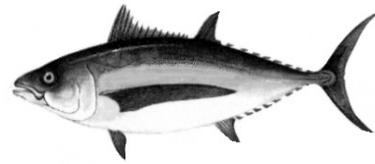


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Members:

June 3, 2019

This is a short newsletter mainly with information about regulations, management, along with buyers information to inform the fleet early enough of updates and changes. There is no AFRF segment in this newsletter but there is a rundown on a variety of issue that could affect your livelihoods. WFOA will send out another early in July with information on market and price issues.

For those on the e-mail newsletter list you already received most of the items listed below over a week ago. This segment is new.

NOTICES:

Included in this newsletter:

- Four page summary of regulations for 2019
- List of 2019 Albacore Buyers and Contacts
- List of WFOA Supporting Members 2019
- Supporting Member Flyers
- What's Up? Segment by Peter Flournoy

Dues: Member dues reminders for 2019 were recently mailed out. Your membership will be closed out on July 1 if you have not paid.

Manager Schedule: I will be out of the office and country from June 4th - 14th. I may be hard to reach by phone but will check emails and text messages when possible. I will also be attending the PFMC meeting in San Diego, CA from June 20th -25th.

Member Contacts: WFOA has been producing email updates for many seasons. Many members have changed emails on their vessels or at home and may not be receiving the messages. Please indicate your new regular email and vessels email on your dues receipt or send it via email to wfoa@charter.net.

Archival Tags: Vessels interested in deploying about 60 Archival tags in August-September let us know. We will send you an application soon but are in the process of revising and updating them.

AFRF Fees: Companies that have signed American Fishermen Research Foundation (AFRF) contracts and purchased fish in 2018 and the 2019 South Pacific season are obligated to pay those fees of \$30/st to AFRF. If you as a boat owner sell to a non-AFRF buyer then the boat owner has the responsibility. Thanks to all that have participated!

MSC Fees: Buyers that signed MSC contracts for 2018 should be up to date on the payments to WFOA. We maintain a list of eligible MSC contracted buyers on our webpage www.wfoa-tuna.org under the page "MSC". We periodically have to report this to the MSC certification bodies to be current.

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MARKET and CATCH: Over the next 3-6 weeks we will update through email and other means changes and developments in markets and prices.

Catches in Japan are now picking up in the past weeks in their coastal zone. That fishery on average produces 15,000mt-20,000mt of albacore. Since it has low oil/fat content much is exported to traditional canner markets in Samoa, Thailand and Europe. This catch has a bearing on mainly our brine price markets.

The Bay of Biscay which had record production last season from July-August and was closed late in August after reaching a percentage of their TAC is another with direct effects on the U.S. west coast market gives we are just a little later than both of those fisheries. Most of that albacore fishery is now also MSC certified.

Also reported recently are some albacore catches higher than normal in longline fisheries around 138W between the U.S. mainland and Hawaii. We are not sure what this means but given California water temperatures are below the past few years' temperatures an opportunity may present itself.

Blast markets as mentioned in the last newsletter are having issues with cheap foreign albacore. Foreign interests have bought some of the Canadian facilities and local west coast albacore is not in prime demand so it seems. Japan has bought little blast albacore in recent seasons but that could always change. The U.S. and Canada combined catch is only about 5% of the world supply of albacore. Blast frozen albacore probably accounts for around 2%. It seems like demand should keep prices reasonable for that amount.

WHAT'S UP? By Peter Flournoy

As I sat down to write this I looked at a similar paper I had done 5 or 6 years ago, and it was amazingly depressing. Many of the same problems remain, or have gotten worse, and many new problems have reared their ugly heads. In the past I broke this down into State, Federal, and International management issues, but today many of those overlap.

