



New England Fishery Management Council

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PRESS CONTACT: Janice Plante
(607) 592-4817, jplante@nefmc.org

Whiting Amendment 22: Council Schedules Five Hearings to Consider Limited Access Program for Small-Mesh Multispecies

The New England Fishery Management Council has scheduled five public hearings on Draft Amendment 22 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan. This amendment proposes to establish a limited access program for five stocks of small-mesh species: northern silver hake, southern silver hake, and offshore hake – collectively referred to as “whiting” – as well as northern red hake and southern red hake.

The amendment contains three components: (1) limited access qualification criteria; (2) silver and offshore hake possession limit alternatives; and (3) permit “characteristics and conditions” that could apply if limited access is adopted. Although the Council voted in December 2017 to send Amendment 22 out to public hearing with “no action” as its preferred alternative, public input is highly encouraged on all options.

The Council is committed to hearing all points of view before making a final decision in September.

Public Hearing Schedule

- **Gloucester, MA** – Thursday, July 19, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries Annisquam River Marine Fisheries Station, 30 Emerson Avenue, 4 p.m.
- **Tinton Falls, NJ** – Monday, July 23, DoubleTree by Hilton, 700 Hope Drive, 7 p.m.
- **Montauk, NY** – Tuesday, July 24, Montauk Playhouse Community Center Foundation Inc., 240 Edgemere Street, 5 p.m.
- **Warwick, RI** – Wednesday, July 25, Hampton Inn & Suites, 2100 Post Road, 7 p.m.
- **New Bedford, MA** – Thursday, July 26, Fairfield Inn & Suites, 185 MacArthur Drive, 7 p.m.

Limited Access Qualification Criteria

* November 28, 2012 control date

Alternative	Qualifying period	Qualification Criteria (Pounds of small-mesh multispecies & number of qualifiers)	
		Category I	Category II
1	2008-2012* (5 years)	500,000 lbs. 48 vessels	100,000 lbs. 88 vessels
2	2008-2012* (5 years)	1,000,000 lbs. 25 vessels	20,000 lbs. 237 vessels
3	2008-2016 (9 years)	500,000 lbs. 58 vessels	100,000 lbs. 113 vessels
4	2000-2016 (17 years)	500,000 lbs. 115 vessels	100,000 lbs. 201 vessels
5	1996-2012* (17 years)	1,000,000 lbs. 97 vessels	200,000 lbs. 180 vessels

In addition to “no action,” Amendment 22 contains five wide-ranging alternatives under which fishermen could qualify for permits if the Council adopts a limited access program. Each alternative contains two permit categories covering different levels of historical landings: (1) a higher-poundage Category I permit; and (2) a lower-poundage Category II permit. Some alternatives use the November 28, 2012 control date as a cutoff point for landings, while others do not. A preliminary estimate of the number of qualifying vessels is listed under each category above.



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Whiting Possession Limits by Permit Type

Amendment 22 proposes to: (1) retain or adjust whiting possession limits for vessels that qualify for a limited access permit; and (2) create an “incidental” possession limit for non-qualifiers. If the Council decides **against** establishing a limited access program, it still could adjust possession limits through this amendment. The new limits then would apply to any vessel with an open access Category K permit that operates in a small-mesh exemption program.

NOTE: No adjustments to red hake possession limits are proposed. The possession limits would apply to silver and offshore hakes under the following options:

