

American Fishermen's Research Foundation News (AFRF)©

The AFRF Board met in Newport, Oregon on March 23, 2016 and had a change in leadership (see below), heard presentations from Steve Teo on the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process which is just beginning and may be a benefit for how fishermen can better access the management process. The board was also impressed with the presentation follow up by Stephanie Snyder on information she used in her doctorate from AFRF's years of archival tagging of albacore.

Dr Vidar Wespestad science consultant since 2000 announced he is retiring. AFRF will be looking for a replacement to monitor albacore assessments and stock status information internationally and at the federal levels when needed. Contact AFRF at 530-229-1097 or wfoa@charter.net if you have any ideas or suggestions. The Board voted Vidar to receive the Frank Martins award for service to the organization since 2000.

Vidar wrote the board some thoughts on the management process, and I included them below edited:

"I feel the process has moved from a fairly chaotic assemblage of models and data of marginal value to a much more simpler and transparent one with a vast improvement in the quality and treatment of data. The assessment is currently as good as it can get, and awaits collection and analysis of data relative to important data and assumptions. This is a multilateral effort and I hope the leadership is there to accomplish it.

The next stage is the Management Strategy Evaluation. This is to be structured by the AlbaWG with fisheries and socio-economic data from the RFMO members. This will be a long and complex process. Hopefully, the process will be structured such that agreement on a harvest rate satisfactory to FAO standards be the target for MSE and at a later stage incorporate the socio-economics of international harvest. I think the chair of the Albacore WG, Dr. John Holmes, is providing outstanding leadership for the MSE process and I believe he will advance the process on the science side as guidance is provided to the AlbaWG by RFMOs.

On the bad side, I've experienced the effects of shifts in policies and budgets at the Federal level, and also the states, that are degrading both science and services to the fishing industry. Also, I see the program being more influenced by "agenda driven" science. The effect being deep pockets and "citizen letters" often trumps science and personnel and funds are diverted from programs that benefit the harvest and resource sustainability. Bad science leads to bad advice and decisions and needs to be carefully monitored. I could do a rant here, but point to take home is things are changing and I think the industry needs to be a bit more proactive to avoid being swept away by the campaigns to end fishing in the US.

It is becoming increasingly clear to me that the goal of achievement of a world class sustainable fishery is going to be impossible mainly due to the fact that China isn't going to play in the game by our rules. I fear that sustainable management regime is basically a pipe dream as the Chinese effort continues to rise. You may have noted recent articles where the Chinese effort has been cited as

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being 500-700 thousand vessels, but this is largely well documented. What is documented is there are increasing numbers of Chinese vessels taken on the high seas as IUU vessels, yet the U.S. government does not recognize China as a IUU state. With the U.S. position that China is a good world citizen in fisheries it appears that RFMO actions will largely be a paper exercise.

Protection of the primary spawning aggregates in the western Pacific Ocean is of paramount importance to maintaining a healthy fishery in the eastern Pacific Ocean. AFRF/AAFA/WFOA should make sure that effort not be increased during the spawning period to maintain reproduction and your fishery. “ VW

Changes at American Fishermen’s Research Foundation - March 28, 2016

At the annual spring meeting of the American Fishermen’s Research Foundation (AFRF) in Newport, Oregon on March 23, AFRF president for the past 20 years, John LaGrange of San Diego, California announced that he would step down, leaving his position open to a new president. In his place, Rick Goché of Coquille, Oregon was elected.

Also, Larz Malony of Pacific Seafoods, was replaced as AFRF vice president by Christa Svensson of Bornstein Seafoods. Bill Carvalho of Wild Planet Foods remains as Secretary/Treasurer of the AFRF organization.

AFRF was established in 1971 to aid, encourage, promote, and support science and education in the field of albacore and other fish species. AFRF has been the only research group founded and funded by the fishing industry, with cooperation from independent fisheries research organizations, to fund and encourage and promote sound science-based research and publications related to Pacific Albacore tuna as a sustainable and nutritionally valuable resource for commercial and retail consumers on the U.S. West Coast and beyond.

