverage on U.S. at-sea processing vessels (herring-related issue taken up under Other Business).

**Meeting Attendance:** David Pierce, Chairman; John Nelson, David Simpson, David Goethel, Terry Stockwell, and Laurie Nolan, Pelagic Committee members (Dana Rice and Phil Ruhle absent); Lori Steele, NEFMC staff; Michael Ruccio, NMFS NERO; Amy Van Atten and Sara Wetmore, NEFSC Observer Program; Matt Cieri, ME DMR; Tom Swim, Hank Lackner, Dan Farnham, Russell Sherman, and Maggie Raymond, Whiting Advisory Panel members; Vincent Carillo Jr., Gib Brogan, Stephen Arnold, Don Swanson, Evan Cornell, Roger Fleming, Peter Baker, Robert Fitzpatrick, Jim Kendall, Steve Weiner, Chris Weiner, Christopher Pease, and several other interested parties.

#### ***Alternatives for Optimum Yield and TAC-Based Management***

The Pelagics Committee reviewed preliminary work completed by the Whiting Plan Development Team (PDT) for the development of alternatives for optimum yield (OY) and management measures based on total allowable catches (TACs). Ms. Steele and Mr. Ruccio presented the PDT's preliminary work and identified issues that require additional discussion by the Committee, Advisory Panel, and PDT. Of primary concern to the Committee was the time series of historical landings by stock (northern/southern) that, in part, forms the basis of the relative exploitation indices that are used to develop OY specifications. The stock assessment workshop apportions whiting and red hake landings to the northern and southern stocks based on a pro-ration scheme applied across the total landings from the dealer weighout database; in addition, the Whiting PDT provided landings from the Cultivator Shoal Whiting Fishery separately based on information reported in vessel trip reports (landings from the CSWF are assumed to come from the northern stock).

Several Pelagics Committee members expressed concern about the accuracy of the time series of stock-specific landings resulting from the proration scheme applied during the stock assessment. Mr. Goethel noted that in some recent years, the CSWF landings from the VTRs, which should be a subset of the northern area landings, are higher than the total northern area landings. Ms. Steele noted that the Science Center is investigating the proration scheme and will be revising the landings from 1994 forward, but she was unsure when this work would be completed for small mesh multispecies. She suggested that at this time, the TAC/OY alternatives should be developed by the Committee and PDT in concept, recognizing that the absolute numbers associated with the specifications may change as landings are updated and/or

revised. The timing for such changes, however, remains unclear. Committee members agreed that the data-poor nature of this fishery will complicate the development of TACs and other management measures in this amendment, and several advisors and industry members expressed concern about this during the discussion.

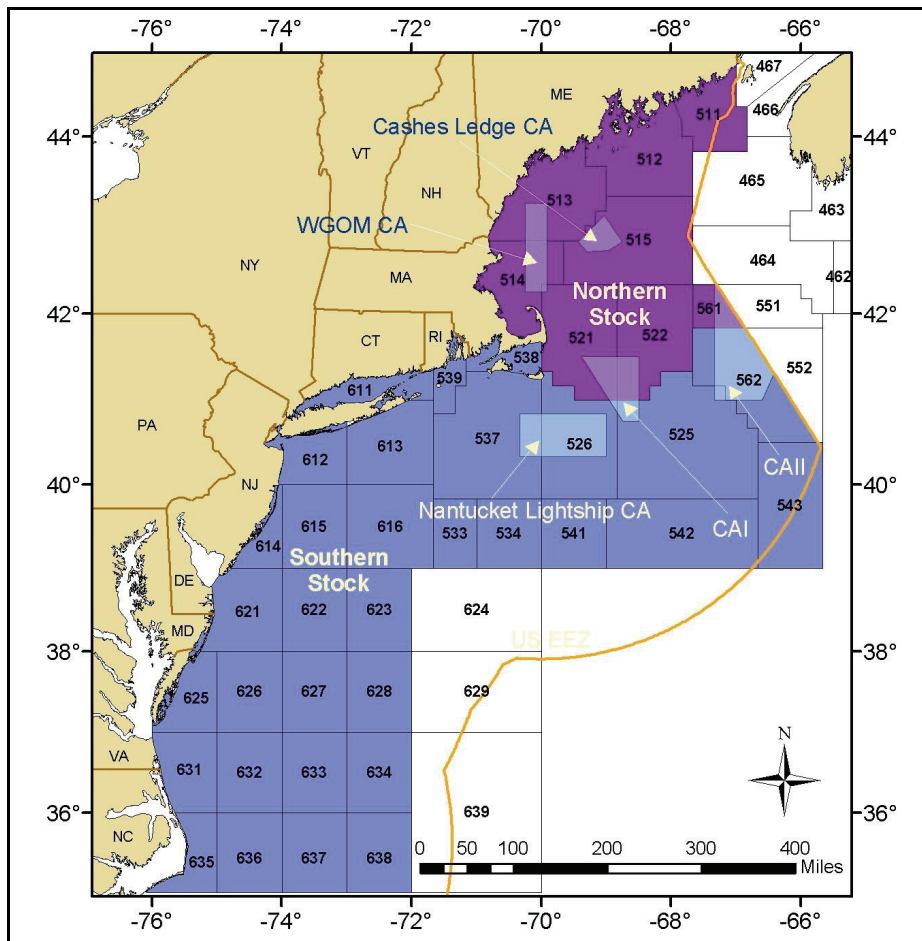
The Pelagics Committee agreed that the stock areas used in the assessment and to prorate landings should be incorporated into the amendment as management areas if this amendment ultimately includes stock-specific TACs and/or other measures.

