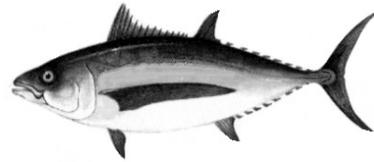


WESTERN FISHBOAT OWNERS ASSOCIATION ©



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Members:

August 15, 2017

The 2017 albacore season is about two months old and fishing has been a very slow. Markets and prices are good but as it seems to go the better the prices the slower the fishing phrase seems to apply. WFOA wishes all well on the ocean and hopes the fishing picks up over the next two months.

NOTICES:

Annual Meeting 2018 - Depending on how the season ends will determine where the 2018 annual meeting will be held. WFOA will make a decision later in September. We most likely will have the November meeting at Expo and possible expand that somewhat.

2018 Dues - Dues notices will be sent out in October. We encourage members to pay as always even if the fishing ends badly. These are the type of years that WFOA collects less dues because of low catches and tonnage fees through AFRF but our costs do not go down especially regarding trying to represent fishermen at international meetings.

MARKET and CATCH:

Catch: The west coast albacore catch began around the third week of June 2017 with some small catches off Oregon. As effort increased the catches became increasing spread out and spotty in nature. Most of the catch was made within 60 miles throughout most of July. Overall catch per boat probably did not exceed 1/3 to 1/2 ton per day. Toward the end of July there were similar small areas of fish reported from Washington to as far south as Bodega Bay, California. A number of boats have also gone offshore as far as the 165W region and found mixed success. Most fish along the coast are averaging from 11-13 pounds with smaller in California.

Price: Ex-Vessel dock prices for albacore in late June started at \$2,800st for unbled/brine, \$2,900st for bled/brine, \$ 4,500st Bled/Bled, \$1.75-\$2.00/lb for

iced. Since then prices have climbed steadily and now are at \$3,000/st Unbled/Brine, \$3,100-\$3,700st for Bled/brine, \$5,500st Blast, and \$2.00lb for Iced. Of course these may have changed since the newsletter was printed so boats should check with their buyers prior to unloading.

Albacore catch in Japan this season was lower than average but the coastal fishery occurred later than normal. Although one report was that albacore were fairly large compared to average years. We have also seen some reports showing the Spanish and Bay of Biscay fishery started out better than normal.

It appears the North Pacific may be experiencing some sort of hangover from two past years of El Nino, the Blob, and retraction to a LaNina situation that may have spread out the albacore. From on grounds reports usual feed seems to be scarce and boats have reported seeing fish on sonar but they do not bite. The invasion of the Pyrosomes that plagued the more coastal fisheries has not been reported

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on the albacore grounds but could play some role.

MANAGEMENT & REGULATION:

WFOA's goal remains to promote sound science on albacore tuna in the North and South Pacific in order to maintain our fleet's access to the resource utilizing our sustainable fishing methods.

The main emphasis in the North Pacific has been the 2017 stock assessment. WFOA and AAFA hired David Itano to attend the ISC Plenary in July 2017 and the previous ISC - ALBWG meetings leading up to the stock assessment for the NP. David has taken over the duties that were formerly carried out by Dr. Vidar Weststad who retired in late 2015. Given the positive results of the 2017 stock assessment and the forward movement of the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process which we are part of there was not a lot of other activities concerning N Pacific albacore. We do remain vigilant on the setting of fair harvest reference points for albacore which we expect to be part of the MSE process we support as well as other potential HCR's that may affect the troll and pole fisheries. We are also looking at ways to identify a potential increase in IUU operations by foreign vessels in the NP zone and SP zone.

In the South Pacific we have larger concerns as the movement still exists to close fishing on the high-seas. Although the U.S. albacore fleet which numbered 13 vessels in 2017, January - April and fishes south of 35S as far as 46S at least a thousand miles from the longline fleets we may get caught up in the move to close the high seas. Such a move would be detrimental to our few boats that fish in the south. WFOA and AAFA remain troubled over the MSC certification given to the Cook I longline fleet of Chinese vessels and its predicted expansion from 23 to 45 vessels in the near future and have submitted our concerns previously.

If there is a threat in the South Pacific it is in the west from growing longline production from countries such as China and not from 10-15 US boats fishing on 2-4 year old albacore in the temperate zone far to the south.

