

American Fishermen's Research Foundation News (AFRF)©

American Fishermen's Research Foundation (AFRF) recently has been fully involved in a number of scientific meetings and management meetings at the international and federal level. AFRF funds much of the costs of having Peter Flournoy and Dr. Vidar Wespestad to attend these events when important. American Albacore fishing Association (AAFA) also has been splitting the costs of these meeting with AFRF. The next meeting will be the Northern Committee of the WCPFC in a couple weeks in Sapporo, Japan where many HMS issues will be presented including those affecting albacore such as the MSE planning as well as continued work on biological reverence points stock wide.

AFRF also continues with its archival tagging for the 13th season, otolith sampling, and measuring on board. Some of the reports and data from all of this have been delayed or tied up at the Southwest fisheries science Center (SWFSC) but should be interesting once it is done and hopefully will keep supporting our fishery as sustainable and well managed.

Tagging and Sampling: AFRF has been awarded grant funding through NOAA to continue doing archival tagging this season with two trips planned starting this week and continuing through 2016 -2017. So far more than 900 archival tags have been deployed with another 100 for 2015. They have not been recovered at a very good rate but of the 30 or so recovered since 2002 very interesting data and tracking has been acquired.

As mandated by the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Fishery Management Plan, Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) conducts biological and economic research on several highly migratory species including albacore tuna. SWFSC albacore research has been ongoing since the 1970s and recent efforts involve gathering information on albacore movement and behavior, and albacore biology and life history in the north Pacific. These research goals can only be accomplished with a cooperative effort between SWFSC and the albacore fishing industry.

Albacore tag deployments both coastal and offshore will be conducted in both areas of interest. In the northeast Pacific, the archival tag deployments will be done supporting research efforts of understanding migration patterns and stock structure of juvenile albacore. In the central Pacific, pop-off archival tags will be deployed on adult albacore to gain information on the movements and behavior of the adult population. SWFSC has been working over the past few years with a vessel owner out of Kona, Hawaii to tag some larger albacore caught on hand lines and inserted with pop-off tags. A few have been successful but the main issue there has been catching the fish the nights when the technicians were present.

AFRF also will coordinate the collection, storage and shipping of whole juvenile albacore from the northeast Pacific for the SWFSC's studies on albacore life history and ecology.

The results of this research will contribute to a better understanding of the behavior and habitat utilization of this species and therefore strengthen SWFSC's ability to effectively assess the stock status.

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WCPFC-SC Meeting: Dr. Vidar Wespestad

The West and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Science Committee meeting concluded last week in Pohnpei, Micronesia. At the meeting a stock assessment for south Pacific albacore tuna was presented:

S J Harley¹, N Davies², L Tremblay-Boyer¹, John Hampton¹, and S McKechnie. 2015.
Stock assessment for south Pacific albacore tuna WCPFC-SC11-2015/SA-WP-06
<https://www.wcpfc.int/node/21776>.

The stock assessment was, as expected, similar to the 2012 assessment in regard to catch remaining at or below the estimated MSY level. Additionally, indications are that estimated spawning levels of spawning will maintain exploitable biomass near the MSY level and above the limit reference point.

It was noted in the assessment that fishing mortality is below that level of that will achieve full MSY, However, increasing fishing to the level that will achieve MSY will require a significant increase in effort, yet only very small (if any) increases in long-term catch. A secondary effect would be to greatly reduce the amount of fish available to the longline fishery. Nothing was mentioned regarding the troll fishery, but in passed assessments it has been noted that the level of fishing effort in the troll fishery has a small contribution to total fishing mortality.

Noteworthy about the recent south Pacific albacore assessment is the incorporating geographic partition of fisheries to reflect local productivity differences and also that both assessments are now assuming the same rate of natural mortality (0.3). The increased compatibility of model structure make results more comparable and comparison assessment results may lead to improved assessments for both stocks.

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Climate Issues and Albacore Tuna:

2015 albacore season – a very different year. Dr. Vidar Wespestad

It's pretty evident to most on the west coast that climate is a lot different this year with unusually hot and dry weather. At sea it appears the marine environment has warmed beyond normal levels, some possibly due to the large mass of warm water off the Pacific northwest to Alaska, and more perhaps to the essentially strong el Nino that is developing. Whatever the cause its clear that albacore are distributed to the northern portion of its range with very few found in California. Fishing in early August appears to be centered on the Columbia River and to the North in central and northern BC, with possibly some albacore landings in Alaska. During prior el Nino years albacore were taken off Alaska.

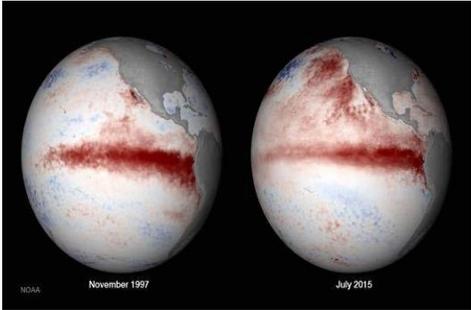
One of the more interesting aspects of the reports from fishermen on the grounds is the lack of feed in surface waters and that landed albacore are smaller and have little to no feed in them. It was also noted early in the season that fish were moving more than normal apparently in search of prey. Comments such as "fish are starving" have been received at WFOA from vessels at sea reporting on catch.

