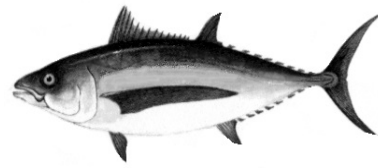


WESTERN FISHBOAT OWNERS ASSOCIATION ©



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Members:

December 20, 2015

As the holidays approach WFOA wishes the best to all members for a prosperous and safe new year. The 2015 season was a challenge as many are, and 2016 will hopefully be better. From now through June there is a number of industry, management, and regulatory meetings with issues concerning albacore tuna that WFOA will be following. Information will be provided to members especially for decisions that affect your access to the resource and affect your pocketbook. Fish do not always bite but it seems more than ever regulators and rulemakers do.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

✓ **2016 Dues:** Invoices were sent out in October and we really appreciate members making early payments. Feel free to contribute to the public outreach and management support fund and be entered in the 2016 raffle at the annual meeting. Tickets are \$25/each. Prizes on that raffle are around \$500 in value selected at the annual meeting and you do not have to be present to win.

✓ **Member Facebook Page:** WFOA maintains a Wild Pacific Albacore facebook page which has many likes and followers. We also do a monthly News Flash on Constant Contact mainly to foodies, in addition to this newsletter and three websites - wfoa-tuna.org, afrf.org, and PacificAlbacore.com. These are open to the public.

However, WFOA will soon set up a "Members Only" Facebook Page as many of you do have facebook. This will be only for paid up members and you will be able as a member post messages, photos etc.. or express an opinion easily. You can also send message through facebook messenger and chat on facetime. We know not all have it but we will give it a try as a way for more member contact and participation.

✓ **2016 Annual Meeting Site:** WFOA will hold its 2016 annual meeting from Sunday, March 20th through Wednesday, March 23rd, 2016 at the Hallmark Resort in Newport, Oregon.

This will essentially be the same as before with WFOA Board meetings on 20th and 21st, seminars, reception, dinner on 22nd, and AFRF board meeting on 23rd

This was scheduled earlier this year to avoid some scheduling issues. A full schedule will be in the next newsletter.

Hallmark is offering WFOA rates, contact them at 1-855-391-2484

ALBACORE CATCH: The 2015 Albacore landings in U.S. ports in 2015 were; Washington - 7750 st, Oregon - 3774 st, California - 15 st, Total - 12,314 st.

This total albacore catch is down by about 2,000 tons from 2014 but still falls in the average range of the past 20 seasons. Most likely the decrease was due to less effort and low prices paid to fishermen. Also bad weather, and a northward shift of the fish probably had an affect.

Canadian vessel catch and landings for 2015 have not yet been reported. Some U.S. vessels did sell catches in Canada and those totals are not yet final but may be close to 1,000 tons. Alaska also received some small amounts landed. These overall landing numbers do not in some cases take into account fish sold off vessels directly to the public, in some cases or through certain obscure small and personalized outlets.

DIRECTORS '2015 - 2016'

BRITISH COLUMBIA
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KARL JOHNSON
(Vice - President)
NORMAN RINGSTAD
MIKE BROWN
ROD McVICKER
BRUCE SAMUELSON

ASTORIA / WESTPORT

LOUIE HILL
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ED BITTNER
DOUG FRICKE
LIBIE CAIN
RON HARPER

COOS BAY / NEWPORT

HENRY deRONDEN
BARRY NELSON
SHAWN RYAN

EUREKA / FT. BRAGG

AARON NEWMAN

SF / OAKLAND

VACANT

MOSS LANDING

STEVE FOSMARK

MORRO BAY

WAYNE MOODY

SOCAL/HAWAII

JOHN LAGRANGE

NEW ZEALAND

PETER BALLANTYNE

CORI HALVORSEN

(Secretary / Treasurer)

MARKET & PRICES: Prices for albacore did not move up or down by much during the season. However, as it usually is at the end, blast/bled albacore demand increased in October when buyers realized that the supply was near an end. Blast frozen albacore which fetched \$2,300/st in early October was at \$ 3,500/st and above late in October. This was especially true in Canada where there was inventory prior to the season. Some buyers are offering boats fuel to go to the South Pacific. It will be interesting to see how the South Pacific fishery works out. Just a few boats are going down again, but a positive now is the falling prices of fuel and oil which will help.

