



Conservation Equivalency Proposals for Vertical Line Reduction under the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP)

January 2011

The text below represents a proposed process for how the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team (ALWTRT) and NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will receive and evaluate vertical line reduction proposals. Information gained through the questions below will help the ALWTRT and NMFS assess and respond to proposals that may be considered under the ALWTRP.

Provide the following information to help the ALWTRT (or appropriate ALWTRT Subgroup) and NMFS to determine if the concept proposal has potential and – if it is worth pursuing further – whether it should be revised or adopted as is as part of an overall vertical line reduction strategy.

- (1) Describe the location of the affected areas (choose from the co-occurrence areas agreed upon by the ALWTRT).
 - a. What fisheries are affected by your proposal?
- (2) Describe the baseline of your chosen area(s). Use the baseline resulting from the NMFS Co-occurrence model.
 - a. How many vessels currently fish in the area? Please provide descriptions of vessel types (size, gear type, etc.)
 - b. How many vertical lines are currently in the area? What is your baseline year? How was this count of vertical lines established?
 - c. What's the current effort relative to latent effort?
- (3) Describe your proposed management approach
 - a. How many vertical lines are to be removed?
 - b. How many vertical lines will remain in the area?
 - c. Are your measures year-round or seasonal?
 - d. What is your method for allocating vertical lines?
 - i. Who is in your allocation pool?
 - ii. How did you decide who gets vertical lines?
 1. Lottery?
 2. Other?
 - iii. What tool did you use for tracking the number of vertical lines in your area?
 1. Tags?
 2. Permits?
 3. Other?
 - e. What is your strategy for addressing latent effort?
 - f. Are you using a new gear technology to address vertical line reduction? If yes, please address the following points:
 - i. What is the product/modification (material, size, etc.)?
 - ii. Describe how the product/modification works. (What it does, how it does it, how is it applied/attached to the gear, etc.).
 1. Attach a photo and illustration.
 - iii. What fishery(s) is the product designed for?
 - iv. What is the cost of the product? How does that compare with what is currently used?
 - v. Is the product operationally safe?
 - vi. What is the lifespan/durability of the product? How does that compare with what is currently used/other alternatives on the market?
 - vii. What limitations are there on its utility (depth, current, etc.)?

- viii. Please describe the laboratory testing that this product has gone through (hours, conditions, etc.)?
 - ix. Please describe the field/at-sea testing that this product has gone through (hours, conditions, fisheries, etc.)?
 - x. Please describe any changes in fishing practices that would be necessary to accommodate the use of this product/modification.
- (4) Describe how you will assure your proposal will fulfill the ALWTRT's goal of reducing vertical lines.
- a. How will you measure the effectiveness of your proposal?
 - i. What data will you collect? At what frequency?
 - ii. Who will collect the data?
 - iii. Will there be mandatory logbook reporting?
 - iv. Will you use observer coverage?
 - b. Describe your monitoring plan.
 - i. What tools will you use to monitor? Gear marking?
 - c. Describe your enforcement plan
 - i. Who will enforce your proposal?
 - ii. What are the penalties for non-compliance?
- (5) How does the proposal/gear modification reduce the risk the gear poses to whales?
- a. Does it make the gear less available to whales (e.g. reduce volume in the water column)?
 - b. Does it reduce the likelihood that an entanglement will result in serious injury or mortality, and if so, how (e.g. break, disintegrate)?
 - c. Will this proposal/gear modification reduce risk for different species of large whales across different age groups? If not, which species and age groups would it benefit?

Recommendations from ALWTRT (or appropriate ALWTRT Subgroup)

After reviewing the information available in the proposal, the ALWTRT may wish to make one of the following recommendations:

(1) This should replace a current requirement of the ALWTRP; requirement will be specified with consideration of the following:

- What is the recommended timeframe for implementation?
- Should this apply universally to all areas and fisheries? If not, specify what areas and what fisheries this should be applied to.
- What is the conservation equivalency of this proposal compared to the one proposed by NMFS?

(2) This should be required as an addition to existing ALWTRP requirements, with a consideration of the following:

- What is the recommended timeframe for implementation?
- Should this apply universally to all areas and fisheries? If not, specify what areas and what fisheries this should be applied to.
- What is the conservation equivalency of this proposal compared to the one proposed by NMFS?

When the use of new technology is proposed the ALWTRT could make one of the additional recommendations:

(1) Further testing, development and evaluation of new gear (e.g. field [conditions, depths, fisheries, bottom type, currents, etc.], test tank, modeling). (The ALWTRT may specify certain concerns, areas/aspects to be investigated.)

(2) Additional expert(s) need to be invited to future meetings to discuss product/ modification (e.g. engineer, veterinarian, industry person, or scientist).

(3) Use of this product should be encouraged, but not listed in the ALWTRP regulations as a requirement. (The ALWTRT will include recommendations for how it is to be “encouraged”).

How to submit your proposal

Please respond to the appropriate proposal questions above and send this information to the
ALWTRP Coordinator:
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