All,

Below is a quick summary of key discussion points from our 9/26/16 webinar. This is not intended to be a detailed overview of the entire webinar. Rather, it is intended to provide issue context, a synthesis of main options discussed, and key next steps.

Issue Context:

The PLTRT consensus recommendation regarding mainline length from the December 2015 meeting:
While pelagic longlining in the MAB, the owner and operator of an Atlantic Pelagic longline vessel may set no more than 30 miles of active gear (gear with leaders and hooks) in a 24 hour period. Gear may be set either:
- Single-set: in a single set with a maximum mainline length of 32 nautical miles, and continuous active gear (gear with leaders and hooks) of no more than 20 nautical miles. Any active gear in excess of 20 nautical miles must be separated from other active gear along the mainline by a gap of at least one nautical mile along the mainline in which no leaders and hooks are set; or
- Multi-set: in separate sets separated by a least one nautical mile, with the maximum mainline length of any single set no longer than 20 nautical miles.

Issue:

During the course of further analyses conducted as part of proposed rulemaking, Science Center staff determined that the "multi-set" option would yield no conservation benefit for pilot whales, primarily due to the longer soak times associated with multi-sets (Note: for the purpose of analyses, multi-sets or "consecutive sets" were defined as two distinct sets that have a time separation ≤ 0.5 hrs between sets).

Options Discussed:

Given this finding, a webinar was convened with the PLTRT to brief members on the new analyses and discuss possible ways to modify the mainline length consensus recommendations to achieve the desired conservation benefit. Lance Garrison presented several model simulations on the status quo and consensus recommendations (see summary table on page 3). He also presented a new concept called "same day" sets (two sets that occur on the same day, with separation >0.5 hrs between sets and most commonly 8-16 hrs between sets). These same day sets have shorter soak durations than multi-sets and are functionally equivalent to single sets. Based on the analyses presented, the PLTRT discussed several possible modifications to the consensus recommendation, including:

- Eliminate the multi-set option completely from the consensus recommendation (i.e., delete the multi-set bullet from the above recommendation and leave only the single-set option)

- Delete the multi-set option and replace it with "same day" sets (as described above) allowing no more than one piece of mainline in the water at once (with some exception for line that may become parted after setting)

- Delete the multi-set option and replace it with "same day" sets requiring sets to be separated by some amount of time (e.g., two sets must be separated by 6 or 8 hours)

Next Steps:

Based on the discussion, webinar participants agreed to the following next steps:

- Informal fishing industry caucus (independent of NMFS) to assess considerations and preferences associated with the three options outlined above. Feedback is needed by late October to inform follow-up webinar.
- Reconvene Team by webinar in late October/early November to take stock of fishing industry feedback, review any new analyses conducted by the Science Center with the aim to develop, as possible, an updated consensus recommendation for Agency consideration.
    - CONCUR will distribute a Doodle Poll to firm up webinar timing.
- L. Garrison is to conduct initial analyses, as possible, based on Team discussions:
    - Model conservation benefits associated with three options discussed above (to extent that new modeling that is warranted and possible)
    - Assess interactions where multiple pilot whales taken per set or trip – anything to learn there (change in observer program or fishing practices, percentage of fleet involved, etc.)
- Develop and distribute side-by-side table summarizing existing regulations and options discussed
    - Description of management action
    - Caveats (what is/is not permissible)
    - Expected conservation benefit
- Southeast Region to redistribute Serious Injury criteria

Modeled Options Discussed (apply in the EEZ portion of the MAB)	Caveats and Implementation Feasibility Considerations	Forecast Conservation Benefit
Amended current regulation: Close unintended 'loophole' in current regulations: PLL sets must not exceed 20nm in mainline length (no multi-sets allowed)	• no multi-sets allowed	14.8% reduction in pilot whale bycatch (Change is driven by reduced number of sets, shorter soak times.)
Dec 2015 Consensus Recommendation (Part 1): Pelagic longline sets must not exceed 30 nm of active gear (gear with leaders and hooks) in a 24-hour period. Gear may be set: • Single-set: in a single set with a maximum mainline length of 32 nm, and continuous active gear (gear with leaders and hooks) of no more than 20 nm. Any active gear in excess of 20 nm must be separated from other active gear along the mainline by a gap of at least one nm along the mainline in which no leaders and hooks are set ("hookless line interrupt").	• no multi-sets allowed • cannot account for effects of "hookless line interrupts", therefore modeled as 30nm mainline length with appropriate soak times	18.1% reduction in pilot whale bycatch (Change is driven by reduced number of sets, shorter soak times - even with longer mainlines)
Dec 2015 Consensus Recommendation (Part 2): Pelagic longline sets must not exceed 30 nm of active gear (gear with leaders and hooks) in a 24-hour period. Gear may be set: • Multi-set: in multiple sets separated by at least 1 nm, with the maximum mainline length of any single set no longer than 20 nm.		No reduction in pilot whale bycatch (driven by high number of sets and longer soak times)

* Note: same day sets (including test sets discussed during webinar) are functionally equivalent to single sets