Brine and brine bled remained at \$2,200/\$2,300/st throughout the summer and fall. There were a few buyers paying more for good quality albacore both brine and iced during the season on generally small quantities. Iced/fresh remained from \$1.00 to \$1.10 at most places all season with a fair demand. We are hearing that longline catches in the South Pacific and Indian Oceans and possibly in the South Atlantic are slow now, but canners did have a good supply of fish the past few months. That may not be the case going into early 2016 which could start very low prices upward at some point. New Zealand albacore fishermen look to be getting around \$1,900 USD st and possibly higher for 4kg(9lb) and up albacore delivered (iced).

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC): WFOA and AAFA who share the North and South Pacific Albacore Pole and Line/Troll Albacore certification under MSC have put out for bid a request to a number of certifiers for the 2016-2017 Annual Audit and potential re-certification in 2017.

Originally this was with Moody's Marine who became Intertek who then transferred the certifications over to Acoura Certification. We felt it was time to see what was out there and have narrowed it down to MRAG certification. The individual bids had a spread of nearly \$100,000 but MRAG was the best and had personnel familiar with WFOA. We are still finalizing the details and clarifying some questions we do have of there certification. Depending on circumstances we do leave open the option of not pursuing re-certification in 2017 if the conditions we have to meet are unattainable or are not the same ones applied across the spectrum of all albacore surface fisheries.

WFOA does appreciate those buyers that use the MSC certification and contribute to the upkeep. They are the ones ultimately that will decide its fate.

MANAGEMENT & REGULATION:

Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC): The Pacific Fishery Management Council and its advisory bodies met November 12-19, 2016 in Garden Grove, CA. Although there was not much on the agenda concerning albacore, (That will be on the March 2016 agenda) the Council did vote to help fund a couple of industry representatives to attend the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) workshop in Yokohama, Japan in April 2016. Also, PFMC Executive Director Don McIssac and Council Chair Dorothy Lowman sat in the HMSAS meeting and had a good session where all sides freely expressed their thoughts on how the PFMC was handling HMS management and related issues. We thought that meeting went well and was productive. The biggest news is in the letter received 12-19-15 that Don McIssac is resigning effective April 2016, although he will stay on as a paid consultant, or Executive Director *emeritus* for at least a year to aid in the transition to a new Executive Director.

New Appointments to the Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS):

Commercial Troll - Wayne Heikkila
Commercial Purse Seine - August Felando
Commercial Gillnet - Arthur Lorton
Commercial At-Large - Douglas Fricke, William Sutton, Gary Burke
Processor South of Cape Mendocino - Dave Rudie
Processor North of Cape Mendocino - A. Pierre Marchand
California Charter Boat - Mr. Mike Thompson
Washington/Oregon Charter Boat - Ms. Linda Buell
Private Sport - Bob Osborne
Conservation - Charles Farwell
Public At-large - Ms. Pamela Tom

The next meeting of the Pacific Fishery Management Council is scheduled for March 8-14, 2016 in Sacramento, California. A single-page draft proposed agenda summary is available on the Council website <http://www.pcouncil.org/council-operations/council-meetings/current-meeting/>

U.S. /Canada Treaty: The second year of the three-year regime is now over, although U.S. vessels have port privileges with the access permit until December 31. Canadian fishing in the U.S. EEZ ended on September 15, 2015. We were told that out of the 45 Canadian vessels eligible to fish in the U.S. EEZ, 44 did so this season. A fair number of U.S. boats also fished in Canadian waters as fish were pushed northward right at the end of June and fair fishing was scattered through Canadian waters all season.

