

American Fishermen's Research Foundation News

Albacore Tagging: Two Archival Tags Recovered - Two tags were recently recovered off Oregon not far from where they were released a year ago. It will be interesting to see the migration pattern of these albacore this season given the strange nature of the fishery in 2016. As far as future tagging, AFRF was set to tag an additional 75 albacore this season. Unfortunately UPS lost the shipment of tags somewhere between Seattle and LaJolla and they have not been found yet. This is unfortunate as with the recoveries of the two fish along with tagging this season, we may have produced some new and exciting results. Wildlife Computers Company and Southwest Science Center (NOAA/NMFS) are working to track these tags.

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: Five or six boats are taking part in this program again this season. This has seen good results 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 may expand this in the future to include a fin sampling for DNA project. If interested for 2017 let us know.

International Management - Peter Flournoy

International Management Measures:

First, a quick refresher. Limit reference points (set at 20% of the unfished spawning biomass for both the north and south Pacific albacore stocks). This is a level of the stock which fishing should never force the stock below. Target reference points (undecided for both north and south Pacific albacore stocks) are just that – targets where fishing should occur. Generally, the target reference point should be at MSY, or perhaps OSY. The "risk" factor is used to determine the size of the "buffer" between the target and limit reference points. Harvest control rules are those management measures put in place to keep fishing around the target reference point and prevent fishing from exceeding the limit reference point. They also include measures which the managers put in place to get back to the target level if the limit level is exceeded.

There have been several meetings which have dealt with north and south Pacific albacore, if not directly, then in a tangential manner which nonetheless will likely have a long term impact on the albacore fishery. When the WCPFC-Northern Committee (NC) agreed to have the International Scientific Committee (ISC) conduct a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE), it was initially thought that this might give us some breathing room to allow the science to catch up with what the fisheries managers wanted to do in terms of target reference points and harvest control rules. The results of the MSE Workshop in Yokohama in June and the NC meeting in Fukuoka for the most part are in line with this strategy and were generally adopted by the NC in late August.

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The commercial harvester representatives who attended the Yokohama meeting in June of 2016 made substantial progress in drafting fishery management “objectives” which moved away from the prior ideas coming from the initial workshop (where there were only fisheries managers and ENGOs in attendance) held in May of 2015. Specifically, the accomplishments were: (1) eliminating the setting of target reference points that would be “average” catches, with no allowance for variability; (2) narrowing the percentage changes in the fishery catch which managers could make by imposing new management measures (3) lengthening the time period to 30 years or two generations of the albacore stock which would be used to calculate averages and trends; and (4) increasing the amount of risk that could be tolerated in accepting management measures that might exceed the target reference point due to the conservative limit reference points which have been put in place.

Therefore, we believe the NC and the ISC are headed in the right direction in the MSE process for north Pacific albacore. Nevertheless, one disappointment is that contrary to initial impressions, while the MSE process will identify those areas where scientific knowledge is lacking to the extent necessary to make valid management decisions, we now know that the decisions on management measures will not be delayed until such scientific information is obtained. This is unfortunate. On the plus side, the pressure to put early harvest control rules and target reference points in place coming in the past from the Pacific Fisheries Management Council, seems to have abated. It is also heartening that the scientists managing the MSE process will be housed in the Southwest Fisheries Science Center and, therefore, should be readily accessible for consultation.

Unfortunately, the situation with south Pacific albacore is not so sanguine. The advice from the Permanent Advisory Committee to the U.S. Section of the WCPFC, which met in Honolulu on October 6-7, 2016 with regard to south Pacific albacore is as follows:

The PAC recommends that the U.S. urge the WCPFC to take into consideration the process undertaken for north Pacific albacore as it considers development of target reference points, harvest control rules, and levels of risk for south Pacific albacore. The MSE process is clearly based on science and is progressing in an orderly manner.

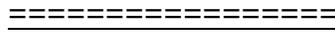
The PAC recommends that the U.S. advocate for an assessment of the South Pacific albacore stock throughout its range, and collaborate with the IATTC to complete that work.

The background which gave rise to these recommendations is as follows. The last assessment of south Pacific albacore brought forth by the SPC made a major change in that instead of assessing the stock throughout its range, the assessment only considered the estimated spawning biomass within the Treaty Area. Despite concerns raised by AFRF to this change NMFS scientists have not seen fit to raise this as an issue with the SPC. The result of this change was to increase the percentage of the unfished spawning biomass which is currently being fished, bringing current effort closer to what might be chosen as a target reference point. It also leaves out any consideration of the stock which the U.S. actually fishes on in the south Pacific, which is outside the Treaty Area.