**1. MOTION: NELSON/STOCKWELL**

To use the boundaries illustrated in Figure 1 (see figure below) as an alternative for management areas for the small mesh multispecies amendment (including the portions of 465 and 464 that are in U.S. waters)

**Discussion on the Motion:** The Committee agreed that these management areas would facilitate the monitoring of catch quotas for each of the small mesh multispecies stocks and would be based on the best available scientific information about small mesh multispecies stock delineation at this time.

**Figure 1 Proposed Management Areas for Small Mesh Multispecies (Northern and Southern Management Areas)**



**The motion carried unanimously.**

The Pelagics Committee discussed the possible alternatives for optimum yield (OY) developed by the Whiting PDT. The alternatives are based on a three-year average relative exploitation index, as suggested by the Committee at the February 28, 2007 meeting.

## **2. MOTION: NELSON/SIMPSON**

For northern silver hake, develop an OY/TAC alternative based on the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile of relative exploitation from the 1980-2006 time frame

**Discussion on the Motion:** Several Committee members again expressed concern about the accuracy of the time series of stock-specific landings used to form the basis of the OY specifications. A few Committee members suggested that the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile may be too conservative if the landings are not accurate, especially for the northern stock area. The Cultivator Shoal Whiting Fishery is perhaps the most economically-important fishery for the directed whiting fleet, and this fishery falls in the northern stock area. Mr. Stockwell raised concerns about bycatch of small mesh multispecies and noted that the limited bycatch information available indicates that bycatch alone may be higher than the OY values proposed for the northern stock. Dr. Cieri confirmed that bycatch is not currently included in the OY specifications (due to lack of information) and suggested that the Committee may therefore want to be more conservative when specifying OY and the TACs in order to account for bycatch/discards. Ms. Steele clarified that the proposed TACs are intended to reflect total catch but are based only on historical landings at this time. She added that they will likely be monitored based on landings until a better system is established to accurately document bycatch and count it against the TAC. Mr. Swim argued that the Committee should be less conservative with the OY specifications given what he feels are major problems associated with the time series of stock-specific landings.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

## **3. MOTION: GOETHEL/STOCKWELL**

To develop an alternative for the northern stock of whiting based on the median relative exploitation from the 1980-2006 time frame

**Discussion on the Motion:** Mr. Farnham questioned the Committee's support of the 1980-2006 time frame and wondered if the MSY time frame (1973-1982) should instead form the basis of the OY specifications. He reminded the Committee that the Amendment 12 trip limits have influenced catch in the fishery since 2001 and, in some cases, may have reduced landings.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

## **4. MOTION: NELSON/STOCKWELL**

To develop an alternative for the northern stock of whiting based on the 15<sup>th</sup> percentile of relative exploitation from the 1980-2006 time frame

**Discussion on the Motion:** Mr. Nelson clarified that the intent of this motion is to develop an alternative that more closely corresponds to landings from the fishery in the most recent years (2004-2006).

**The motion carried unanimously.**

## 5. MOTION: NELSON/STOCKWELL

For southern silver hake and the two red hake stocks, develop OY alternatives based on the same percentiles as northern whiting for the 1980-2006 time frame (15<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, and median value)

**Discussion on the Motion:** Mr. Swim expressed concern that the alternatives under development may be overly conservative, especially given the uncertainties associated with the landings data. He suggested that the Committee may want to consider less conservative options for the southern stock of whiting in particular.

### **The motion was perfected:**

For southern silver hake and the two red hake stocks, develop OY alternatives based on the same percentiles as northern whiting for the 1980-2006 time frame (15<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, and median value) as well as the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile

**The perfected motion carried unanimously.**

### ***Bycatch Discussion***

The Pelagics Committee reviewed a summary of available bycatch information for whiting and red hake, prepared as part of the last stock assessment, as well as some preliminary discard analysis provided by the Whiting PDT. This information characterizes the bycatch of whiting and red hake in directed and non-directed fisheries and provides discard estimates based on discard/kept ratios by gear type and target species. Overall, estimating whiting and red hake bycatch is very difficult at this time, given the limited information with which to base the calculations. Information at-hand suggests that bycatch appears to be greater in the southern area versus the northern area and highest on otter trawl trips where hake and/or pout is identified as the primary target species. Ms. Steele reiterated that the current OY/TAC alternatives are based on landings only and suggested that the Committee may want to consider a more conservative approach to account for bycatch until such time that bycatch can be incorporated into and counted against the TACs.

