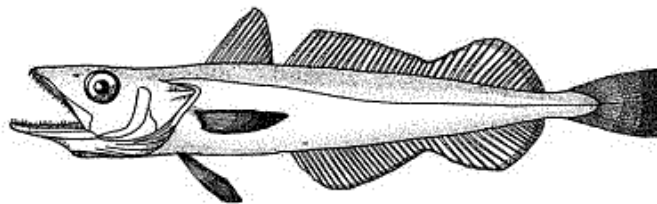
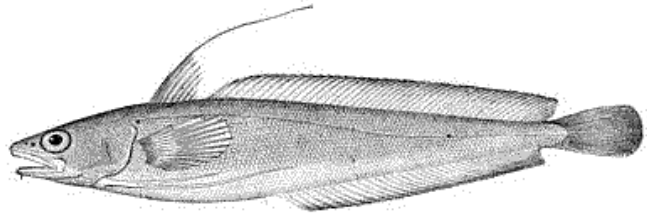
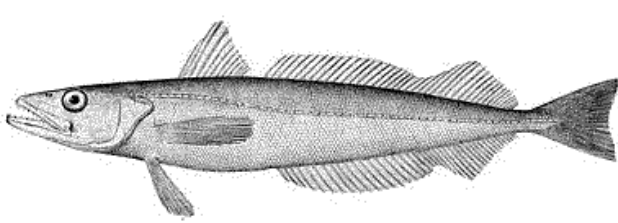


**ADDENDUM TO
FRAMEWORK ADJUSTMENT 38
to the
NORTHEAST MULTISPECIES FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN
(for Whiting, Red Hake, & Offshore Hake)**

ADDENDUM

**To Establish an Exempted Grate Raised Footrope Trawl Fishery
in the Inshore Gulf of Maine**



Prepared by the New England Fishery Management Council

in consultation with

Maine Department of Marine Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Addendum Submitted by NEFMC:

March 28, 2003

Addendum to Framework Adjustment 38

The following information should be added to the beginning of Section 6.0, Analysis of Impacts, p. 16 of the Framework 38 document.

Impacts of the No Action Alternative

Under the no action alternative for this framework adjustment, the Council would not establish a grate raised footrope trawl fishery in the inshore Gulf of Maine. This framework adjustment, therefore, would not be necessary, as the establishment of this fishery is the only action proposed. The impacts of taking no action in this framework adjustment are equivalent to maintaining status quo conditions in the small mesh multispecies fishery. Current regulations for small mesh multispecies would remain effective in the region, as established in Amendment 12 and modified in Framework Adjustments 32, 35, and 37 to the Multispecies FMP.

From a biological perspective, taking no action would result in no biological impact on the northern stocks of small mesh multispecies. The 2002 SAFE Report for small mesh multispecies shows that the northern stock of whiting is fully recovered, with estimated biomass at 175% of the proxy for B_{MSY} . These stock conditions would continue to exist under the no action alternative, and further increases in biomass in the northern area could be expected. While the analyses in the following sections demonstrate that additional effort generated by the grate raised footrope trawl fishery would not compromise the health of the small mesh multispecies resources in the northern area, taking no action would eliminate the likelihood that there would be any increases in fishing mortality or other biological impacts on these stocks.

Taking no action also would eliminate the possibility that other stocks, like the regulated large-mesh groundfish species, would be affected by the establishment of the grate raised footrope trawl fishery. The analyses in the following sections suggest that minimal impacts on some groundfish stocks may result from the proposed action; these impacts would not occur under the no action alternative. However, the analyses conclude that the impacts on other species from the proposed action are expected to be insignificant.

The negative economic and social impacts of taking no action relate to the loss of additional fishing opportunities in the northern area and the foregone revenues expected from the establishment of the grate raised footrope trawl fishery. Analysis of the economic impacts of the proposed action predicts about \$1,000,000 in additional revenues for participants in this fishery (see Section 6.4). Based on historical participation in the grate experimental fisheries, the communities likely to benefit most from the establishment of the exempted grate raised footrope trawl fishery include: Portland, ME; Five Islands, ME; Phippsburg, ME; Sebasco Estates, ME; West Point, ME; Gloucester, MA; and Provincetown MA. Taking no action in this framework adjustment would eliminate the economic benefits for these communities, despite a healthy resource and the expectation of minimal biological impacts resulting from the proposed action.

Most vessels and communities that are likely to benefit from the proposed action also are engaged in the large-mesh groundfish fishery. Increasing restrictions in the large-mesh groundfish fishery are compromising flexibility for these boats; many vessels are finding it

difficult to maintain a year-round revenue stream from fishing because opportunities have become so limited (see Section 6.5). Taking no action in this framework adjustment would eliminate the potential to mitigate some of these problems by providing another seasonal fishing opportunity for at least some of the vessels affected by large-mesh groundfish regulations.

In addition, the no action alternative is not consistent with the recommendations of the Council's Whiting Monitoring Committee (WMC) in the 2002 SAFE Report for Small Mesh Multispecies (included as an appendix to the recently-submitted Framework 37). In its third-year review of the management program for small mesh multispecies, the WMC recommended modest increases in exploitation in the northern stock area. The WMC suggested that the Council consider establishing new exempted fisheries for whiting in the northern stock area if data exist to support them. The proposed action in this framework adjustment is consistent with this recommendation. For these reasons, the no action alternative was not selected as the preferred alternative for this framework adjustment.