

American Fishermen's Research Foundation News (AFRF)©

The American Fishermen's Research Foundation (AFRF) Board of Directors met in Astoria, OR on April 1, 2015 at the Holiday Inn Express. All but one director showed up. There was some discussion about future AFRF projects on fish quality and content but no specific projects were proposed at this time. The Archival tagging and sampling as well as international management and science meetings seem to be going along without disruption.

AFRF Board Members: This is an ongoing issue discussed by the board, and according to AFRF bylaws - AFRF has up to 16 members on the board of directors. Eight are albacore fishermen and do not have to be WFOA members since AFRF supports research for the entire troll and baitboat fishery. The other eight are elected as processor/buyer directors by the processors. The bylaws were changed in 2014 deleting the clause that there be three designated seats for "Charter Members of AFRF" which included Bumble Bee, Chicken of the Sea, and Star Kist. This is no longer the case but also does not exclude them.

The AFRF Board believes the organization is evolving as markets and research needs change. The elimination of the "charter" member clause in the bylaws seems to us to better reflect the situation today. It may not be the final adjustment depending on circumstances and the Board's future thinking and planning. This leaves the door open to others to become board members and contribute both in ideas and financial support.

AFRF was founded as an organization to have equal input and an open exchange between processors/buyers and fishermen, with also input from government and academia. AFRF is open to interest from other processors willing to serve on the board.

On April 1, 2015 the AFRF processors did hold an election as described in the bylaws and since no other companies at this time expressed a desire to be on the board even though they remain paying members, the board reelected all to a new term.

Frank Martins Award: The board presented this award named after Frank Martins a founding member of AFRF, fisherman, and longtime WFOA member with forward-looking insight to see the need for such an organization prior to any rules and regulations on albacore, to Pierre Marchand of Jessie's Ilwaco Fish Company, an AFRF board member for many years, who contributed much to the foundation.

Vessel Logbooks: From 2014 data it appears that not all logbooks were submitted for albacore. This is troubling as the percentage is not good and logbooks are the first line of data and research establishing a history of the fishery. Issuance of HMS permits will be held up if you have a logbook outstanding. WFOA suspects most of the delinquent logbooks are from smaller boats that have small landings of which many who are not members of any association may be unaware the logbooks are required.

North Pacific Albacore Archival Tagging Project: After a late deployment of 39 tags in 2014 there will be more than 100+ tags to deploy in 2015. Since there will be no wait in procuring and testing the

AFRF DIRECTORS ' 2015 - 2016'

Kevin McClain
Bumble Bee Seafoods

Kevin Bixler
William Gounder
Chicken of the Sea

Cary Gann
Joseph Choi
Star Kist Seafoods

Anthony Vuoso
John Zuanich
Tri-Marine
International

Pierre Marchand
Ilwaco Fish Company

Bill Carvalho
Wildplanet, Inc.
(Secretary)

Larz Malony
Pacific Seafoods
(Vice-President)

Christa Svensson
Bornstein Seafoods

Wayne Moody
WFOA

Rick Goche
WFOA

Shawn Ryan
WFOA

John LaGrange
WFOA
(President)

Lewis Hill
WFOA

Karl Johnson
WFOA

Mark Halvorsen
WFOA

Barry Nelson
WFOA

2015 tags, AFRF in cooperation with SWFSC - NOAA hopes to do an early tagging trip in July and a later one in September in 2015. This should work out unlike the past seasons where it has been an issue receiving tags from the manufacturer and testing them during the season, and by the time that happens the season is wrapping up.

Nearly 1,000 tags have been deployed since 2001 and 29 have been recovered plus six dummy tags. SWFSC will have a paper with all the updates coming out on this later this year.