Dr. Pierce noted that the uncertainties associated with bycatch of small mesh multispecies (limited data, no estimates of total bycatch, etc.) would be of greater concern at this time if the fishery was landing amounts closer to the proposed OY/TACs. He suggested that there may be a way to account for bycatch through a "buffer" approach as long as the uncertainty about bycatch does not result in unnecessary constraints on the directed fisheries for small mesh multispecies. Mr. Goethel agreed that extrapolations of the available bycatch data across all fisheries that encounter small mesh multispecies would be inappropriate because the nature and composition of bycatch as well as overall bycatch rates vary considerably by area, vessel size, and target fishery. Ms. Raymond reminded the Committee that the Whiting and Groundfish Advisory Panels identified concerns in the past about the bycatch of other groundfish in the small mesh multispecies fisheries and asked whether the Committee intends to address this issue. Ms. Steele confirmed that the PDT will explore this issue further and provide the Pelagics Committee with information to characterize the bycatch of other species in the small mesh multispecies fisheries at a future meeting. Mr. Brogan suggested that relative to bycatch, this amendment focus on implementing the tools necessary to collect more and better information.

### *Alternatives for a Specifications Process*

#### **6. MOTION: NELSON/SIMPSON**

Consider the three alternatives for specification process in the small mesh multispecies amendment (no action, annual, multi-year)

**Discussion on the Motion:** Mr. Goethel expressed some concerns about a three-year process based on three-year moving averages and potential problems associated with projecting three years ahead for the specifications, especially given the limited data on which to base the specifications. Mr. Swim suggested that the Committee consider adding adjustments to possession limits for small mesh multispecies to the list of measures that could be addressed as part of the specifications process.

#### **The motion was perfected:**

Consider the three alternatives for specification process in the small mesh multispecies amendment (no action, annual, multi-year), and include the ability to adjust possession limits as part of the specifications process

#### **The perfected motion carried unanimously.**

### *TAC Monitoring and Reporting*

The Committee reviewed some background information provided by the NMFS Regional Office regarding the current monitoring systems in place for TACs in other fisheries. The Committee agreed that similar options should be explored in the small mesh multispecies amendment for monitoring TACs for whiting and red hake, should quotas be established in this amendment. There is some uncertainty about the most appropriate mechanism for monitoring area-specific quotas, however. Mr. Goethel felt that dealer data may be most appropriate for quota monitoring and could be utilized to monitor area-specific quotas if the area fished information from the VTRs could be better linked to the dealer reports.

#### **7. MOTION: GOETHEL/NELSON**

For TAC monitoring, clarify the potential approach to use dealer reported landings data as the primary source, by adding a requirement to submit the area fished from the logbooks

**Discussion on the Motion:** Mr. Goethel clarified that this would require a change to fishermen's logbooks (VTRs) so that the dealers can report statistical area fished. The Committee also agreed that the intent is to consider all three approaches described by the NERO at this time and further develop any alternatives for the small mesh multispecies fisheries as appropriate. Mr. O'Malley reminded the Committee that the reporting requirement implied in the motion has been explored on several occasions in different fisheries and has been rejected in a number of plans, primarily due to the potential for mis-reported areas fished. Mr. Simpson suggested that the Committee may want to explore different reporting requirements for different areas.

#### **The motion carried unanimously.**

### ***Alternatives for a Limited Access Program***

The Pelagics Committee reviewed additional preliminary analysis of potential qualifiers under a limited access program and discussed related issues (see May 3, 2007 Limited Access Memo, Attachment 1). The Committee confirmed that the recommendation was made in November 2006 to move forward with limited access qualification criteria based on the following poundage requirements: 1,000; 10,000; 50,000; 100,000; 500,000; and 1,000,000 pounds. These poundage options will form the basis of alternatives for limited access permits at this time, although they may be further modified by the Committee at a later date.

The Pelagics Committee also addressed other issues identified in the May 3, 2007 memo and provided additional recommendations and clarifications to the PDT. One issue that required clarification was the application of a requirement that vessels possessed a permit for small mesh multispecies as of the March 25, 2003 control date for small mesh multispecies.

### **8. MOTION: GOETHEL/NELSON**

To include a requirement for limited access qualifying vessels to have held a small mesh multispecies permit ON March 25, 2003 (Approach #1 in the May 3 limited access memo)

**Discussion on the Motion:** Mr. Goethel felt that this approach would best minimize the potential for speculative entrants in the fishery to qualify for a limited access permit. However, several Committee members expressed concern with this approach and felt that it may not best reflect the Committee's intent with respect to the control date requirement, as it would eliminate vessels that may have participated in the fishery prior to the control date simply because they do not possess a permit ON the control date itself. Moreover, the difference between the number of vessels that would qualify under the two approaches for utilizing the control date requirement appears to be relatively small. While it is unclear why vessels may have relinquished their small mesh multispecies permit during the 2002 fishing year prior to the control date, the majority of Committee members felt that these vessels should still be eligible to qualify for a limited access permit because they did hold a small mesh multispecies permit before March 25, 2003.

