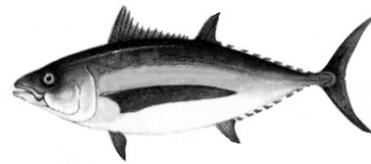


# WESTERN FISHBOAT OWNERS ASSOCIATION ©



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Members:

June 15, 2015

The 2015 albacore season is near. This is a brief newsletter containing some inserts relevant to the 2015 season. WFOA will update information via email lists to land and sea as conditions change and send updates to supporting members for distribution throughout the season. Thanks to all that support WFOA and have a good albacore season and stay safe.

Included:

- WFOA abbreviated newsletter
- 2015 List of Albacore Buyers
- List of Supporting Members
- Updated To-Do Regulatory List from NMFS
- Quality & Handling Guide Summary

## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

**Dues:** For the few members that have yet to pay your 2015 dues you will be taken off the membership list and communications after June 30<sup>th</sup>. Please try to pay by then. Thanks.

**Vessel E-Mail List:** WFOA will try to send out brief updates throughout the season on our vessel email list. If you are not on, not getting them, or your email has changed let us know. Regular messages will begin after July 4<sup>th</sup> on a need to know basis.

**Regular E-Mail List:** WFOA will be doing Friday updates in-season again beginning in early July. Please let us know if your regular email has changed.

**MARKET & PRICES:** No commercial albacore catches have been reported yet. However there were a couple confirmed recreational catches made recently off Westport trolling deep. We will not be surprised to see fish showing early this season as the warm water "blob" still exists in the NE Pacific. A good season off Canada would also not be a surprise.

Early catches off Japan of their summer albacore appear about normal. Effort has been lighter on skipjack as that

price worldwide is very depressed after peaking in 2012 - 2013.

Locally some of the companies that had inventory from the last season have been trying to market it to make room for possible early albacore catches. There have also been some new possible markets for the product but generally a continued soft market especially for blast market which has been overwhelmed in the past two seasons.

There are no set albacore prices yet and we don't expect that to happen until after July 1<sup>st</sup>. Blast remains a problem with the late catch off Canada in 2014 contributing to the situation and some very questionable albacore being bought and held at the end of the season.

Added Chinese Affect, more information: See link below.

<http://tinyurl.com/nqom69g>

This activity is hurting the U.S. local fleets as cheap subsidized albacore is flooding markets at 30% of what local fishermen receive. Local U.S. albacore fishermen get paid on average \$1.00 - \$2.00 per pound for this wonderful fish. Truly this is a great bargain for consumers compared to other species. Until we can sell it all at home we continue to be at the mercy of unregulated fish managers internationally letting these fleets grow unabated while the U.S. fleet continues to age and retract.

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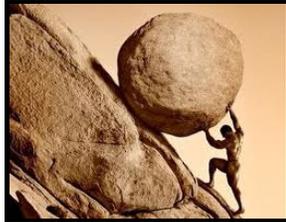
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Over the past 20 years the biggest disappointment of mine is seeing little gain in the albacore prices to fishermen. Most of the movement has occurred on the negative side. The period of late 2011 thru 2012 saw a hopeful increase across the board with brine prices at \$2,700-\$2,900 ton and blast frozen as high as \$ 5,500/ton. Skipjack prices also were at record levels and some even proclaimed that the era of cheap tuna was over! Like Sisyphus rolling his ball to the top of the hill, we almost crossed the rubicon where the prices would have finally matched the value of the local sustainable albacore. But it was not too be! On the far side of that hill was China and plenty of customers willing to buy their discounted subsidized albacore. Down came the ball over the U.S. fleet once again.



In the past albacore was something local buyers just put in containers and shipped off for the going rate at the time. The problem many times was in order to get an sale overseas they had to offer it for lower values. That cut out the competition briefly, but at the far end buyers could see that there was little reason to buy fish if someone else was dropping it the next day. Thus a vicious cycle would result.

Gradually more local boutique and custom canners popped up in the NW, as well as more and more retailers, fishmarkets, processors, and restaurants willing to do more with a fish which compared to species like Salmon and Halibut offer the same healthful experience for a lot less money. To do this year around more facilities both large or small that process albacore into consumer-friendly forms would be great. There also is a severe shortage of cold storage where fishermen and processors could utilize for a year around supply which is a problem but solvable.

**America Samoa Canneries:** *From WPFMC Spring 2015 Newsletter. "Tri Marine International, one of the world's largest tuna companies, celebrated the grand opening of its cannery, Samoa Tuna Processors, Inc., in Atu'u, American Samoa on Jan. 24, 2015. The facility was four years and \$70 million in the making and is expected to employ about 1,500 workers when fully operational."*

#### **MANAGEMENT & REGULATION:**

**Canada Treaty:** A couple weeks ago the U.S. and Canadian governments had an online bilateral

meeting. Data reported was that the U.S. caught 95% of its albacore catch within the U.S. EEZ and less than 5% in the Canadian EEZ. Total U.S. landings in 2014 were 13,533mt, compared to 13,596mt in 2013. This number includes Canadian Landings in the U.S. which were less than 500 tons. U.S. vessels landed about 1,277 tons in Canadian ports in 2014, compared to 289 in 2013. A total of 590 individual U.S. boats fished albacore in 2014 compared to 684 in 2013, and 816 in 2012. 36 U.S. boats fished in Canadian waters in 2014, 39 hailed in. One boat short of the allotment, 44 Canadian boats fished in the U.S. EEZ in 2014. Total Canadian catch was slightly less than 5,000mt of which 44% was caught in the U.S. zone.