Pole and line and troll caught albacore processed by contracted AFRF buyers are certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), and also recognized as a “green list species” by the Monterey Bay Aquarium as caught by sustainable and well managed methods.

Officer Bios:

Rick Goché – President - Rick Goché has been actively involved in the seafood business – from research to retail – for over 40 years. He fishes the F/V Peso II for Pacific albacore and markets a large portion of his catch under his family brand Sacred Sea Tuna at sacredseatuna.com Rick is also chairman of the Oregon Albacore Commission, which promotes Oregon Albacore.

Christa Svensson – Vice President - Christa Svensson has worked for Bornstein Seafoods since 2005 and sells fresh, frozen, and value-added seafood in both the domestic and international markets. She also manages Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) audits, logo usage, new packaging design, and marketing materials. Her area of expertise for Bornstein Seafoods includes Albacore tuna, International Trade, and Sustainability. Christa also serves on the Oregon Albacore Commission.

Bill Carvalho – Secretary/Treasurer - Bill Carvalho has been the Secretary/Treasurer of AFRF for the past 10 years. He and Bill McCarthy founded Wild Planet Foods in 2004. Wild Planet focuses on preserving the natural marine habitat, while sustainably harvesting wild seafood for the benefit of environmentally aware seafood consumers. Wild Planet Foods offers a product line of eco-preferable wild seafood, and the name Wild Planet arose from and adheres to this commitment in its business practices.

Other AFRF Business:

Tagging: AFRF will continue archival tagging of albacore through at least 2017. Two coastal trips are planned for 2016, one in July/August and one later. However, as we have experienced this schedule has not always worked out. Fortunately two vessels, the F/V Her Grace and F/V Royal Dawn have been working out great over the past few seasons in cooperation with SWFSC and their tech people in LaJolla, CA. AFRF has been rotating those two boats and plan to continue. However, AFRF is certainly open to others applying to do future tagging or as alternates. Please send AFRF a request for an application and we will put you on our on-call list if you qualify as being able to accommodate two technicians for up to 7-8 days and have live-bait capabilities.

Bio-Sampling: This has been good and only requires fishermen to save at random 4-5 fish per trip and mark them with informational tags from SWFSC. Then the fish need to be offloaded and saved at participating companies until SWFSC picks them up. Boats are compensated for the albacore at \$5 more than dock prices. If interested contact AFRF.

E-Logbooks: The board passed a motion passed to allocate funding for production of thumb drives containing the electronic log book and distribute it to the fleet if fishermen want to use the program instead of paper logs. NOAA has not yet produced an updated version, but this does work with most operating systems.

Meeting with SWFSC: AFRF representatives including the new and past president will meet with SWFSC this week in LaJolla for orientation and discussions of future cooperative research that will benefit albacore fishermen and support the fishery in a time of increased management.

AFRF.ORG Updated: Check out the new and improved information on the AFRF website. We took away much of the old material and are planning on adding new research oriented info as we get it. One added page is called "Ocean Conditions" which has files from Mark Hess at Ocean Imaging dealing with El Nino, the Blob, and the future.

See: <http://pacificalbacore.com/afrf/ocean-conditions/>

International and National Management:

The first major event this year will be the two day workshop put on by the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific (ISC) in Yokohama, Japan on May-24-25, 2016. The workshop will be the second one on the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE), which will initially be conducted on North Pacific albacore through the Northern Committee (NC) to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

The NC of the WCPFC shares international jurisdiction with the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) over albacore stocks in the North Pacific with the dividing line at 150°W. Nevertheless, the IATTC is focused, as its name implies, on *tropical* tunas such as skipjack, bigeye and yellowfin, and has been relatively slow to focus on albacore management since the passage in 2005 of a conservation and management resolution to avoid increasing effort on North Pacific albacore stocks. On the other hand, the NC of the WCPFC, having been pushed in large part by the former Executive Director of the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC) has advanced in the areas of setting target and limit biological reference points and beginning the process of setting harvest control rules. Perhaps unfortunately, the NC is controlled by Japan, which is known to desire to fish to at least maximum sustainable yield (the same management philosophy as the IATTC scientific staff), sometimes to the displeasure of various international environmental NGOs such as PEW and the Monterey Bay Aquarium. The MSE exercise will be undertaken first by the NC

since there are more management measures to evaluate than the simple limit on effort which governs the fishery east of 150°W.