### **MOTION TO SUBSTITUTE: NELSON/NOLAN**

To include a requirement for limited access qualifying vessels to have held a small mesh multispecies permit during the 2002 fishing year up to March 25, 2003 (Approach #2 in the May 3 limited access memo)

**Additional Discussion on the Motion:** None.

**The motion to substitute carried 4-1.**

**The substitute motion was voted as the main motion and carried 4-1.**

The Pelagics Committee then discussed some details of the potential qualification criteria and provided additional guidance to the Whiting PDT. Mr. Nelson questioned the need to consider 1,000 pounds for qualification into a limited access directed fishery program. Mr. Stockwell expressed some reluctance to narrow down the limited access alternatives too much and felt that the Committee should continue to explore a number of possibilities at this time.

## 9. MOTION: GOETHEL/SIMPSON

To use the HIGH FIVE AVERAGE approach for the limited access directed fishery permit alternatives

**Discussion on the Motion:** Mr. Goethel expressed support for the motion because using an average of the highest five years over the time period would help to better capture the vessels that participate regularly in the directed fisheries for small mesh multispecies, versus vessels that may participate part-time and/or for just one season. Ms. Raymond expressed opposition to this motion due to the nature of the fisheries in the northern area. Small mesh fishing in the northern area has been very limited geographically and temporally since Amendment 5 was implemented in 1993, so opportunities to participate in the directed fishery during the qualifying time period have been few and far between for some vessels, particularly vessels from ports in Maine that must travel farther to participate (in the Cultivator Shoal Whiting Fishery, for example). Mr. Carillo added that the economics of the fishery and rising fuel prices have further precluded participation for some of these vessels in recent years.

**The motion failed 2-3. (Both options for qualifying landings will be considered further at this time.)**

## 10. MOTION: SIMPSON/NOLAN

To use the 1/1/95 – 12/31/05 time period for qualification under all of the limited access alternatives

**Discussion on the Motion:** Mr. Simpson expressed support for narrowing down the qualification options and suggested that one time frame be the focus of the qualification criteria for the directed fishery. Several Committee members expressed opposition to moving forward without using the control date as part of the qualifying time period in any of the alternatives considered in the amendment.

**The motion failed 1-4.**

## 11. MOTION: SIMPSON/NO SECOND

Eliminate 1/1/93-12/31/05 as a time period for further consideration in the limited access directed fishery permit

**The motion failed with a lack of a second.**

### *Limited Access Permits for Incidental Catch Fisheries*

The Pelagics Committee discussed possible approaches to address incidental catch fisheries as part of the limited access program being developed in the small mesh multispecies amendment. Several ideas were considered, and ultimately, the Committee agreed to seek further guidance from the Whiting Advisory Panel on this issue. Specifically, the Committee wants the Advisory Panel to consider a three-tier permit program: (1) a limited access permit for the directed small mesh multispecies fisheries; (2) a limited access permit for incidental catch fisheries, perhaps with a possession limit associated with it; and (3) an open access permit for other fisheries, associated with a very small possession limit. The Advisory Panel should consider this approach and provide recommendations as to what may be appropriate possession limits to consider for these permit categories.

The Committee also discussed the possibility of developing separate limited access programs for the northern and southern management areas and agreed to seek additional feedback from the Advisory Panel and PDT regarding the further development of this approach. Ms. Steele identified some potential difficulties associated with this approach, especially if area-specific TACs are established in a fishery

where some vessels qualify to fish in some areas, and others qualify to fish in all areas. She also noted that qualification criteria for an area-specific limited access program cannot require historical landings to come from specific areas, so the landings to qualify in a particular management area could come from any area. The Committee directed Council staff and the PDT to outline an area-specific approach to limited access and discuss the concept further with the Whiting Advisory Panel.

**In general, the Committee expressed more support for a three-tier limited access program, as described above, that would apply to the entire fishery. The Committee directed Council staff and the Advisory Panel to focus more effort on developing this approach in more detail at this time.**

### *Alternatives to Address “Historical Fisheries”*

Ms. Steele reviewed several general approaches, developed primarily by Council staff for discussion purposes, to address “historical” fisheries in this amendment, i.e., historical whiting fishermen who used to participate significantly in the fishery and may have lost access to the resource in more recent years. Many of these fishermen may not qualify for the limited access directed fishery based on the qualification criteria under consideration in this amendment. Examples include Mid-Atlantic fishermen south of New Jersey, primarily in North Carolina where whiting landings were more significant in the early to mid 1980s. There are also concerns about fishermen in Downeast Maine who may have lost access to the resource since the mid-1980s.