2015 will be the second year of the 3-year regime. To date no diplomatic notes have been exchanged by the countries as required after the May 2014 consultations, and the treaty regime has been going forward on a provisional basis. Both sides are working to correct this issue prior to the season.

**Application to Enter Canadian Waters and Ports:** WFOA is still working on a solution to the confusion and subsequent charging 4 U.S. vessels with fishing in the Canadian EEZ without a port access application. NMFS reiterated that guidance to the US fleet is that "The port access is not required for fishing in the EEZ". All seem to agree but the higher up bureaucrats have not straightened it out yet. We expect this to be resolved and a better format established to address similar confusion instead of court trials and heavy fines.

WFOA and AAFA wrote a letter dated June 11, 2015 to the U.S. Dept of State requesting official clarification and something in writing that U.S. fishermen can carry onboard if fishing in the Canadian zone. If we get such a document WFOA will forward it to the membership.

**PFMC:** The Pacific Fisheries Management Council is meeting this week in Spokane, WA and we will have a report of full activities via email lists or in the August newsletter. As off Saturday the HMSAS committee recommended the following to the council:

North Pacific Albacore Tuna - Concerning the 11th Northern Committee (NC) meeting in September 2015, the HMSAS was briefed on the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) that the US is committed to supporting for North Pacific Albacore at the NC meeting last September. The HMSMT provided a number of suggested requests for inclusion in the proposed items

to be investigated within the Albacore MSE framework analysis. The HMSAS concurs with these recommendations, and based on information received understand that these proposed items are within the bounds of items included in the model. The HMSAS is concerned regarding increasing the number of variables into the MSE model. The best available data for albacore are primarily catch, effort and limited biological data. These primary data all have a high level of uncertainty, such as the Chinese directed or bycatch of albacore. Other important stock assessment information such as the spawner-recruit relationship is unknown, substituted with assumed parameters that further introduce error and uncertainty into the evaluation process. There are also concerns as to the effectiveness of fishery controls relative to environmental effects and also that most of the North Pacific albacore catch is not a target catch, only the North American and Japanese pole and line albacore fisheries are target fisheries, but in the Japanese fishery, albacore is of secondary importance to skipjack.

At this time the HMSAS believes the MSE process should not become too complex. The MSE process should focus on the issue of developing target reference points that are appropriate to maintain albacore abundance at or above the MSY level (historic long term average catch) and to develop control rules to achieve that result.

VMS - The HMSAS would like to bring to the attention of the Council: International Affairs; High Seas Fishing Compliance Act; Permitting and Monitoring of U.S. High Seas Fishing Vessels – April 13, 2015 Federal Register Notice of Proposed Rule. This notice requires enhanced mobile transmitting units (EMTUs), which are two-way VMS units, for all vessels having a high-seas permit. It is HMSAS' understanding that the proposed regulation was not vetted through the Pacific Council or the West Coast Region.

The HMSAS requests that the Council send a letter requesting a re-opening of the comment period for this proposed rule so the Council, HMSAS, HMSMT, and SSC can submit comments, particularly since by its own terms it suggests that the fishing fleet most impacted by the proposed rule will be the Pacific albacore fleet. As an aid to the Council, the HMSAS has attached a summary analysis of the EMTU portions of the proposed rule, but does not include the observer, groundfish and transshipment portions. The summary analysis also includes information on International Fisheries Pacific Tuna Fisheries Establishment of Tuna Vessel Monitoring System in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.

**USCG Safety Exam Notice:** Passing a U.S. Coast Guard fishing vessel safety examination will become mandatory Oct. 15, 2015. Any fishing vessel crew operating beyond three miles off shore will need to complete their safety examination and receive a commercial fishing vessel safety decal, which should be displayed on the vessel.

For inspections along central Washington Coast and the Puget Sound, contact Robert Cuddeback at 206-217-6187. For inspections along the Oregon coast from Brookings to Westport, Washington, contact Curt Farrell at 503-240-9373.

**Marine Stewardship Council:** The 2<sup>nd</sup> MSC audit is underway for the AAFA/WFOA NP and SP troll and pole fisheries. We have been making arguments that the conditions placed on both the NP and SP and the SP in particular are “unattainable” due to the politics involved in the RFMO process. Essentially in the NP we are covered by the actions of the PFMC but the SP is deeply embroiled in moves to close the high seas to fishing which is our first fight and may contradict establishing BRP's and HCR's at this time.