- **Category I limited access permit**
 - Alternative 1 – Maintain the existing whiting possession limits (see table below)
 - Alternative 2 – Raise the limit from 40,000 pounds to 50,000 pounds from December 1 to April 30 in the Southern New England and Mid-Atlantic exemption areas
 - Alternative 3 – Lower the limit from 40,000 pounds to 30,000 pounds from May 1 to November 30 in the Southern New England and Mid-Atlantic exemption areas
- **Category II limited access permit**
 - Alternative 1 – Maintain the existing whiting multispecies possession limits
 - Alternative 2 – Apply a 30,000-pound limit in the northern exemption areas (Gulf of Maine Grate Raised Footrope, Small-Mesh Areas I and II, Cape Cod Raised Footrope Areas, and Cultivator Shoals Area) and 15,000 pounds in the Southern New England and Mid-Atlantic exemption areas where more vessels are expected to qualify and often land lower volume
- **Incidental possession limits for vessels that do not qualify for a limited access permit**
 - Alternative 1 – Maintain the existing small-mesh multispecies possession limits
 - Alternative 2 – Apply a 2,000-pound possession limit

Current Mesh Size-Dependent Possession Limits

Cod-end Mesh Size	Silver and offshore hake, combined, possession limit	Red hake south	Red hake north*
Smaller than 2.5"	3,500 lbs.	5,000 lbs.	3,000/1,500 lbs.
Larger than 2.5", but smaller than 3.0"	7,500 lbs.	5,000 lbs.	3,000/1,500 lbs.
Equal to or greater than 3.0"	30,000 lbs. (40,000 lbs. in Southern Area)	5,000 lbs.	3,000/1,500 lbs.
Accountability measure, in-season	2,000 lbs.	400 lbs.	400 lbs.

* Northern red hake possession limit is 3,000 lbs. at the beginning of the fishing year and decreases to 1,500 lbs. when landings reach 45% of Total Allowable Landings.



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Permit Characteristics and Conditions if Limited Access is Adopted

Amendment 22 also proposes a series of permit characteristics and conditions that could be applied *if* the Council adopts a limited access program for small-mesh multispecies. Two sets are proposed:

- Five alternatives pertain to vessels that would be issued Category I & II limited access permits if a program is adopted; and
- Four alternatives – one with two sub-options – pertain to incidental possession limits that would apply for vessels that do not qualify for a limited access permit.

More Information and Questions

- A public hearing document and other related Amendment 22 materials will be posted on the Council's website at <https://www.nefmc.org/library/amendment-22>.
- The hearing notice is available at <http://s3.amazonaws.com/nefmc.org/A22-Public-Hearing-Notice-use.pdf>.
- Questions? Contact Andrew Applegate, the Council's small-mesh multispecies coordinator, at (978) 465-0492 ext. 114, aapplegate@nefmc.org.

*The Council is expected to take **final action on Amendment 8** during its September 2018 meeting in Plymouth, MA.*

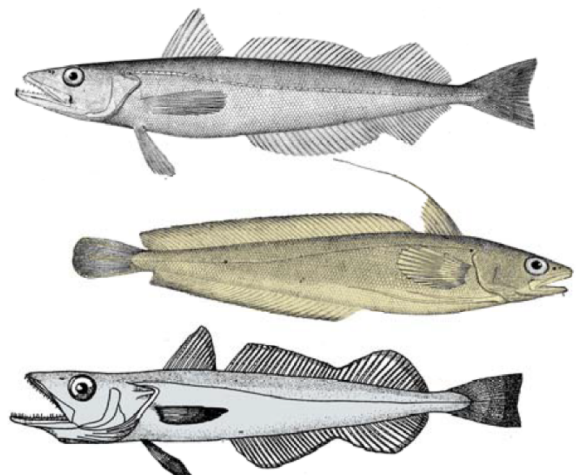
Public Comment Deadline

Written comments are welcome.

*The deadline for submitting written or electronic comments is **Monday, August 6, 2018 at 5 p.m.** Earlier submissions are welcome.*

Label correspondence as "DEIS for Amendment 22 to the Northeast Multispecies FMP" and send to:

Tom Nies, Executive Director
New England Fishery Management Council
50 Water Street, Mill 2
Newburyport, MA 01950
Fax: (978) 465-3116
Email: comments@nefmc.org



Silver hake (top), red hake (middle), and offshore hake (bottom)

– Northeast Fisheries Science Center archive