Thus, 2016 is the final year of the fishing regime under the treaty. According to the U.S. government there will be no regime in 2017 and beyond unless the fishing industry requests a continuation. The treaty itself will not expire thus possible port access and other issue could be addressed aside from the fishing regime. However, given past history that scenario may be unlikely. Therefore your WFOA directors need to start gathering member input on any future regime. If they hear little then we should assume fishermen prefer the status quo and the expiration of the regime.

WFOA may send out a member poll soon on this issue to begin gathering thoughts and give all members an opportunity to express their thoughts. WFOA will also try to set up port meeting early in 2016 for this issue and others.

Observers Not here But Something to Watch:

December 18, 2015 — The following was released by the Center for Sustainable Fisheries:

The Center for Sustainable Fisheries fully supports the lawsuit filed in New Hampshire last week by Cause of Action. The Washington-based watchdog group, which focuses its attention on government overreach, is suing the federal government on behalf of our commercial fishermen in New England.

The case is crystal clear. It stems from the high cost for at-sea monitors and the insistence, by NOAA's intransigent National Marine Fisheries Service, that fishermen must now foot the bill for monitors because the agency has run out of money. This is simply outrageous. The regional administrator for the National Marine Fisheries Service is former New Bedford mayor John Bullard.

Beginning January 1, fishermen who are required to bring monitors on groundfish trips will be billed an estimated \$710 daily for their services, an expense previously borne by our government regulators. This mandate comes down at a time that the groundfishery in New England has been declared a disaster, with landings and revenue down and fewer boats fishing. To now burden struggling fishermen with what is undoubtedly a function of government is simply unjust. Furthermore, NOAA has conducted its own study on the costs of monitoring and concluded that upwards of 60 percent of active groundfish vessels would be rendered unprofitable if forced to pay for at-sea monitors. 'Unprofitable' in this case meaning fishermen going out of business; deprived not only of income but a way of life.

The plaintiffs in this important case are Dave Goethel, a CSF board member and owner of the Ellen Diane, a 44-foot dayboat out of Hampton, N.H., along with Northeast Fishery Sector XIII, comprising thirty-two East Coast fishermen and managed by John Haran in New Bedford. The controversial issue has been simmering for some time. It is now in the hands of the judiciary. In arguing the case Cause of Action will present a number of legal arguments, primarily that NOAA has no authority to compel funding. It does not take a legal scholar to see which way this case should be resolved. Let us hope that justice will prevail.

VMS - See Insert VMS Funding: Originally it was rumored out of NMFS that the applications for VMS reimbursement for High Seas Permit holders (outside of 200 miles) ended as of November 15, 2015. After some inquiries with Pacific state Marine Fisheries Commission they were still under the impression that the deadline was Nov 15. However, followup with NMFS showed that the deadline was gone or did not exist in the first place. So the bottom line is - you still have time to go through the reimbursement process if you need to buy a VMS in order to keep your High Seas Permit active.

Coast Guard Authorization Unanimously Passes House - From Rep Don Young - Washington, D.C.- Dec 10, 2015 - Reflecting bipartisan and bicameral negotiations, the House unanimously passed H.R. 4188, the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015. Specifically, the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2015 would:

Authorize the Coast Guard for Fiscal Year 2016 and 2017 at currently authorized levels, ensuring the Service has the resources it needs to successfully conduct its critical missions.

Alleviate administrative burdens on mariners by requiring the Coast Guard to harmonize the expiration of merchant mariner credentials, radar observer endorsements, and medical certificates.

Require the Coast Guard to certify local physicians to make medical fitness determinations of merchant mariners.

Bolster shipyards and mariners by requiring the implementation of a program to promote the transportation of LNG on U.S. flag vessels, using U.S. mariners.

Ensure Coast Guard officers and enlisted service members receive access to the same benefits as their counterparts in the Department of Defense.