Mr. Goethel suggested that the PDT explore a combination approach that would establish limited access in high catch areas and a TAC set-aside process to accommodate historical fisheries in other areas should the need arise in the future. Several Committee and audience members emphasized the need to clearly identify these historical vessels or fisheries. Mr. Stockwell stated that in Maine, the issue is primarily geographic in nature. Vessels from Downeast Maine have lost access to the fishery due to changes in the resource, groundfish regulations, and market conditions. Mr. Goethel expressed support for addressing historical fisheries but felt that these management approaches should not be aimed at trying to resolve market issues.

### **12. MOTION: SIMPSON/GOETHEL**

To use the PDT recommended boundary for the limited access program in the alternatives that apply limited access to high catch areas only, and also include Area 515 and the portion of 464 that falls in U.S. waters as part of that area

**Discussion on the Motion:** Mr. O’Malley reiterated the need to clearly define and identify “historical” fisheries and suggested that the Committee may want to consider addressing this issue from an inshore/offshore perspective (versus north/south).

**The motion carried unanimously.**

The Pelagics Committee agreed that the Whiting Advisory Panel should meet prior to the next Committee meeting to review the alternatives for the small mesh multispecies amendment and provide related advice/recommendations.

### ***Other Business – Herring: Observer Requirements for At-Sea Processors***

The Pelagics Committee addressed an issue related to the Atlantic herring fishery during Other Business. At the February 2007 Council meeting, there was a discussion of how fish transferred to at-sea herring processors such as the M/V American Freedom would be monitored to determine bycatch levels. Of particular concern to Council members was the potential for bycatch of haddock should the catch of Georges Bank herring increase.

As a result of the Council discussion, staff was asked to provide background information on observer requirements for at-sea processors in other U.S. fisheries. To that end, discussion of this issue was included on the agenda of the May 3, 2007 Pelagics Committee meeting, and the Committee was asked to review the background information and provide a recommendation to the Council regarding further action on this issue.

Ms. Van Atten, who works in the Sea Sampling (Observer) Division of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, explained that the Center has about 150 days set aside to observe the herring and mackerel fisheries this year and intends to increase coverage during times when the American Freedom is scheduled to be operating in the fisheries. Observers may be deployed on both the catcher and processor vessels. However, current regulations mandate that catcher vessels take observers on board whenever asked by NMFS, but this provision is only voluntary for the at-sea processing vessels at this time. A Council action to mandate processing vessels to carry observers when asked would strengthen the ability to collect more bycatch information and may also provide an opportunity to implement some sampling protocols for at-sea processing vessels.

Several members of the audience commented in support of a Committee recommendation for the Council to take action on this issue. In addition, numerous similar written comments were received and reviewed by the Committee. Several commenters expressed support for action to require observers on at-sea processors as a way to better ensure compliance with the current catch cap for haddock. Mr. Baker noted that CHOIR supports 200% coverage on the at-sea processor (two observers who could alternate shifts so as not to miss any codend transfers). Mr. Brogan noted that NMFS' current omnibus amendment for Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology only addresses harvesting vessels, and he urged the Committee and Council to take similar action for at-sea processing vessels.

### **13. MOTION: GOETHEL/NOLAN**

That the Council take action so that NMFS can require at-sea processors to take observers, in the most expedient way possible, because there is no way to observe the catch on vessels that transfer codends to the processor and because this is the most efficient way to observe a number of vessels, and further that catcher boats be required to deliver the entire catch (codend) to the processor, to the extent possible, so that accurate observations can be made.

**Discussion on the Motion:** Dr. Pierce and Mr. Goethel questioned whether there is a need for the Council to take action to make this regulatory change. Ms. Raymond reminded the Committee that many important management issues did not make the priority list for action during 2007 and suggested that the Council would need to reconsider all of these issues as well, if it plans to take another action this year. She felt that there is not enough information to suggest that this issue in particular is of more immediate concern than other management issues which did not make the Council's priority list.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

Also under Other Business, Mr. Stockwell emphasized the need to examine updated trawl survey data for herring in light of the changes made by NMFS to the 2008 and 2009 specifications.

**14. MOTION: STOCKWELL/NO SECOND**

That the Fall Trawl Survey results for Atlantic herring in 2006 be provided to the Council

**The motion failed with a lack of a second.**

Ms. Steele noted that the Herring PDT would likely meet later during the summer/early fall to update the survey and would provide this information to the Council. At that time, the Council can determine whether it should request that NMFS reconsider the further reductions it proposes for 2008 and 2009.

The Pelagics meeting adjourned at approximately 5:45 p.m. A Whiting Advisory Panel meeting will be scheduled in early June to continue work on the development of alternatives for consideration and analysis in an amendment for small mesh multispecies.

**Pelagics Committee Meeting**

**May 3, 2007**

**Attachment 1:**

**May 3, 2007 Memo Re. Limited Access Information**

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MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** May 3, 2007  
**TO:** Pelagic Oversight Committee Members  
**FROM:** Lori Steele, Whiting PDT Chairman  
**SUBJECT:** **Additional Limited Access Information**

Attached are tables that characterize the potential number of qualifiers for a small mesh multispecies limited access program based on different qualifying time periods and landing (pounds of all small mesh multispecies) requirements.

