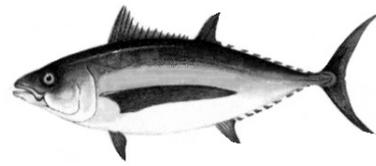


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Members:

January 6, 2014

Happy 2014 to all WFOA members and the seafood industry in general. WFOA wishes 2014 to be productive, safe and profitable to all catching and processing, and consuming wild pacific albacore tuna. We have included information on catch, management, and regulation for the past year as well as a future outlook. There is a News Years management statement by our legal counsel Peter Flournoy at then end of the WFOA newsletter, and a discussion on albacore science within the AFRF section by Dr. Wespestad.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

☛ **Annual WFOA/AFRF Meeting 2014:** WFOA will hold it's annual meeting from March 30 - April 2, 2014 at the Hallmark Resort Hotel, in Newport Oregon. See insert.

☛ **Dues:** 2014 membership dues are now officially payable. We certainly appreciate all those who have sent them in since mid-October. You will receive a notice in the mail or may have already received it if you have not paid yet. Thanks.

☛ **Websites:** WFOA, AFRF, and PacificAlbacore websites are in the process of being updated to a new format with new content. We expect this to be finalized soon.

NORTH PACIFIC SEASON 2013:

Catch: Landings for the west coast will be somewhat higher than we expected in October. According to latest data it appears the total will exceed 13,000 mt, down from 15,000 mt in 2012 mostly attributed to effort from weather, other fisheries, and market prices for albacore being less. Washington led in landings with nearly 8,000 tons followed by Oregon at 5,000 mt and a marginal amount in California. Canadian landings in the U.S. ports were around 500mt. We have yet to see totals on Canadian catches but total in the U.S. and Canadian EEZ's may be close to 5,000 tons.

opening in the U.S. Oregon albacore tuna fishery, the late season delivered, and fishermen ended this season above average in terms of total haul and well above average in terms of catch value.

They brought in a total of 10.1 million pounds of tuna, above the ten-year average of 9.8 million; said the news website. At \$15.9m, the haul well exceeded the ten-year average annual catch value of \$11.9m, it said.

The season was very similar to 2012, considering fishing was slow at the start but brought in good returns later. Cyreis Schmitt, the ODFW's marine policy project leader, expects the total catch and value numbers to go up slightly once the final tickets are tallied."

South Pacific Season: At this time it appears there will be about 12-15 vessels fishing albacore in the South Pacific. Vessel owners need to make sure they are registered under the WCPFC registration system, through NMFS - Pacific Islands Regional Office. All albacore vessels in the South Pacific are required to carry VMS. There has been a dock rumor that the U.S. trollers are not allowed in the South Pacific any longer. This is not true. However, there have been moves made by RFMO's to limit longline effort and some of the ideas based on lack of knowledge about the troll fishery overlap into albacore.

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From The Fishermen's News: "After another lackluster

WFOA posts permit and registration info on its website at: <http://wfoa-tuna.org/permits/>

Does Brine Frozen Albacore Have a Future? This question has arisen often in the past year as blast/bled albacore prices have had a sustainable price that is twice that of regular brine frozen fish.

The market for blast/bled albacore has steadily increased in the past 10 years with demand in Asian and North American markets for sashimi and value-added loins and steaks. On the other hand, brine frozen un-bled markets have been stagnant with demand limited to Europe and that is being met by the canners such as Bumble Bee, Chicken of the Sea and Star Kist.

Most, if not all of the brine fish is destined for the canned market where price and demand is largely affected by catches in early summer Japanese fisheries and recently by the developing Chinese fishery and other high seas foreign longline fleets. If these fisheries increase the supplies of fish, for which there is a lessening of demand, the price, generally low already, will fall farther. Add in that part of the supply of albacore on the market come from subsidized fisheries only increases the likelihood of reduced competitiveness for North American albacore.

Brine freezing on smaller boats where space is limited is a very effective method to chill fish and allows fishermen to hold more fish than on ice. However, brine frozen albacore cannot be sold into blast bled markets, but blast can be sold into brine. This provides more marketing options to fishermen. The downside is that with blast freezing holding capacity is reduced, which in turn reduces the amount of fish per day that can be handled on board. Also, blast/bled have higher quality standards that also reduce the amount of fish that can be handled in a day of fishing.

Every season more boats switch over to blast freezing. About 100% of Canadians use a variation of blast freezing in their boats thus supplying a large portion of the market.

The growth of blast production may alter price if too much fish are placed into that specific market. Also, people need to consider that although the price of blast fish is higher it needs to be weighed against the production loss during periods of good fishing. In slow fishing it does not make any difference.

Thus, individual fishermen need to consider these factors and more when considering the right freezer system for the type of fishing and markets they are targeting. There

is no clear direction to follow other than blast does create more options market-wise. It may not always generate the best price in any given year, but indications are that over the long term a better income stream is obtained with blast/bled fish.