Closed Areas and Access: *This is a perennial problem which seems to be growing worse. This year is an El Nino year, so there are additional areas off the west coast which are closed to certain gears. While this does not directly impact trollers and baitboats it may have the effect of putting additional vessels on your traditional fishing grounds.*

MPAs and Seamounts: *Off the coast of California in particular, and further up the coast even into Canadian waters, we are seeing more and more Marine Protected Areas, which while they may go by different names, generally mean no fishing, whether your gear touches the ocean bottom or not. More MPAs are being proposed for many of the underwater sea mounts off the west coast where upwelling occurs, and fishing has traditionally been excellent.*

Off Shore Energy Production: *While those are the actual closed areas, BOEM and the State of California has recently gotten active (along with Washington) in designating at least three offshore areas for possible wind farm projects. There have been 14 interested companies in the three areas designated which cover many fishing grounds, but again are not directly impacting troll and baitboat harvesters. However, they may well become hazards to navigation, not just for their location, but also because of their known interference to radar and other directional devices. Again, while much research has been done on their impact on marine mammals, almost none has been accomplished on how their place impacts fish migratory routes or how their magnetic fields and noise and vibration impact fish populations.*

Target and Threshold Reference Points North

Pacific MSE: *Another issue has more to do with access than an actual closed area. For a couple of years, the WCPFC-NC has been involved in a management strategy evaluation (MSE) to set limit, target, and threshold reference points and harvest control rules for North Pacific albacore. Albacore was picked because unlike bluefin tuna the albacore stocks are deemed to be healthy, there are a limited number of countries that actually target albacore in the North Pacific, and current fishing mortality is roughly 48% of the*

unfished female spawning biomass (SSB) giving a comfortable cushion before the 20% SSB Limit Reference Point would ever be approached.

However, now there are three causes for concern: (1) Dr. DiNardo who has championed the required participation of fishermen in this process has left NMFS; (2) the WCPFC has set a target reference point of about 52% for South Pacific albacore; and (3) we are now dealing with a 3rd reference point called the threshold reference point which will be set, we assume prior to the target reference point. The "location" of the threshold reference point, which is thought to be the point at which management actions take place if you are getting close to the TRP, has not been set. While I believe an argument can be made that it should be located between the TRP and the LRP, apparently it has been accepted to be located before the TRP. This means even though the fleet is supposed to fish around the level of the TRP, as the fleet approaches it, management action, probably to restrain fishing, will occur before the fleet ever reaches the TRP.

If the South Pacific TRP of about 52% is taken as precedent, we are perilously close to management applying harvest control rules which while they haven't been formulated yet are likely to cause problems for harvesters.

U.S. Albacore Treaty With Canada: *With regard to the US albacore treaty with Canada and its fishing regime which will be up for negotiation in late 2019 and early 2020, the meetings are likely to be difficult given our current administration's treatment of our neighboring North American countries. It is quite possible access to the Canadian EEZ, which seems increasingly productive as the ocean waters warm off the west coast, may become closed to US fishermen.*

South Pacific Albacore: *So, the good news is that for the last two years, with the presence of more U.S. vessels, the South Pacific albacore fishery is making a comeback. Of course, there is bad news to accompany that as well. The Pacific Island States continue to want to close out all high seas fishing (primarily to try and slow down the Chinese longline onslaught) which of course would eliminate the fishing grounds for the US fleet. Another monkey wrench is that despite WFOA efforts to retain the*

right to transship albacore on the high seas (all at sea transshipping for purse seine vessels is prohibited and longline transshipping is highly regulated) we were focused on the traditional practice of transshipping from a fishing vessel to a carrier vessel. Now the best practice seems to be transshipping from a smaller capacity vessel to one of larger capacity due to the lack of small carrier vessels. This practice while not obviously outlawed will require a revision of NMFS regulations.