✘ Interested vessels should contact AFRF ASAP and request a charter application for 2015. ✘

Otolith Sampling: AFRF is requesting vessels and crews to take part in sampling in 2015. AFRF did not pursue it as we should have in 2014. We do need a few boats to collect at random over the season a few sample fish and leave them at a designated albacore buyer during the season. The vessel will be compensated more than the dock price. Kits will be made available from SWFSC prior to the season. The overall total of fish needed is only about 100 random albacore for the entire fleet. That would be about 10 per boat per season. NOTE - It appears as of today we have enough vessels to collect the samples, however we always could use backups.

Onboard Measuring: We also encourage fishermen with AFRF measuring boards to continue to measure fish at random. AFRF can construct some new measuring boards if necessary. The information on these two projects is very informative and useful in the science community and supports your local fishery when it comes to international and federal management support.

Pacific Fisheries Management Council: June 10-16, 2015 Council Meeting

The Pacific Fishery Management Council and its advisory bodies will meet June 10-16, 2015 in Spokane, Washington, at the following location:

DoubleTree by Hilton Spokane City Center
322 N. Spokane Falls Court
Spokane, WA 99201
Phone: 509-455-9600

A DRAFT Preliminary Proposed June 2015 Agenda is available. Please note, all agenda items, ancillary meetings, and discussion topics are Subject to Change at any time. Days may be adjusted or added depending on Council Workload, facilities availability, or other unforeseen circumstances. A detailed finalized agenda will be posted to this page when it becomes available.

See: <http://www.pcouncil.org/council-operations/council-meetings/current-meeting/>

Albacore Data in Easy to Read Format: Also, the update data pages of the SAFE Report are well done and reflect many aspects of west coast landings. See: <http://tinyurl.com/kcp6aod>

Albacore Working Group Meeting to develop a Management Strategy Framework for North Pacific Albacore in Shimizu, Japan. By Dr. Vidar G. Weststad

The Albacore working group met April 21-23 in Shimizu, Japan to begin development of a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) designed to take into account important uncertainties in the stock, the fisheries and in management in order to frame a process that meets the goals and objectives of management.

The MSE process began in 2014 when the US drafted a proposal for management strategy evaluation

(MSE) for north Pacific albacore to be discussed at the July 2014 meeting of the IATTC. In July 2014 Albacore Working Group and the ISC concurred with U.S. proposal that MSE was a potentially useful tool, challenging to implement. Further, that north Pacific albacore would be a good test case in the application of MSE. At Northern Committee 10 in September 2014 the recommendation went forward that a management framework for north Pacific albacore be developed that specifies fishery goals, a limit reference point (LRP), and some harvest rules, and requested that the ISC evaluate suitable target reference points, and using MSE if appropriate. The Dec 2014 meeting of the WCPFC adopted CMM-2014-06 on developing and implementing harvest strategy approaches for key stocks, including north Pacific albacore tuna. Key elements of a harvest strategy identified in the CMM include management objectives, decision rules, reference points, risk associated with exceeding reference points, and an evolution using MSE. The CMM specifies that work plans and timelines to achieve the development of harvest strategies are to be approved no later than the 12th meeting of the WCPFC. The latest step in the process was a MSE workshop that was held in Yokohama prior to the Albacore Working Group. The meeting took place over 2 days and was directed toward fishermen, managers and scientists. Representatives of several NGOs were present and may have funded some of the MSE workshop and also prior ones under the sponsorship of WCPFC.

The purpose of the meeting was to present the method and to present MSE applications in other fisheries. The ISC workshop had presentations from scientists, managers, and scientists. The Workshop highlighted that there were benefits to having predetermined rules to deal with changes and uncertainties in fisheries. It was pointed out that there are often uncertainties that make MSE difficult and perhaps invalidate results, but if properly formulated the uncertainty impacts can be minimized. It was also pointed out by speakers that MSE can range from very simple harvest rules to complex models of all aspects of fishing from harvest to markets that include detailed socio-economic data. Several members of the Albacore and Bluefin working group along with managers, NGO representatives and some Japanese industry and government representatives attended the MSE workshop. The Workshop concluded with panel discussions of how to proceed on MSE and exploration of implementation goals and how to proceed to develop MSE applications useful for management. The presentations of this Workshop have been posted on the ISC website: <http://isc.ac.affrc.go.jp/>. The agenda and other information can be found under the heading Management Strategy Workshop.