At the February 28, 2007 Pelagics Committee meeting, the Committee agreed that the following be considered for limited access qualification criteria (**directed fishery**) at this time:

	1/1/93-12/31/05		1/1/95-3/25/03		1/1/95-12/31/05	
POUNDS	HIGH 1 SUM	HIGH 5 AVG	HIGH 1 SUM	HIGH 5 AVG	HIGH 1 SUM	HIGH 5 AVG
1						
100						
1,000						
5,000						
10,000						
25,000						
50,000						
100,000						
150,000						
200,000						
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800,000						
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900,000						
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1,000,000						
2,000,000						

The Pelagics Committee also agreed that possession of a permit for small mesh multispecies as of the March 25, 2003 Control Date should be a requirement of the limited access directed fishery program. This requirement, however, requires some additional clarification. There are two potential ways to interpret the control date permit requirement:

1. vessels are required to have held a permit for small mesh multispecies **ON** March 25, 2003; or
2. vessels are required to have held a permit for small mesh multispecies **DURING** the 2002 fishing year as of March 25, 2003 (any time from May 1, 2002 – March 25, 2003).

For purposes of analysis, the permits during the 2002 fishing year that would allow a vessel to possess small mesh multispecies include:

- Mul A NE Mults – Individual DAS - 2002
- Mul B NE Mults - Fleet DAS - 2002
- Mul C NE Mults – Small Vessel Exempt-2002
- Mul D NE Mults – Hook Gear - 2002
- Mul E NE Mults – Combination - 2002
- Mul F NE Mults – Large Mesh Individual DAS – 2002
- Mul G NE Mults – Large Mesh Fleet Das – 2002
- Mul K NE Mults – Open Access – 2002

Using approach #1 identified above (on March 25, 2003), there are **2,170** potential qualifiers for a limited access program for small mesh multispecies.

Using approach #2 identified above (during the 2002 fishing year up to March 25, 2003), there are **2,228** potential qualifiers for a limited access program for small mesh multispecies.

In total, the difference between the two approaches is about **58** vessels. The most significant differences can be seen at the lower poundage requirements for limited access permits.

While the information provided above characterizes the potential number of qualifying vessels based on small mesh multispecies permit possession, the number of potential qualifying vessels decreases considerably when landings requirements are applied. For example, of the 2,170 vessels that possessed a small mesh multispecies permit under approach #1 above, only **1,078** have any recorded small mesh multispecies landings. Of the 2,228 vessels under approach #2 above, only **1,100** have recorded small mesh multispecies landings. These numbers better reflect the pool of potential qualifiers for a limited access permit, since the qualification criteria will likely include a requirement for some amount of small mesh multispecies landings (see attached tables).

With all of the possible combinations of qualifying criteria – date ranges and poundage requirements – it is very difficult for the PDT to provide additional analysis that may be useful for decision-making purposes at this time. Once the alternatives are narrowed and become more refined, the PDT can provide more information about both the qualifying and the non-qualifying vessels. At its May 3, 2007 meeting, the Pelagics Committee should review the following tables and further refine the limited access alternatives that will be analyzed in this amendment. Some issues the Committee may want to address include:

- **Clarification of the requirement to have possessed a permit for small mesh multispecies as of the March 25, 2003 control date:** As discussed above, the differences between the two approaches that may be used for the control date permit requirement are relatively minor. The differences are more significant at lower poundage requirements (less than 10,000 mt), which may not be entirely appropriate for qualification for the limited access directed fishery permits. The Pelagics Committee should clarify the control date permit requirement and select one approach to utilize in the limited access program. A decision about this issue would decrease the number of possible alternatives by 50%.
- **Selection of High 1 Sum versus High Five Average:** The High 1 Sum approach qualifies vessels based on their highest year of small mesh multispecies landings during the qualifying time period. The High Five Average approach is more restrictive and qualifies vessels based on the average of their five highest years of small mesh multispecies landings during the qualifying time period. If vessels did not land small mesh multispecies during five of the qualifying years, zero catches are added for the additional years to determine the average of five years. The Pelagics Committee may want to review the attached tables and select one of these approaches for further consideration at this time, since poundage requirements can be utilized under either approach to allow a greater or lesser number of vessels to qualify for the limited access directed fishery permit. Selecting one of these approaches and eliminating the other from further consideration would decrease the number of possible limited access alternatives by 50%.
- **Selection of specific poundage requirements for limited access alternatives:** The Pelagics Committee should begin to select specific poundage requirements to consider further during the development of limited access alternatives. The attached limited access tables are shaded to illustrate which combinations of dates and required landings are likely to result in a similar number of vessels that qualify for the permit.

