

American Fishermen's Research Foundation News

The board of directors of AFRF will be holding its' spring 2017 meeting in conjunction with the WFOA annual meeting in Astoria, Oregon. The AFRF meeting will be 8:00 AM on Wednesday, March 29, 2017 at the Holiday Inn Express in Astoria. AFRF has some new projects in the works for 2017 as well as continued tagging of albacore. AFRF has been addressing the issues of processing past tag data so it can be used for education, science, and management.

Tag Data Processing: American Fishermen's Research Foundation (AFRF) has been working on a cooperative research project with Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) - NOAA/NMFS tagging west coast albacore tuna with archival tracking tags since late 2001. Nearly 1,000 tags have been deployed by U.S. albacore vessels and technicians from the SWFSC in that time frame and over 30 tags have been recovered with very interesting information regarding albacore migration, feeding patterns, and daily movements.

Over that period of 16 years over 1.2 million dollars contributed by the albacore troll and pole industry and NOAA has been spent deploying and purchasing these tags. The problem we have had is the continued issue of funding and lack of personnel at the SWFSC to process the tag data in a timely manner, write publishable reports, and disseminate the data and results to the public and management and scientific regulatory bodies. Given there is uncompleted issues we have never been able to adequately utilize the information in stock assessment and management forums.

AFRF has realized that a more pro-active approach to processing this data is essential and AFRF will hire Stephanie Snyder to process and write reports on the remaining tags that have languished at SWFSC. The processed data is fascinating and would help support the U.S. troll and pole west coast fisheries in management and scientific venues ongoing that look at health and abundance of the stock and try to make regulatory decisions for the future all which affect local fishermen.

This type of project has never been done by anyone, including NOAA. This is necessary as there is a backlog of tags at SWFSC on hold due to budget constraints and if we do not do it the money spent to date will not result in any conclusions.

AFRF believes those directly and indirectly depending on albacore harvesting and processing contribute financially to this project. We are asking west coast associations, commissions, and others to consider this. In return you will be added to the updates on this information as well as recognition to the public and industry.

OVERVIEW: Stephanie Snyder will provide the American Fishermen's Research Foundation with analytical reports and presentations of data collected through the Albacore Archival Tagging Program. By collaborating with members of AFRF and scientists at NOAA, she will bring to this project her experience with both movement data and remote sensing data to deliver timely first looks at newly recovered tags as well as in depth analysis to understand patterns across fish. In addition to the analysis, she will advocate for the continued funding of the tagging program through annual program productivity reports to the Southwest Fisheries Science Center.

Objectives The proposed services will address the following needs:

- News & Updates: A prompt "first look" into the tracks and behavior of new recoveries as well as reports

AFRF DIRECTORS ' 2016 - 2017'

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Kevin Bixler
William Gounder
Chicken of the Sea

Cary Gann
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on deployment trips.

- Insights into albacore behavior: Scientific analysis of the tagging data that provides an understanding of albacore diving behavior and migration within the context of dynamic oceanographic conditions.
- Program promotion & funding: Promotion of the importance of the tagging program to the management of the albacore fishery.

News & Updates: The invested time and resources into the Albacore Archival Tagging Program have resulted in an invaluable dataset of albacore movements under years of dynamic oceanographic conditions. However, this data loses all its value if it is not analyzed and communicated in a professional and timely manner. Currently, there is a backlog of tags and a great potential for discovering how dynamic oceanographic conditions will influence the fishery. Communication of the tagging efforts and the scientific insights gained is essential for maintaining a productive tagging program. Stephanie proposes to accomplish this through presentations and multiple forms of written reports including a post fishing season newsletter with briefing on deployments and recoveries, a first look tag recovery report, an annual presentation to the AFRF, and annual progress report to SWFSC directors.

Stephanie Snyder will be giving a preliminary overview of this project on March 28, 2017 at 10:30 AM at the WFOA Annual Meeting. Please try to attend this presentation as the information is quite interesting.