*WFOA and AAFA believe the conditions placed of the Albacore MSC Certification are not valid from two standpoints. These are:*

*1. The conditions are not achievable within the time frame of the certification. This is based on the MSC criteria that unachievable conditions can be placed on a fishery. As it currently stands the recent requirement to perform a full management strategy evaluation (MSE) at the request of both North Pacific RFMOs the ability to develop BRPs and associated control rules can not be achieved until 2018 at the earliest for WCPFC and 2019 for IATTC. Both these dates are beyond the dates of the albacore certification. As the conditions cannot be fully achieved within the time frame of the current certification WFOA and AAFA believe that the conditions fall within the MSC definition of being unattainable and thus invalid conditions.*

*2. WFOA-AAFA believes that PI 1.1.2 is improperly scored and should be raised to 80 or greater, or the condition be removed. A limit reference point has been adopted and revised by the WCPFC Northern Committee. The original limit reference point was found to be too conservative and the North Committee at it's 2014 meeting adopted a U.S. proposal for a F20 limit reference point. This limit reference point is stated to be a conservative reference point and may be equivalent to the MSY level of tropical tunas. (NC-10, 2014, <https://www.wcpfc.int/meeting-folders/northern-committee>).*

Since there is no chance of a RFMO solution to conditions in the absence of RFMO control rules control rules instituted and enforced by national governments will meet conditions for those fisheries. Until Chinese effort growth controlled it will be impossible to achieve a multinational harvest plan.

WFOA and AAFA may be re-evaluating whether the MSC certification for the South Pacific makes any sense. As our fishery is small and far from others albacore fisheries such as longline. Also, MSC certifications are given to fisheries supported by China that is vastly expanding in the region with no effort to control their own expansion.

#### **American Fishermen's Research Foundation (AFRF)**

**Updates:** There is no separate newsletter this month, however, AFRF recently has;

Planned and organized and arranged funding for the two charter trips for archival tagging in 2015. One trip will occur in July and one later in the season. Over 100 tags are available to deploy and the first batch is ready to go, since they were left from the non-late trip of 2014.

WFOA has four vessels doing bio-sampling especially for AFRF otolith studies and other work on random whole albacore caught during the season.

Last week the AFRF board of directors voted to contribute \$2,000 to a Dr. Ray Hilborn study on forage species arranged by the California Wetfish Association. Although not specifically directed at what albacore feed on, it does help to counter some of the arguments being made by ENGO's that could drastically affect harvesting of baitfish in designated areas.

#### **OTHER:**

**RAY HILBORN: Rising tide of America's sustainable seafood:** See: <http://tinyurl.com/owsxan9>

*WASHINGTON (Saving Seafood) -- March 23, 2015 -- The following is an excerpt from an op-ed published on March 17 in The Hill by Dr. Ray Hilborn, professor of aquatic and fishery sciences at the University of Washington and author of "Overfishing: What Everyone Needs to Know":*

*Today, the U.S. has essentially eliminated overfishing, with only 9 percent of stocks now fished at rates higher than would produce long-term maximum yield. In a report released this month by the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch, 98 percent of U.S. fisheries received a "Best" or "Good" rating, with only 2 percent on the "Avoid" list. While 17 percent of stocks are still*

*considered "overfished", most of these are on the road to recovery. And in New England, bottom fish stocks have made a spectacular recovery, having increased six-fold since the mid-1990s.*

*Technically speaking, some stocks will always be "overfished" - fish stocks fluctuate naturally and the managers can only control what they harvest-but the U.S. management system, using scientific advice, is designed to take such fluctuations into account, and will completely stop harvesting when stocks reach low levels. Consumers and retailers should buy U.S.-caught fish with confidence that the fishery is managed through an open, transparent, and sustainable process.*

*However, consumers and retailers are often confused by the numerous non-governmental organizations providing consumer advice on what stocks are sustainably managed. Legitimate concerns about overfishing in the 1990s led to the rise of these watchdog NGOs, and today there are literally dozens of seafood advice web sites that provide often conflicting advice. A stock may be listed as a "best choice" by the Monterey Bay Aquarium, but still be on Greenpeace's "red" list. The same stock of fish may be rated "green" or "red" by the same organization depending on how it is caught.*

*Why the conflicting information? Quite simply, providing seafood advice is now a big business, both with direct payment from retailers to those giving advice, and by fundraising campaigns to "save the oceans" that fail to acknowledge that the existing U.S. fisheries management system provides for sustainability. Indeed, despite the fact that it is widely agreed among scientists, fisheries managers, and government regulators that U.S. fisheries are well managed, some NGOs now gain so much revenue from companies that sell seafood and concerned citizens, that they simply cannot admit the U.S. success.*

#### **New Members Since May 1, 2015:**

|                  |                |               |
|------------------|----------------|---------------|
| F/V Midnight Sun | Paul Munowitch | Camarillo, CA |
| F/V Paula Ann    | Joe Luz        | San Pedro, CA |

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