South Pacific Albacore TRP: *Another problem is that the WCPFC last year set a target reference point in excess of 50% unfished Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB). With the New Zealand troll fleet fishing primarily within its EEZ, and with the US fleet's still small catch, this is not expected to have any immediate impact, however, it bears watching, particularly if the troll catches increase as it likely will do.*

BBNJ: *Another long-term fly in the ointment is the United Nation's drive to get the text of what is referred to as the BBNJ agreement. Don't confuse this with PB&J. Rather, this stands for a Treaty on Biological Resources of the Oceans Beyond National Jurisdiction, i.e., the high seas, where most of you have fished at some time in the past and may have to again. The forces behind these negotiations are the same ones who want to close 20% of the high seas to fishing and turn the areas into international MPAS. This also includes the block of Pacific Island States which wish to end all high seas fishing for tuna so distant water tuna fishing nations are forced to pay increasingly unrealistic fees to fish in their EEZs. While the Department of State continues to assure us that the jurisdiction to make fisheries management decisions of the current tuna RFMOs (the IATTC and the WCPFC) will not be affected, there is as of yet no clear language in any of the draft texts which I have seen which clearly states this.*

Foreign Crew and Labor Standards: *Both the WCPFC and MSC are increasing their focus on the treatment of crew members. While this is primarily focused on Asian longliners it needs to be carefully watched. Without question decent treatment of crew on US vessels sets a world*

class standard. However, problems may arise concerning the method of crew payment (shares), and working hours (long and varied), as well as adverse public perception generated by the little publicized but heavily enforced rule of Homeland Security that foreign crew are not permitted to leave the confines of US vessels because there is no provision for obtaining crew visas for US fishing vessels. WFOA is still pursuing getting the C-1/D visa system reinstated, however, the current politicalizing of anything to do with immigration makes this difficult.

Good News: *It was finally confirmed in a recent joint seminar by the Coast Guard and EPA that the proposed discharge rules would not be applied to US fishing vessels of any size. At the same time, it was emphasized that the discharge of oily bilge water would not be tolerated.*

OTHER:

New Members:

F/V Julia C Mark Coleman Ast/West
F/V Resolute Dale Brevick Puget Sound

Electronic Logbooks: From NMFS - The operator of any commercial fishing vessel and any recreational charter fishing vessel for highly migratory species in the management area must maintain onboard the vessel an accurate and complete record of catch, effort, and other data on report forms provided by the Regional Administrator or state agency.

All information specified on the forms must be recorded on the form within 24 hours after the completion of each fishing day. The original logbook form for each day of the fishing trip must be submitted to either the Southwest Fisheries Science Center or the appropriate management state agency within 30 days of each landing or transshipment of the highly migratory species. Each form must be signed and dated by the fishing vessel operator. Informational and Download Link: <https://tinyurl.com/y6kpsrcr>

Limited Entry: There is much chatter about the possibility of limited entry coming down on the albacore fleet. Since the Management Strategy Evaluation(MSE) is laying out a number of scenarios and options in the event the stocks regress the possibility is real. The process would have to begin internationally and then be implemented domestically by nations such as the U.S. through the councils. WFOA will be following this closely and relay any information to the members. The U.S. fleet continues to shrink. Less than 500 boats made landings in 2018 compared to an annual average of 600-700 boats in the past 15 years.

AFRF/WFOA Social Media Committee: A social media committee was set up at the board meeting, to put together a committee to explore options for updating WFOA / AFRF websites as well as boosting the social media platforms. Teresa Reeves, Libbie Cain, Lewis Hill, and Mike Cornman will comprise the committee. Greg Surenger volunteered to help as well.

Bankruptcy of Fish Buyers: While there are no companies in distress at this time we know of, many can remember in the past when large companies and small filed for bankruptcy without much warning. Since then WFOA has been vigilant to inform members to watch for negative financial signs and make unloading decisions based on their best knowledge. WFOA will inform members if we become aware of such filings or closures as soon as we can. Remember that there is a 90-day period prior to a bankruptcy filing where those that may have been paid in full or partially for their loads of fish are ordered by the bankruptcy court to return the money to the proceedings. That usually does not work out well in the end. Anyway, this is just a heads up that we put out to our members from time to time.

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