To See Video of one track: <http://tinyurl.com/z3enha2>

Archival Tag Rewards: Fishermen, unloaders, buyers, and processors need to be aware of potential tags in the albacore. A \$500 reward will be paid for each recovered fish. Check out www.afrf.org under the menu item “Tagging” for more information and graphics. More than 1,000 albacore have been tagged since 2001 with at least 200 tagged in the past two seasons. The reward is \$500/fish. Retain whole fish even if you suspect it’s a tag. For Information from NOAA/NMFS See: <http://tinyurl.com/myho44q>

Bio-Sampling: Unfortunately only a few fish were collected in 2016 for bio-sampling. This has seen good results in past years 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/fish more than dock prices. AFRF will do more organizing drop off points with buyers in 2017.

Tokelau agreement for albacore gets a boost: February 25, 2017-From Radio New Zealand

Efforts to implement the Tokelau Arrangement for South Pacific albacore have been boosted by a grant of \$US5.1 million dollars from New Zealand.

The agreement, signed at the Forum Fisheries Agency headquarters in Solomon Islands, will cover services and advice from the FFA and the Oceanic Fisheries Programme of the SPC to ensure a better performing tuna fishery and a more viable stock.

Countries sharing in the southern albacore long-line fishery and participating in the development of the Tokelau Agreement include the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

For Full Story See: <http://tinyurl.com/h6ywuyx>

Comment: Given this agreement could potentially close the South Pacific High Seas to fishing, the position of the U.S. South Pacific albacore troll harvesters remains firm. There is no scientific or economic basis to close the high seas to the South Pacific albacore troll fishery. This fishery occurs entirely outside of any of the Pacific Island Countries’ EEZs.

AFRF Background: Starting in the mid-1980s the American Fishermens Research Foundation (funded by the harvester, processors, and supplier members of the Western Fishboat Owners Association) joined with the U.S. Government's Pacific Fisheries Development Foundation to explore and expand the troll fishery for South Pacific albacore. The total budget for the first phase was \$287,800, the federal share \$115,000 and the AFRF's share \$172,800. The project was to send two to four albacore troll vessels, 60-80 feet in length, with crews of 2 to 4, to the South Pacific to develop a U.S. albacore fishery and to do albacore tagging. The U.S. vessels, in cooperation with New Zealand, were given permission (by Dr. Robin Allen, then with the New Zealand Government) to enter the New Zealand EEZ in the area near Chatham Island.

During February and March of 1986 two troll vessels, sometimes accompanied by NOAA's research vessel, the Townsend Cromwell, fished in waters between 38° and 41° S and 140° to 155° W and caught 100mt of albacore while tagging 702 albacore.

A second phase of the 3 year project followed, with the U.S. supplying \$360,000 and AFRF supplying \$180,000 for a total of over a half a million dollars, to send 6 U.S. troll vessels to fish for albacore during December 1986 to April of 1987. Eventually, 40 troll vessels went fishing in the area catching 4,000 mt in the 1987 to 1988 season, while tagging 1,247 albacore.

A third phase was conducted in December 1988 to April 1989 at an additional cost of \$129,000 with the U.S. government and AFRF again sharing the costs. This part of the project was to send 40 albacore troll vessels to tag 2,000 albacore in the South Pacific fishing area.

The thrust of this effort was to develop a fishery which could deliver to the two canneries in American Samoa. Canneries in California and Hawaii had been closed. Also in 1988, there had been a large influx of Asian drift gillnet vessels taking albacore in the North and South Pacific. A log book sheet attached to one of the reports from the 1988-1989 season had the entry that "Because of gilnet [sic] damage, we are tagging small fish to get the quality of fish you specified . . . 75% of the fish we are catching are gilnet [sic] marked . . ." 3

The U.S. fleet was not alone in its efforts which resulted in the tagging of 3,783 albacore between 1986 and 1989. In cooperation with AFRF, New Zealand tagged 1,866 albacore and French Polynesia tagged 190. The New Zealand tagging occurred near shore on the west and east coast of the North Island. The U.S. tagging occurred between 170° and 140° W and 38° to 41° S.4

Tuna Consumption Does Not Cause Mercury Toxicity: It Prevents It

NOTE- AFRF contributed to the presenters at Brussels, Nick Ralston and Laura Raymond for the past work on selenium's mitigating affects on mercury in seafood. It is great that results of their work is now being distributed through other sources worldwide.