For Full Press Release from Congressman Young See: <http://tinyurl.com/nuc855z>

Current Situation of China's Tuna Fisheries: From Organization for the Promotion of Responsible Tuna Fisheries (OPRT) - <http://oprt.or.jp/eng/>

OPRT held its second seminar in Tokyo on Nov.15, reporting the result of the study mission dispatched to China, last August, by OPRT. Professor Lou Xiabo, Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology, who participated in the mission, reported that the current demand of the sashimi – grade tuna market is about 12 thousand tons which include about 3 thousand tons of high quality tunas such as southern bluefin tuna, maintaining the same level for recent years.

He explained the main reasons why the demand has not increased as was expected, as follows: "ç competition with fresh salmon and Chinese consumers prefer salmon because of price, tastes, etc. less promotion advertisement than for salmon suitable cold chains for distributing tunas in fresh have not been yet well developed prohibition of tuna processed by using CO gas, causing business risk of distributors shrunk expenditures of entertainment by the government's order.

He also reported that China's tuna fishing industry is suffering from increase of costs (labor costs, fuel and baits) and decrease of income because of decreasing catch, low fish price and unfavorable exchange rate).

Mr. Daishiro Nagahata, Managing Director of OPRT, as a member of the mission, reported, in response to his concerns about recently expanded China's tuna longline fleet operating in the WCPO, the Chinese side had responded that "the said longliners are targeting albacore and do not have deep-freezing capacity, and, therefore, it will not bring adverse impacts on the Japanese sashimi tuna market". Nagahata added that the number of newly built vessels of that fleet had further increased since the mission's visit to China and the OPRT Secretariat would continue careful watch on this fleet, in particular, in relation to the sashimi tuna market. See <http://tinyurl.com/pvz8x8b>

IUU: President Obama signed into law H.R. 774, the "Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing Enforcement Act." This bi-partisan legislation will advance U.S. efforts to prevent illegally harvested fish from entering our ports and market and achieve sustainable fisheries globally. It will also help address key priorities in the Administration's action plan for combatting illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and seafood fraud.

The United States will now join a global effort to ratify and implement the Port State Measures Agreement, which will prevent vessels carrying fish caught illegally from entering our ports, keep illegal product out of the market and demonstrate our continued leadership in the global fight against IUU fishing. Twenty five countries are needed for the treaty to enter into force. We are more than halfway there and the U.S. will continue to work closely with our partners around the world to finalize this important treaty.

These measures will benefit U.S. fishermen, seafood buyers, and consumers by protecting our domestic fishermen from unfair, illegal competition and ensure consumer confidence in the seafood supply. The signing of this bill will also enhance our ability to prevent IUU fish and fish product from entering U.S. commerce by strengthening domestic enforcement authorities.

OTHER:

Wild Seafood Exchange - Bellingham, Washington

Marketing, processing and distribution are vital links between fishermen and their customers, and they are among the many issues to be explored at the 13th annual Wild Seafood Exchange. Fishermen's News The Port of Bellingham and Washington Sea Grant look forward to holding the event once again in Bellingham, Washington on March 2, 2016, where west coast commercial fishermen will gather for the day with their customers: the chefs, retailers, and commercial fish buyers to whom they market their catch. Contacts:

Event Programing: Peter Philips - peter@philipspublishing.com
Sponsorship: Bill Forslund - bill@philipspublishing.com
Registration: Denise Philips - denise@philipspublishing.com

Thai Union Announces The Termination Of Bumble Bee Acquisition: Article - Thai Union Group Public Company Limited (TU), announced today that it has reached an agreement with Lion Capital to mutually terminate the acquisition of Bumble Bee Foods, LLC (Bumble Bee Seafoods). The termination of the Share Purchase Agreement is effective immediately.

Thai Union announced the acquisition of Bumble Bee Foods in December 19 2014. Over the course of last twelve months, both Thai Union and Lion Capital have advocated vigorously the merits of the deal to the U.S. Department of Justice. However, in light of the antitrust investigation initiated by the U.S. Department of Justice on the packaged seafood industry in the United States, Thai Union and Lion Capital have concluded that the clearance is unlikely under the time stipulated in the share purchase agreement.

New Members Since September:

F/V New Hope Paul Harman Brookings, OR

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