The recommendations of both the SPC and the WCPFC Scientific Committee (SC), and now the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC), are driven by the FFA’s legitimate concern with the greatly increased longline catch of albacore by China. This Pacific Island member organization is forcing decisions to be made on south Pacific albacore which ignore the U.S. troll fishery which occurs on the high seas. Thus, even though there is a conservative limit reference point which has been set of 20%, they are trying to set the acceptable level of risk going over this reference point at a the very low conservative level of 5%. This is a lower risk level than that for big eye where overfishing is occurring. This has the effect of forcing the “buffer” necessary between the target reference point and the limit point to be very conservative in the sense of being very broad. With a limit reference point of 20% for a highly prolific species such as albacore it should be possible to have

a target reference point of 30%, if not 25%. Instead with a 5% risk factor the target reference point will be at least 40% if not 60%.

My understanding of what this means is that the fleet could only fish down to a level of 40% or 60% of the unfished spawning biomass. It is also my understanding that it is estimated that the fleet is fishing currently at about 41% or 42% currently.



Satellite service tracks illegal fishing in Pacific: October 11, 2016 News Ocean global fisheries

The modern age has come to policing illegal fishing...a battle that's pitched federal officials, lawmakers from American Samoa and the other Pacific territories against those illegally depleting the ocean's fisheries.

KHJ News Washington correspondent Matt Kaye reports—A new satellite service is scanning the seas from space in search of illegal fishing activity.

The Washington Post reports that Global Fishing Watch, using Google-powered technology, monitors more than 35-thousand commercial fishing vessels with public broadcast data.

Governments, journalists and citizens can track the movement of boats, making it easier for nations with limited resources to apprehend fishermen illegally depleting the oceans.

Congresswoman Aumua Amata Radewagen, Guam Congresswoman Madeleine Bordallo, and CNMI Congressman Greg 'Kilili' Sablan spearheaded successful legislation last year to crack down on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

President Obama signed the IUU Fishing Enforcement Act in November.

Illegal fishing in Pacific Ocean waters accounts for a third of total catch from those fisheries...and leaves fewer migratory fish like tuna for US fisherman, who face added restrictions if stocks don't recover.

The new law boosts US Coast Guard and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration powers to regulate illegal fishing.

It increases inspections and monitoring of illegal foreign vessels, and helps fight human trafficking associated with IUU fishing.

The bill amends several international agreements to include civil and criminal penalties, and broadens data sharing with foreign governments to identify and punish nations that violate fisheries management rules.

Radewagen, Bordallo and Sablan feel the law's enactment sends a clear message, the United States will not tolerate these actions within US waters.

The Washington Post reports, the new satellite technology isn't a perfect solution.

Some ships will shut their tracking services off. Still, Global Fishing Watch has seen some initial success.

The service tracks between 10,000 and 20,000 vessels each day.

Pacific Fisheries Technologists' (PFT) Conference 2017 - Vancouver, BC Canada. Feb 5-8th 2017.

A message from the conference president:

“It is my privilege to serve as president and host for the 68th annual PFT conference and as such I should like to personally invite each of you to Vancouver, BC Canada at the Pinnacle Harbourfront hotel located in downtown Vancouver. This location offers majestic views of the harbour and North Shore Mountains and is within easy walking distance of both Stanley Park and the skytrain direct to the airport.

PFT membership has always had a rich and diverse representation from industry, academia and government and our friendly welcoming group includes individuals from Canada, USA and Mexico with a sizable contingent from further afield in Asia, Australasia, and Europe. It is the ideal setting and opportunity to renew old acquaintances, make new ones and find out what is new in the industry from our presenters, exhibitors and each other.

This year our key note speakers will address our theme of, “From bottom to top, ethics matter” and we are planning an exciting line up of papers and presentations to stimulate discussions concerning technical, scientific, and ecological matters related to the seafood industries, processing, safety, developments in the academic world and the ever changing regulatory environment within which we all work.

Bookmark the website www.pftfish.net We will be adding lots more detail as the weeks go by.

We are also hoping to tag on some training courses on the two days immediately following the conference - so stay tuned for more information on that.

The future of PFT relies on our ability to transfer our long and successful tradition to young, energetic leaders from various fields encompassed by PFT.

So save the date, February 5-8th 2017 and bring a youngster with you. We can promise they will have fun!”

Kate Abraham - 2017 President - Pacific Fisheries Technologists - kate@qpscana.ca

Logbooks: All U.S. vessels fishing HMS are required to fill out logbooks and return them to John Childers, SWFSC, 8604 LaJolla Shores Dr., LaJolla, CA 92037-1508 within 30 days if landed in the U.S. Logbooks are available as are e-log options. For Information call 858.546.7192 or john.childers@noaa.gov.

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

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