This topic will be addressed by two globally renowned expert speakers, who will explain the health benefits of eating tuna, the misconceptions surrounding the effects of mercury in tuna, and how this information can be used by consumers and regulators as an advantage.

Known for his groundbreaking research into the relationship between mercury and selenium in seafood, Dr. Nicholas V.C. Ralston, Biomedical Research Scientist at the University of North Dakota will be a valued speaker at the 6th European Tuna Conference (ETC2017).

Dr. Ralston will be joined by colleague and co-author of his work, Dr. Laura J. Raymond, also of the University of North Dakota. Specializing in the way selenium prevents mercury toxicity in fetal and childhood development, Dr. Raymond will add invaluable expertise to the ETC2017.

High caliber speakers and astute delegates shall be in attendance at this year's ETC2017 to consider progress and innovation, under the theme "Rethinking Tuna: Moving Into A New Era".

In One Ear: Boat to School - Seaside fifth graders learn about Oregon's fishing industry

Published on February 17, 2017 Daily Astorian - <http://tinyurl.com/zle45z7>

Grant McOmie's "Grant's Getaways" on KGW recently featured Seaside Heights Elementary School's "Boat to School" program, which introduces fifth-graders to Oregon's fishing industry, and shows them where their food comes from (<http://tinyurl.com/schoolcrab>).

The pilot project has fishermen come to the classroom every other month for a one-hour session to explain the species they catch, and how it's done. The kids also receive an activity book and a sample to take home.

Since it's crabbing season, fisherman John Corbin explained how a crab trap works, and how to pick up a crab while avoiding it's "business end." He's shown in a screen shot from the show. Also in the lineup for some classroom time are fishermen who catch salmon, rockfish, pink shrimp and albacore tuna.

"We are hoping that this can work everywhere in the state," Nancy Fitzpatrick, executive director of the Oregon Albacore Commission, told McOmie. "It doesn't have to be just Oregon either, but all of the coastal states that produce their seafood. Perhaps we act as a template for other areas to develop something like this for their students." — Elleda Wilson

WFOA members obligation to AFRF Contributions:

Under WFOA's bylaws you are required as a member to submit AFRF fees for any albacore landed to buyers others than those listed at the bottom of this page. If you unloaded all or a segment of your catch to those AFRF buyers you need not submit to that portion.

Payments of USD \$20/ton can be made to:

American Fishermen's Research Foundation
P.O. Box 992723
Redding, CA 96099

AFRF relies on funding such as yours to continue this unique organization that has been involved in cooperative research and public education for all North Pacific troll albacore fishermen over the past 46 years. It is extremely hard to show short term benefits of this contribution but without AFRF we may not have access to albacore grounds.

AFRF continues to promote research and education helpful to all those that harvest Pacific albacore with troll and bait boat methods. Thus, fee obligations extend to the entire fleet not just WFOA members! We continue to stress that AFRF is not a vehicle to take money out of fishermen's or buyers pockets for gaining market advantage over anyone. Its entirely about research and trying to keep all albacore fishermen on the ocean so they can supply the buyers product for now and in the future.

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 U.S. 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, Hag Fish LLC, High Seas Tuna Inc., InterOcean Fisheries, Island Trollers Inc., Jessie's Ilwaco Fish Company, JK Fisheries, Ilwaco Landing LLC, Oregon Seafoods, Pacific Seafood Group, Papa George Gourmet Albacore, Pelican Packers Inc., Seafood Producers Co-op, Star Kist Foods, Trident Seafoods, Tri-Marine International, Wild Planet Foods Inc

Check Us Out At: WWW.AFRF.ORG