For the Draft EIS and public hearing document, a range of alternatives should be developed that include specific poundage requirements and qualifying time periods. The range of limited access alternatives, however, should be fully fleshed out, address the scope of issues at-hand, and allow for thorough analysis of impacts on all affected entities. A list of more than 25 possible poundage requirements (see attached tables) makes it very difficult to conduct a thorough impact assessment at this time. The Pelagics Committee should consider its intent with respect to a limited access program for the directed small mesh multispecies fishery and should narrow the scope of poundage options to more specifically address the intent of the limited access directed fishery program. Focusing the development of limited access qualification criteria on a smaller number of poundage requirements will allow the

Whiting PDT to better flesh out the details of the limited access program and conduct a more detailed analysis of impacts.

- **Development of alternatives for a limited access incidental catch permit:** Much of the Pelagics Committee's discussion and Whiting PDT's work to date has focused on qualification criteria for a limited access directed fishery permit. If the Committee wants to consider alternatives for a second tier of limited access for incidental catch vessels, it should start to identify appropriate qualification criteria and poundage requirements at this time. In addition to the attached tables, all of the preliminary limited access qualification information from the February 28, 2007 Committee meeting will be provided for consideration of limited access incidental catch permit alternatives at the May 3, 2007 meeting.

The attached tables also provide some preliminary information to characterize how many of the qualifying vessels may already use a vessel monitoring system (VMS) due to requirements in other fisheries (groundfish, for example). At higher poundage requirements, the majority (80% or more) of vessels that would qualify for the limited access directed fishery permit already use a VMS.

**Held Permit on Control Date (3/25/2003)**

Minimum Qualifying Landings (lb)	1/1/1993 - 12/31/2005		1/1/1995 - 12/31/2005		1/1/1995 - 3/25/2003	
	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum
1	1052	1078	994	1020	963	987
100	725	852	674	790	645	768
1,000	456	577	418	531	402	514
5,000	298	395	271	369	258	357
10,000	242	332	226	310	217	297
25,000	186	248	171	231	160	219
50,000	151	198	140	182	129	173
100,000	105	155	87	137	81	130
150,000	72	117	63	103	61	97
200,000	60	92	53	81	51	76
250,000	50	78	42	72	41	66
300,000	44	64	38	56	34	51
350,000	38	57	32	53	28	50
400,000	26	54	23	47	21	45
450,000	23	50	22	42	19	40
500,000	19	44	17	35	13	34
550,000	18	39	16	31	11	30
600,000	14	35	13	27	11	25
650,000	12	29	11	23	8	20
700,000	12	24	11	21	8	18
750,000	9	22	6	20	6	17
800,000	7	21	5	19	5	16
850,000	6	18	5	16	5	13
900,000	6	15	5	13	5	11
950,000	6	14	4	12	4	11
1,000,000	6	13	4	12	4	11
2,000,000	0	1	0	1	0	1

>1,000 vessels
600-999 vessels
300-599 vessels
100-299 vessels
50-99 vessels
25-49 vessels
10-24 vessels
1-9 vessels
0 vessels

**Held Permit at some time during 5/1/2002 - 3/25/2003**

Minimum Qualifying Landings (lb)	1/1/1993 - 12/31/2005		1/1/1995 - 12/31/2005		1/1/1995 - 3/25/2003	
	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum
1	1072	1100	1013	1040	982	1007
100	739	866	683	800	654	778
1,000	465	591	424	540	408	523
5,000	305	403	276	375	263	363
10,000	247	339	230	315	221	302
25,000	189	254	173	235	162	223
50,000	153	202	142	185	131	176
100,000	105	158	87	139	81	132
150,000	72	120	63	105	61	99
200,000	60	93	53	82	51	77
250,000	50	79	42	73	41	67
300,000	44	65	38	57	34	52
350,000	38	58	32	54	28	51
400,000	26	54	23	47	21	45
450,000	23	50	22	42	19	40
500,000	19	44	17	35	13	34
550,000	18	39	16	31	11	30
600,000	14	35	13	27	11	25
650,000	12	29	11	23	8	20
700,000	12	24	11	21	8	18
750,000	9	22	6	20	6	17
800,000	7	21	5	19	5	16
850,000	6	18	5	16	5	13
900,000	6	15	5	13	5	11
950,000	6	14	4	12	4	11
1,000,000	6	13	4	12	4	11
2,000,000	0	1	0	1	0	1

**Held Permit on Control Date (3/25/2003)**

Minimum Qualifying Landings (lb)	1/1/1993 - 12/31/2005		1/1/1995 - 12/31/2005		1/1/1995 - 3/25/2003	
	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum
1,000	456	577	418	531	402	514
10,000	242	332	226	310	217	297
50,000	151	198	140	182	129	173
100,000	105	155	87	137	81	130
500,000	19	44	17	35	13	34
1,000,000	6	13	4	12	4	11