Off the Columbia River albacore are being reported as primarily feeding on small squid and an absence of normal prey such as sardine, anchovy, hake and rockfish, Off Central to northern B.C. Fishermen also report surface feed to be sparse and that albacore are primarily feeding on krill, lantern fish and small rockfish.

WFOA has sent requests to vessels to observe feeding conditions and prey items consumed by latitude and longitude and time of day if possible.

Water Blob and El Nino: New NOAA images show El Niño and 'The Blob' in stark relief - Oregonian

This year's burgeoning El Niño looks a lot like the last strong El Niño of 1997-98 in an image released by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The side-by-side images from 1997 and July 2015 by the agency's Environmental Visualization Laboratory show a broad swath of warmer-than-average sea surface temperatures extending from the mid-Pacific Ocean at the equator to the coast of South America. El Niño's warmer waters appear a bit larger in the 1997 image, but the image from July 2015 also shows a large pool of warm water along the northwest coast of the United States. That pool has been dubbed "The Blob" and may have an even longer-lasting detrimental effect on sea life, scientists say. For Full story see:



<http://tinyurl.com/o67oc8x>

Record-setting bloom of toxic algae in North Pacific:

August 6, 2015

A record-breaking algal bloom continues to expand across the North Pacific reaching as far north as the Aleutian Islands and as far south as southern California. Coinciding with well above average sea surface temperatures across the North Pacific and West Coast of North America, the bloom is laced with some toxic species that have had far-reaching consequences for sea life and regional and local economies. For Full Story See: <http://tinyurl.com/nquan8p>

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OCEAN TO TABLE - A LOCAL SAN DIEGO SEAFOOD SYMPOSIUM:

AFRF contributed albacore to this event in San Diego. August 5, 2015

The Center for Marine Biodiversity and Conservation at Scripps Institution of Oceanography and the Southwest Fisheries Science Center, NOAA Fisheries, held an interactive symposium to explore local fish, fisheries and seafood. Join the conversation as scientists, fishers, chefs, managers, buyers, consumers and students gather together to discuss three local, storied and valuable seafood products from ocean ... to table. Some of the presenters were:

Market Squid - David Haworth, Fisherman F/V Barbara H, and Vice President of the California Wetfish Producers Association; Michael Navarro, Post-doctoral Researcher, California State University - Monterey Bay; Michelle Horeczko, Senior Environmental Scientist, California Department of Fish and Wildlife; Vanessa DeLuca, Marine Resource Consultant, Pan Pac LLC; Jason McLeod, Chef/Partner, Ironside, Little Italy, San Diego

Sea Urchin - Peter Halmay, Diver and founder of California Sea Urchin Dive Association, San Diego Fisherman's Working Group and Tuna Dockside Market; Steve Schroeter, Research Ecologist, Marine Science Institute, U.C. Santa Barbara; Travis Buck, Environmental Scientist, California Department of Fish and Wildlife; Dave Rudie, Owner, Catalina Offshore Products; Drew Deckman, Chef/Owner, Deckman's at El Mogor, Valle de Guadalupe, Baja California, Mexico

Albacore - John LaGrange, Fisherman F/V Janthina, and President, American Fisheries Research Foundation; Suzy Kohin, Leader, Large Pelagic Program, Southwest Fisheries Science Center, NOAA Fisheries; Celia Barroso, Fishery Policy Analyst, West Coast Regional Office, NOAA Fisheries; Kevin McClain, Vice President of Resourcing, Bumble Bee; Chef Rob Ruiz Chef/Owner, Land and Water Company, Carlsbad

American Institute of Fishery Research Biologists - BOARD OF CONTROL MEETING

Dr. Wespestad will be attending this event on behalf of AFRF:

15-16 August 2015, Portland, Oregon

<http://www.aifrb.org/2015/07/draft-agenda-for-aifrb-2015-business-meeting/>

New Appointments to 2015-2016 Permanent Advisory Committee Members of the WCPFC

Bixler, Kevin	Chicken of the Sea
Chikami, Stuart	Western Pacific Fisheries, Inc (4 vessels)
Chou, Max	South Pacific Tuna Corp (10 vessels)
DaRosa, Larry	Tradition Mariner, LLC (4 vessels)
Feliciano, Edgar	Tautai-0-Samoa Longline and Fishing Ass.
Fougner, Svein	Hawaii Longline Association
Hallman, Brian	American Tunaboat Association
Hamby, Joe	Tri Marine Group (10 vessels)
Johnson, Karl	Troll vessel owner
Leape, Gerry	The PEW Environmental Group
Lutu-Sanchez, C.	Tautai-0-Samoa Longline and Fishing Ass.
Madeira, Josh	Monterey Bay Aquarium
McGowan, Michael	Ocean Global and Sea Global Companies
Paul, Linda	Hawaii Audubon Society
Sardinha, William	Sardinha & Cileu Mgmt (4 vessels)
Sousa, Jim	GS Fisheries (3 vessels)
Steen, Ryan	Hawaii Longline Association
Thomas, Randi	Rpt Advisors, LLC

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.

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.

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>

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