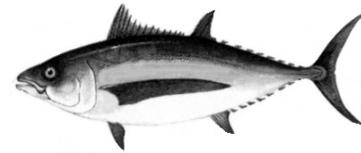


# **WESTERN FISHBOAT OWNERS ASSOCIATION**



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May 2017

U.S. Albacore Fishermen:

## **WHY IS IT CRITICAL TO JOIN WFOA!**

Almost every commercial fisherman knows you can't just buy groceries, fuel up and head out to go fishing anymore. As with most businesses, issues that individuals have to deal with have gotten more complex and complicated. As a vessel owner failure to keep up and on track can mean a bad day with the various State and Federal law enforcement agencies. On top of that the market structure for selling all fish is getting more consolidated and you need to be aware of developing profitable market niches and requirements.

As if that isn't enough, add the ever-encroaching management that is continually directed at narrowing participation among fishermen and pushing toward "share allocation," while at the same time there is a continually growing foreign effort to harvest among nations that never actually had directed albacore fisheries. And of course the ever-present propaganda that tuna will poison you one way or another from those who don't know the truth or don't care because they are on a mission to save the earth.

While it's not all bad news, the good is disproportionate to the disruptive proposals and actions coming out on a continual basis from government at all levels. In recent years scientists have developed a better understanding of resource abundance and the shortcomings of that understanding. This has led to a fairly robust stock assessment that clearly shows that stocks are in very good condition and that fishing is not affecting the productivity or sustainability of North Pacific albacore. The harvest is in line with abundance and current harvest rates are at safe levels.

This is good news and has paved the way to develop harvest policies that should insure continual harvest. Through collaborative research with government agencies WFOA/AFRF have helped acquire the knowledge needed to improve important parameters that determine the proper harvest level. These include collection of specimens for refining estimates of age and growth important for establishing the optimum harvest rates, tagging to understand distribution and migration and links to spawning. WFOA has also, through grants, studied, fleet economics to show administrators the strong dependence on albacore and how management decisions will impact the fleet. Most importantly, over the past few years WFOA/AFRF have been able to make inroads into the management process to halt government and conservation actions that would have been highly detrimental to the U.S. albacore fleet.

Also in the good news department is the completion of MSC certification that opens new markets to Troll and Pole and Line albacore along with an active marketing program by WFOA to increase retailer and consumer knowledge of albacore. WFOA also was able to keep the fishery from being artificially reduced by those saying it was overfished and preserving the rights of current participants, putting others without a history of fishing subject to removal should effort be have to be reduced at some future date.

So, if you're a albacore fisherman you have a pretty good outlook with a relatively stable resource outlooks, improving markets and in the short term reduced fishing competition with the recent temporary ending of U.S. and Canadian reciprocal access to national EEZs. However, there is much remaining work to be accomplished to insure that the fishery continues to be favorable to U.S. albacore fishermen.

At present there is continued government pressure to come to agreement on a fishing regime with Canada. This pressure starts at state levels and goes up high in the US federal government. In government there are those that feel it is U.S. fishermen that are being unreasonable in requesting changes in the Canadian fishery and that we should reach a quick agreement with Canada that would be remain very favorable to the Canadian side. We did achieve an agreement from 2014-2016 that limited Canadian access to 45 vessels and this was extended through 2019. However, we still have a continued fight for favorable language that would attributed Canadian catches in the US EEZ to and future US international quota.

Internationally, there are conflicting philosophies on how albacore should be managed. The Western Pacific is under the jurisdiction of the WCPFC, and Eastern Pacific is under jurisdiction of the IATTC. In both bodies albacore is a species of secondary concern to more abundant target species pursued by the seine and longline fleets. Both organizations are required to develop harvest strategies for albacore and each is approaching it from different directions making it possible that the North American fisheries are managed differently than the Asian fisheries. AFRF/WFOA have taken a leading role in monitoring the progression of scientific management advice to insure that the U.S. albacore fleet isn't endangered by arbitrary rules advanced by organizations bent on reducing fisheries no matter what the cost to commercial fishermen.

The future of albacore fisheries are certainly at the crossroads and it takes a lot of effort and money to move the decisions toward the path that is of benefit to the continued well-being of U.S. albacore fishermen. The U.S. and Canadian fisheries are the only fleets dependent on albacore; others take albacore as bycatch or as a substitute when more abundant tuna are not available. There will be an ongoing interplay among other fishing nations and NGOs at the RFMOs to try and alter the current fishery. WFOA is working to insure the continuance of the fishery and is reaching out to other organizations in an effort to help preserve the fishery and to grow it relative to the resource.

The Boards of both WFOA and AFRF call upon all albacore fishermen to help in the battle to preserve the U.S. fleet and it's harvesting rights. To achieve a successful outcome to the various attacks we need everyone to stay in the fight and support the efforts of the industry leadership to prevail in the coming war. The albacore fishery is one of the few remaining open access fisheries where a U.S. fisherman can continue his profession.

Since the 1970's the amount of U.S. caught fish supplied by U.S. fishermen has dwindled from 50% to 14%. We have to fight now not to be put out of business entirely and being foreclosed from harvesting a healthy, profitable, and sustainable ocean resource!