**Held Permit on Control Date (3/25/2003)**

Minimum Qualifying Landings (lb)	1/1/1993 - 12/31/2005		1/1/1995 - 12/31/2005		1/1/1995 - 3/25/2003	
	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum
1,000	465	591	424	540	408	523
10,000	247	339	230	315	221	302
50,000	153	202	142	185	131	176
100,000	105	158	87	139	81	132
500,000	19	44	17	35	13	34
1,000,000	6	13	4	12	4	11

**Percentage of Vessels with VMS  
Held Permit on Control Date (3/25/2003)**

Minimum Qualifying Landings (lb)	1/1/1993 - 12/31/2005		1/1/1995 - 12/31/2005		1/1/1995 - 3/25/2003	
	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum
1	61%	60%	62%	61%	61%	61%
100	68%	66%	69%	67%	69%	67%
1,000	73%	69%	74%	70%	74%	70%
5,000	76%	73%	78%	74%	78%	74%
10,000	77%	74%	79%	76%	79%	76%
25,000	78%	76%	81%	77%	81%	77%
50,000	80%	77%	81%	79%	80%	79%
100,000	81%	81%	85%	82%	84%	82%
150,000	82%	82%	83%	83%	82%	84%
200,000	83%	83%	83%	81%	82%	82%
250,000	86%	85%	90%	83%	90%	83%
300,000	89%	88%	89%	89%	91%	88%
350,000	87%	88%	88%	89%	89%	88%
400,000	92%	87%	96%	87%	95%	87%
450,000	96%	88%	95%	88%	95%	88%
500,000	95%	89%	94%	89%	92%	88%
550,000	94%	90%	94%	90%	91%	90%
600,000	93%	91%	92%	93%	91%	92%
650,000	92%	93%	91%	96%	88%	95%
700,000	92%	92%	91%	95%	88%	94%
750,000	100%	91%	100%	95%	100%	94%
800,000	100%	90%	100%	95%	100%	94%
850,000	100%	89%	100%	94%	100%	92%
900,000	100%	93%	100%	92%	100%	91%
950,000	100%	93%	100%	92%	100%	91%
1,000,000	100%	92%	100%	92%	100%	91%
2,000,000	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%

**Percentage of Vessels with VMS  
Held Permit at some time during 5/1/2002 - 3/25/2003**

Minimum Qualifying Landings (lb)	1/1/1993 - 12/31/2005		1/1/1995 - 12/31/2005		1/1/1995 - 3/25/2003	
	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum
1	61%	60%	61%	60%	61%	61%
100	67%	65%	69%	67%	69%	66%
1,000	73%	68%	75%	70%	75%	70%
5,000	75%	73%	78%	74%	78%	74%
10,000	77%	74%	79%	76%	79%	76%
25,000	78%	75%	81%	77%	81%	77%
50,000	80%	77%	81%	79%	80%	80%
100,000	81%	80%	85%	83%	84%	83%
150,000	82%	82%	83%	84%	82%	84%
200,000	83%	83%	83%	82%	82%	82%
250,000	86%	85%	90%	84%	90%	84%
300,000	89%	88%	89%	89%	91%	88%
350,000	87%	88%	88%	89%	89%	88%
400,000	92%	87%	96%	87%	95%	87%
450,000	96%	88%	95%	88%	95%	88%
500,000	95%	89%	94%	89%	92%	88%
550,000	94%	90%	94%	90%	91%	90%
600,000	93%	91%	92%	93%	91%	92%
650,000	92%	93%	91%	96%	88%	95%
700,000	92%	92%	91%	95%	88%	94%
750,000	100%	91%	100%	95%	100%	94%
800,000	100%	90%	100%	95%	100%	94%
850,000	100%	89%	100%	94%	100%	92%
900,000	100%	93%	100%	92%	100%	91%
950,000	100%	93%	100%	92%	100%	91%
1,000,000	100%	92%	100%	92%	100%	91%
2,000,000	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%

**Percentage of Vessels with VMS  
Held Permit on Control Date (3/25/2003)**

Minimum Qualifying Landings (lb)	1/1/1993 - 12/31/2005		1/1/1995 - 12/31/2005		1/1/1995 - 3/25/2003	
	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum
1,000	73%	69%	74%	70%	74%	70%
10,000	77%	74%	79%	76%	79%	76%
50,000	80%	77%	81%	79%	80%	79%
100,000	81%	81%	85%	82%	84%	82%
500,000	95%	89%	94%	89%	92%	88%
1,000,000	100%	92%	100%	92%	100%	91%

**Percentage of Vessels with VMS  
Held Permit on Control Date (3/25/2003)**

Minimum Qualifying Landings (lb)	1/1/1993 - 12/31/2005		1/1/1995 - 12/31/2005		1/1/1995 - 3/25/2003	
	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum	High-5 Average	High-1 Sum
1,000	73%	68%	75%	70%	75%	70%
10,000	77%	74%	79%	76%	79%	76%
50,000	80%	77%	81%	79%	80%	80%
100,000	81%	80%	85%	83%	84%	83%
500,000	95%	89%	94%	89%	92%	88%
1,000,000	100%	92%	100%	92%	100%	91%