

New England Fishery Management Council
Draft Amendment 19 to the Multispecies FMP
(Small-mesh Multispecies)
Hilton Garden Inn – Lakewood, NJ

DRAFT Meeting Summary
April 9, 2012

Purpose of meeting: Take public comments on Draft Amendment 19 alternatives.

Attendance: David Goethel (chair), Andrew Applegate (staff), and two whiting fishermen: Jim Lovgren, Dennis Lovgren

Summary

Mr. Goethel opened the public hearing at 5:15 pm with a brief introduction. Mr. Applegate presented an outline of alternatives proposed by Amendment 19 and answered questions. Most of the questions regarded clarification of the alternatives. Mr. Applegate explained the how the specifications would be monitored by stock area boundaries and how the proposed accountability measures would apply by exemption area boundaries from the maps in the public hearing document.

Both fishermen supported the following alternatives:

- 400 lbs. red hake incidental possession limit
- 2000 lbs. southern whiting incidental possession limit (the Council's preferred alternatives) because it would not create as much discards and have the intended effect on the directed fishery
- The Council's preferred alternative for post-season accountability measures, which would reduce the TAL trigger rather than a pound for pound ACL reduction
- The Council's preferred alternative for quarterly TAL allocations when landings exceed 2/3rds of the annual TAL, rather than a single stock-wide annual TAL.
- The Council's preferred alternative for weekly VTR reporting requirements to monitor the TAL by stock area. Many vessels are already required to make weekly VTR reports due to their fishing permits for large mesh multispecies and other species.

After hearing that there were no research on red hake size selectivity with mesh size in response to his question, Jim Lovgren said that the original reason for the silver hake possession limit by mesh size was to reduce silver hake catches in the squid fishery (there were silver hake selectivity research results by mesh when the silver hake possession limits were implemented, but this was not brought up). He said that the silver hake limits for vessels using trawls less than 2.5 inches were to address differences in catch rates by vessel size (smaller vessels using the

small mesh trawls). He thought that the Council should consider setting a 1000 lbs. red hake possession limit for vessels using less than 2.5 inch mesh trawls, as the final alternative.

Jim Lovgren requested that when the Council evaluates allocation options and limited access, that it summarize the landings by state going back to 1970, when the NJ fishery was much more active. He said that the whiting stocks in the Mid-Atlantic had not recovered, but that they should not be excluded from fishing if stocks recover again in the southern part of the range.

Jim Lovgren also reported a lack of representation on the Advisory Panel (AP). One fisherman on the AP was not aware he had been appointed until recently and had not attended any meetings. The other advisor from NJ is an academic researcher, who recently passed away. Mr. Lovgren thought that the advisors need to show up at meetings and it would help to have some meetings further south.

Both fishermen also supported the Council developing limited access rules for the whiting fishery.

No further comments were offered on Amendment 19 or other whiting fishery issues and Mr. Goethel closed the hearing at 6:30.