WFOA continues to represent the industry the best we can with limited resources and time at all levels where regulation and management threatens our future, especially when it is done politically without good science. Your dues contributions go along ways in at least giving U.S. fishermen a seat at the table in these issues. It's not good but if we were not there over the past 15 years we would be in far worse shape.

The Western Fishboat Owners' Association (WFOA) was founded in 1967 and we remain a non-profit California based association. Our purpose is to promote the interests of the hook and line albacore fishery and other small boat pelagic fisheries. Some of our priorities include:

- Continuing the marketing campaign funded by WFOA to promote local Wild Pacific Albacore in U.S. domestic markets and work in conjunction with organization such as the Oregon Albacore Commission and others towards these goals.
- Pursuing best albacore dock prices in existing and new markets and keeping fleet informed on in-season prices and market changes or additions.
- Opposing unilateral management by the U.S. on albacore trollers, especially domestic limited entry or ITQ's on albacore trollers.
- Continuing to raise the issue of IUU (illegal, undocumented, unregistered) drift gillnet vessels.
- Representing members at the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission( IATTC), Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), International Science Committee Albacore Working Group (ISC-ALBWG), and the federal councils involved (PFMC-WPFMC).
- Representing U.S. trollers in negotiations of the U.S./Canada albacore treaty.
- Maintaining the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) North and South Pacific certifications shared with American Albacore Fishing Association. Re-certification for the next 5 years will begin August 2017.
- Monitoring the unnecessary development of Marine Protected Areas, especially regarding access to offshore sea-mounts designated as Marine Monuments under the Antiquities Act..
- Maintaining association and consumer websites, social media such as facebook and twitter, and membership information through e-mail, mailers, vessel-email and other means.
- Managing the American Fishermen's Research Foundation (AFRF), involved in archival tagging, representing all U.S. troll albacore fishermen at management forums, and other public education issues. Continue supporting projects such as archival tagging and selenium research.
- AFRF has just embarked on a new chapter in the tagging. AFRF has hired a private consultant/scientist Dr. Stephanie Snyder to process tags that have languished at NOAA and get data in presentable and recognized formats. This is about a \$ 75,000/year project. AFRF recently hire David Itano from Hawaii to oversee the ISC-ALBWG North Pacific Albacore Stock Assessment and Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) now underway.

Although WFOA's primary focus is on troll-caught albacore, we recognize the need for a healthy and strong U.S. commercial fishing industry. WFOA strives for broad support from all gear types on common issues affecting commercial fishermen. WFOA's members own and operate vessels from 30 -100 feet in length with an average size of about 55ft. Some are brine, some are blast, and a some are ice vessels.

Again we appreciate your support now and in the past if you were once a member. Please send in your appropriate amount of dues and if you want to contribute more either in the public education fund or other it will be much appreciated.

Thank You



Wayne Heikkila  
Executive Director

For your convince we have included a membership application on the nest page. You can pay with cash, check, credit card, paypal, or through your district director.

**WESTERN FISHBOAT OWNERS ASSOCIATION**  
**VESSEL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

VESSEL NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DOCUMENTATION#: \_\_\_\_\_

OWNER: \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

POSTAL CODE: \_\_\_\_\_ PORT OF DOCUMENTATION: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ RADIO CALL SIGN: \_\_\_\_\_

VESSEL E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PORT: \_\_\_\_\_ VESSEL VALUE: (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

LENGTH: \_\_\_\_\_ CAPACITY: (tons) \_\_\_\_\_ GEAR:(bait, jig) \_\_\_\_\_

REFRIGERATION:(brine, blast, ice, coils, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER FISHERIES: Crab\_\_\_\_, Shrimp\_\_\_\_, Swordfish\_\_\_\_, Salmon\_\_\_\_, Groundfish\_\_\_\_, Squid\_\_\_\_, Other \_\_\_\_\_

DISTRICT: (pick) BC,\_\_\_\_ PUGET SOUND,\_\_\_\_ AST/WEST,\_\_\_\_ NEWPORT/COOS,\_\_\_\_ EUREKA / FB,\_\_\_\_ SF / OAK,\_\_\_\_  
MOSS,\_\_\_\_ MORRO BAY/SANTA BARBARA,\_\_\_\_ SO/CAL-SAN DIEGO/HAWAII,\_\_\_\_ NEW ZEALAND,\_\_\_\_

I hereby apply for membership in Western Fishboat Owners Association. As a member I will comply with the bylaws of the association and all rules and regulations of the Board of Directors. Final approval of membership will take place at next directors meeting, you retain all membership privileges in the meantime.

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

First Years Dues: If You Caught (Albacore) in Prior or Ongoing Season;

< 10 Tons	-	\$ 150.00
10-50 Tons	-	\$ 350.00
50 - 100 Tons	-	\$ 400.00
> 100 Tons	-	\$ 500.00

**Make Check or Money Order Payable to WFOA, P.O. Box 992723, Redding, CA 96099, or Enter Credit Card Information: Or Fax To: 1-530-232-0107, You can use paypal also through [wfoa@charter.net](mailto:wfoa@charter.net)**

Visa\_\_\_\_, Mastercard\_\_\_\_, AX\_\_\_\_

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_.

Name on card if different from above: \_\_\_\_\_

Address if different from above: \_\_\_\_\_

CC Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount USD \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

**Check one** - Send the newsletter by - Email in PDF format , or Snail Mail

Referred By: (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_