The stock assessment for south Pacific albacore recognizes that the main impact to the SP albacore stocks concerns the fishing mortality of adult fish taken by longline gear.

IATTC Report - Mexico City - August 2017 - Peter Flournoy: This year's IATTC meeting ended at 1:30 am Saturday morning. It did at least pass a three-year conservation and management measure for the tropical tunas - skipjack, yellowfin, and bigeye - but it failed to pass any resolutions on observer safety, seabird avoidance, shark finning, port state inspection measures, or sea turtles. Albacore, as you will see below, was only discussed around the margins, except for the Science Committee's and the scientific staff's recommendation that the albacore resolutions remain in force as it is now written, because overfishing is not occurring nor is north Pacific albacore over fished.

Even though the WCPFC-NC is reviewing north Pacific albacore under the MSE process and eventually working on target reference points and harvest control rules there seemed to be no desire in the IATTC nor the USG, nor Japan to discuss any of that at the IATTC meeting. Rather those discussions will be had in the preparations for, and during the Northern Committee meeting in Busan Korea the end of August.

There may be some discussion of Target reference points and harvest control rules during the meeting held to discuss a south Pacific albacore "bridging" resolution at a meeting to be held in Pohnpei in conjunction with the WCPFC-TCC meeting which is set for October 4th in Pohnpei. Unfortunately there is no available funding for anyone from AFRF to attend that meeting since the airfare is so expensive and the amount of time required to travel such a long distance for a one day meeting is prohibitive.

Speaking to a representative of the WCPFC I was told that, despite what it says on the website about the Tokelau agreement having entered into force in 2014 (which applies only to longline fishing with TACs confined to the Pacific Island States' EEZs), presently there is no agreement in force, even for Tokelau. Apparently the States are still arguing over the levels of TACs for each country. It was also reported that the various Pacific Island States continue to charter more and more foreign vessels to fish in their zones for albacore. It

was agreed that the real concern was the Chinese longline fleet.

I was also told that there was no way China would agree to a high seas closure for south Pacific albacore, even though China may be expanding its fleet in the Cook Islands from 23 vessels to 45 vessels, China has charter fleets in Kiribati, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu, and have recently been approached by Tuvalu.

Given the current PIRO position not to have any high seas closures and China's adamant opposition to a high seas closure, it is not likely to happen any time soon.

Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC) The next council meeting will be in Boise, ID in September. There are little albacore issues on the agenda as it falls after the WCPFC - Northern Committee meeting in Korea, thus general recommendations were made in June. It is recognized that the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process will set the table for future albacore management internationally that the U.S. will have to fit their role into.

Logbook Reminder: The U.S. logbook compliance rate for 2016 was only around 80% while Canadian compliance was 100%. Submission of the albacore logbook is mandatory for fishermen targeting albacore with troll or pole-and-line gear. The information collected in the logbook is used in international assessments of the two Pacific stocks (north Pacific albacore and south Pacific albacore) as well as in negotiations of the US-Canada albacore treaty. While use of an electronic log is not yet mandatory, it streamlines data processing and helps prevent data entry errors allowing for more accurate and timely summarization of the fishery information.

NMFS has recently undertaken an outreach event to remind vessel operators of permit and logbook requirements to fish for HMS in accordance with the HMS Fishery Management Plan. This effort is done to promote compliance with current permit and logbook regulations. A Pacific HMS permit is required to fish for and/or land HMS into U.S. West Coast ports (50 C.F.R. 660.707). Additionally, logbooks are required on fishing trips for tuna and tuna-like species (50 C.F.R. 660.708, 50 C.F.R. 300.22). Failure to comply with these requirements may result in referral to the NMFS Office of Law Enforcement and in sanctions, including,

but not limited to, monetary penalties or the modification, denial, or suspension of federal fishing permits (15 C.F.R. Part 904 Subpart D). For more information on permits and logbooks, including how to obtain a permit and the appropriate logbook, visit the NMFS WCR permits website and the NMFS WCR logbook website, or contact the NMFS WCR Permits Coordinator, Shannon Penna, at 562-980-4238 or wcr.permits@noaa.gov.

Fishing Outside of 200 nm? With some effort going on west of 150W by the US fleet in 2017 we remind boats that may be headed offshore outside of 200nm that certain requirements are in place.

High Seas Fisheries Compliance Act Permit: Any albacore boats fishing outside of 200nm.