Albacore Working Group - The Albacore Working Group decided to begin the MSE process by developing a framework plan to address all aspects of MSE and to develop a process for evaluating the performance of alternative management procedures for north Pacific Albacore Tuna against a range of scenarios that take into account observational data (catch, effort, etc.) and process uncertainty in stock assessments and management; and alternative assumptions about stock dynamics and structural assumptions.

The development and implementation of an MSE process requires collaboration between managers, industry, and scientific experts. Scientists develop alternative scenarios analyses and outcomes from proposed management alternatives. For this to be possible, managers and industry in the MSE process need to identify objectives for the stock and fishery, articulate management procedures, and identify relevant performance measures to evaluate management plan outcomes. To start the dialog with management the Albacore Working Group developed some ideas for: Proposed Objectives, Propose Performance Measures, Propose harvest control rules (HCR) and a list of uncertainties to consider in the management Operating Model(s) that need to be developed.

The estimated time required to complete an MSE for albacore range from 3 to 4 years. The next stock assessment of north Pacific albacore will be conducted and delivered in 2017. The MSE process will not interfere with delivery of the assessment.

Thus, if work schedules must be rearranged, the first priority will be the stock assessment. Present resources and personnel are not sufficient to develop and conduct an MSE process given existing commitments of scientists to domestic issues and internationally to the stock assessment process.

Therefore, an MSE analyst will have to be hired or contracted to deliver on the MSE process. Therefore, due to the priority of the stock assessment and the need to obtain expertise the albacore MSE will not be forthcoming until 2018 at the earliest.

The albacore Working Group report is being edited and finalized and will be made available when the review is complete. The document lays out all of the aspects relating to a full MSE.

Cook Islands Albacore Fishery Adjudicator's Report and Findings of Items disputed by WWF and FTBOA. <http://tinyurl.com/q3b4vdm>

The decision reached was that the Certifier (Conformity Assessment Body ('CAB') as used in the report) is to reconsider its approach to PIs (Performance Indicators) 1.1.2, 3.2.1 and 3.2.3. All other grounds of objection are dismissed.

PI 1.1.2 assesses whether limit and target reference points are appropriate for the stock. It is agreed by all parties that, in relation to the Southern albacore stock, WCPFC has agreed a limit reference point, but there has been no agreement as to a target reference point.

There is no target reference point for South Pacific albacore. The certifier determined that reference points (limit and target) are appropriate for the stock and can be estimated and gave the PI a passing score (SG 80); however, the adjudicator found that selection of a target reference point based on discussions taking place within the WCPFC Scientific Committee was inappropriate and that the limit and target reference points set forth are "at best generic" and would meet SG 60, but not SG 80. The adjudicator found that the Certifiers for scoring reference points not in use by the "management authority" was inappropriate and not based on any discussion of the logic of selection of reference points those presented and PI scoring was inappropriate.

The Adjudicator found that the certifier failed to "harmonize" scores between the Fiji and Cook Islands certification and explain difference in scoring. Also that fishery monitoring programs as described for the Cook Islands fishery was generic and not based on actual performance information.

WWF objected to PI 1.2.1 to which the certifier found that the harvest strategy (which for these purposes was identified as CMM 2010-05) may not have been fully tested but evidence exists that it is achieving its objectives. WWF cites a variety of evidence (some of which is challenged by the CAB) to show that CMM 2010-05 has not been effective in constraining effort in the fishery. The adjudicator rejected the WWF objection finding that the Certifier's scoring was not arbitrary.

However, more by luck than judgment, the stock status remains good and fishing mortality remains consistent with exploiting the stock at ~MSY. The adjudicator agreed with the scoring and found that the harvest strategy is to maintain the stock at ~MSY through various measures of which CMM 2010-05 is only one part – is sound.

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