Due to the efforts of WFOA and AFRF, the PFMC has agreed to partially fund one member of its Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) and one member of its Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) to attend the May meeting of the ISC. In addition, AFRF will be funding the attendance of its general counsel to the meeting. (Unfortunately, at the first workshop held in April of last year there were only scientists and managers present from the U.S. and no fish harvesters.) Prior to the meeting, on May 12th from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm the PFMC will host a webinar for the HMSAS and HMSMT to develop further what the suggested goals of the various management systems which will be evaluated should be. This webinar will be open to the public to attend by computer and telephone. (Information on how to attend is on the Council's website.)

There is also a document, which is a work in progress for the ISC workshop. It can be found at the PFMC website, March 2016 meeting, Agenda Item F.4, Attachment 2, and is entitled **NC: [DRAFT] Management Objectives for the MSE in April 2016.**

MSE Evaluation Workshop: The Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) and Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) will hold a joint meeting by webinar, which is open to the public. The webinar will be held on Thursday, May 12, 2016, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Pacific Time, or when business for the day is concluded. The primary purpose of the webinar is to provide advice to Council-sponsored attendees to the Second North Pacific Albacore Management Strategy Evaluation Workshop sponsored by the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC). The workshop will be held May 24-25, 2016, in Yokohama, Japan. In January 2016 the Secretariat of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) circulated a list of management objectives and related questions compiled by Dr. John Holmes, Chair of the ISC's Albacore Working Group based on input from members of the WCPFC's Northern Committee. (See the Webinar Materials below for that document). The HMSAS and HMSMT will use this document as a reference for providing advice to the workshop attendees.

For Full Info See: <http://www.pcouncil.org/2016/03/41398/41398/>

General Advisory Committee (GAC): NMFS announces a combined meeting of the Scientific Advisory Subcommittee (SAS) and the General Advisory Committee (GAC) to the U.S. Section to the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) on May 15, 2013, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. PDT (or until business is concluded). The meeting will be held at the NMFS Long Beach office: 501 West Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, CA 90802. Please notify Ms. Heidi Taylor, Southwest Region, NMFS, (562) 980-4039) prior to May 10, 2013, of your plans to attend either meeting, or interest in a teleconference option.

American Fishermen's Research Foundation (AFRF) founded in 1971, is involved in the ongoing stock assessment of North Pacific albacore as well as the management and regulation in both hemispheres of the Pacific ocean. At considerable expense AFRF continues to represent the U.S. albacore trollers and baitboats at management and scientific forums, and continues to be involved in the scientific process through the International Science Committee - Albacore Working Group (ISC-ALBWG). AFRF represents all U.S. albacore trollers and baitboats in maintaining research and data collection that benefits ALL US albacore vessels. AFRF is funded by a per ton assessment paid by AFRF contracted buyers. AFRF also secures research grant funding in cooperation with NOAA/NMFS for items such as archival tagging expenses.

AFRF Contracted Buyers: Bornstein Seafoods Inc., Bumble Bee Seafoods, Chicken of the Sea International, Driscoll's Wharf, High Seas Tuna Inc., Interocean Fisheries, Island Trollers Inc., Jessie's Ilwaco Fish Company, JK Fisheries, Ilwaco Landing LLC, Pacific Seafood Group, Papa George Gourmet Albacore, Pelican Packers Inc., Seafood Producers Co-op, Star Kist Foods, Starvin Marvin Seafoods, Trident Seafoods, Tri-Marine International, Wild Planet Foods Inc

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