- General Info: <http://tinyurl.com/l5wyset>
- High Seas permit info and application: <http://tinyurl.com/mpnj35y>
- FOR INFORMATION CALL - NOAA/NMFS SW Region 562 980 4024, 4238, 4030
- Applications can be obtained and sent to: Permits Office, NOAA NMFS SWR, 501 W Ocean Blvd #4200, Long Beach, CA 90802

Note: U.S. HMS vessels that have this permit for fishing beyond 200nm of the U.S. are required to have VMS tracking. However, if you have no intention of fishing beyond 200 nm you can surrender the permit to NMFS and not fall under the VMS requirements. Keep in mind that most fisheries require VMS now and the only region where its not a requirement for albacore is withing the 200 mile EEZ of the United States.

WCPFC Area Endorsements: (All Vessels West of 150°W, and west of 130°W south of 4°S WCPFC,)

WCFPC Area Endorsement:
<http://tinyurl.com/lywnp6m>

NOTE: Vessels in the WCPFC Registry are required to use IRCS and not Document # on their vessels for ID. Also, make sure the photo you submit to register reflects this. Having it wrong could result in prosecution and heavy fines for the US vessel.

U.S./Canada Albacore Treaty: Although there has been little albacore caught in Canadian waters, U.S. Vessels wishing to fish in Canadian waters pursuant to the treaty must register with NMFS at least seven days prior to the first planned day in Canada by contacting NMFS at (562) 980-4024 or email albacore.fish@noaa.gov, as well as contacting now Prince Rupert CG (250) 627-3074 prior to entering. Additional requirements and instructions can be found in the Guide for Complying with U.S.-Canada Albacore Treaty.

- Number of Vessels: 45 Canadian Vessels in US EEZ, Historical Number U.S. Vessels in Canadian EEZ.
- Fishing Season: Canadian's access to US waters from June 15 - September 15, U.S. vessels can fish in Canadian waters outside of 12nm June 15 - October 31.
- Port Access Season: U.S. boats June 15 - Dec 31 under regime. Jan 1 - June 15 with approval and application below.
- To enter a Canadian port U.S. vessels will need to fill out an application any time of the year. (Not Needed Just For Fishing) - Application to Enter Canada Ports: <http://tinyurl.com/mvy4pvg>
- List of Canadian brokers: <http://tinyurl.com/l37knea>
- USCG At-Sea Vessel Interaction Report Form: <http://tinyurl.com/ken8zb4>
- Copy of Treaty: <http://tinyurl.com/mslth3a>

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) - Recertification: The North and South Pacific Albacore MSC recertifications shared by WFOA and AAFA is underway. MRAG is the certification body doing the work starting with site and constituent visits in August. We expect the process to last until early 2018. We do have certain conditions to meet as we always have such as moving ahead on fair biological reference points and other harvest control guidelines through the RFMO's process internationally. It is recognized

however we are small players in the whole scheme of things with a healthy fishery and an environmentally friendly fishing method. We as small fisheries can only do so much in the international political arena, but will do what we can to make our case without imposing unilateral restrictions on our U.S. albacore fishermen.

The Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) process is a good method to approach this in the North Pacific and expected to last two years. In the meantime we may be meeting the conditions for the NP by the fact the U.S. is abiding by the WCPFC and IATTC resolutions on effort control passed in 2005. If not, other timelines may be imposed requiring us to come up with HCR's and Target Reference Points within 12 months in a worse case scenario. Again, we cannot impose our will on the process internationally but will work for the best situation and have a fishery that everyone knows is sustainable and clean.

While in the South Pacific our troll fishery is very small and hundreds of miles away from Western Pacific tropical longline issues and problems, it is under more scrutiny and pressure by certain South Pacific Island nations and management bodies looking to control the longline catches. Troll albacore was nearly caught up in those but now may end up being exempted from some of the management that addresses the vast longline albacore fishery which would help our members who fish in the south. This still is an important fishery for a number of boats taking the risk.

New Members Since June 2017:

F/V Pamela	David Koester	Newport
F/V Rockfish	Brian Burns	Puget Sound
F/V Sundancer	Tim Quandt	Puget Sound
C2C Premium Seafoods	Al Raffin	Richmond, BC
Power Fuel Savers	Mark Philips	Shoreline, WA

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