Just having blast freezing onboard does not automatically qualify the fish for better markets and prices. It is still up to the fishermen and crew to practice very good handling procedures to ensure a fish that is marketable in the higher end outlets. Internationally brine freezing will probably continue to be the primary method in the canned fish market. However, to be competitive the U.S. albacore fleet will have to move toward handling methods that produce high quality product that command higher prices than the general canned market.

MANAGEMENT & REGULATION:

Will there be limited entry of catch shares imposed on the U.S. albacore fleet soon? This is a question of concern to many members and one without a clear answer. What will likely trigger limited access will be a political decision by U.S. government and regional councils in response to problems with the albacore stocks and action or inaction by international RFMO's to such problems. At present there are no resource problems based on the 2011 stock assessment in the North Pacific. A new assessment is ongoing and results will be made final this spring. At this time we see no cause for concern, at least scientifically, politically is another story.

For the past three years the PFMC has been working on a "framework plan" to address any issues with the stocks which would be measures directed at the U.S. fleet. This is still ongoing. Internationally there are proposals out there to address issue also from nations such as Canada and others in both the North and South Pacific; however, there are many differing ideas on how to best regulate HMS internationally.

Complicating the problem is the emergence of China and it's claim to a share of the Pacific fishery resources, as well as increased effort by other nations. The short answer for now is WFOA does not foresee any effort or catch reduction anytime soon barring a dramatic collapse of the stocks, but at some point, given political winds, it is probably that there will be a movement toward national quotas and that will most likely lead to actions to control and distribute catch at the national level.

In the interim it may be very important to maintain the

historic national share to prevent erosion of catch shares when negotiations for national quotas begin to be considered.

Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC): After two meetings with no HMS agenda items and no advisory committee meetings, the March meeting of the PFMC in Sacramento, CA is expected to include a long agenda on HMS. The agenda will include the ongoing framework management plan, issues on VMS, and treaty issues.

U.S./Canada Treaty: The one-year regime in 2013 allowing 45 Canadian vessels in the U.S. EEZ proved fairly non-eventful. Given there was albacore in Canada there was lower effort than some expected in U.S. waters. Some Canadian fishermen not on the list of 45 we hear were rather upset over that fact and many felt a lottery would be a better approach to allocating the permits in Canada, however that is an internal matter WFOA has little influence in other than to suggest it.

We have heard but not verified that negotiations for 2014 will start in January or February. If there is no new regime agreed to there will not be access in 2014. WFOA members should attend district meetings or since this is coming up soon, contact their directors with their opinions ASAP. Presently WFOA's default position is that; "WFOA supports a phased termination of the fishing regime under the treaty beginning in 2013 for the next 2-3 years after which there would be on regime or mutual access." If you feel we need to change that position please let us know soon.

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC): WFOA and AAFA have completed the process of merging our two certifications into one. The handoff date is set for January 6th and should be announced thereafter. There will be one client for the certification which would be a combination of both AAFA and WFOA. The certification will cover ALL U.S. HMS permitted pole and troll albacore vessels in the North and South Pacific.

Members and buyers should not notice changes as both AAFA and WFOA will continue to collect fees to maintain the certification. The benefit is it will lessen confusion combining into one ALL U.S. troll and pole albacore in the hemisphere. This information will be sent to WFOA buyers prior to the next season. WFOA buyers purchasing South Pacific albacore from WFOA vessels will have to be in the chain of custody under this certification.

Public Outreach: WFOA over the past five seasons has

been doing many projects to promote local albacore to the domestic consumer. We have worked alongside others such as the Oregon Albacore Commission (OAC), retailers such as Whole Foods, New Seasons and others, as well as local processors, distributors, restaurants, and those with new innovative approaches to selling albacore tuna in all forms. In the past most albacore was canned by major canners and generally overseas. The domestic albacore consumption has shown a slow steady improvement with custom cans and value-added products that spotlight the local albacore enhanced flavor and texture. It is catching on but we still have along ways to go.

WFOA continues to get out the word through our websites, social media such as facebook, twitter, blogs and constant contact news every month. At this time we are re-accessing the approach for the coming year and will be updating across the board soon.

WFOA also expects to again work with OAC and others on food demos and events that showcase local albacore, local products and local fishermen and those in the industry in a positive light. We plan to do more to counter erroneous claims about items such as mercury and radiation. Most of those stories that lump in the local fisheries are tied to agendas that tend to be anti-fishing in nature and a way to raise funds.

WFOA appreciates contributions used toward public outreach from coastal albacore buyers through the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) assessment on troll and baitboat albacore, as well as help from the OAC and the Central California Joint Cable Committee. It all helps local fishermen and processors and the consumers who eventually buy your fish and pass the word to their friends and neighbors.

OTHER:

MANAGEMENT MESSAGE FOR WFOA & AFRF: By Peter H. Flourney - *" Sometimes I wish I had a better memory. I don't remember exactly when I started having American Fishermen's Research Foundation (AFRF) as a client. Seems like maybe it was 1996. Part of the problem is that very little has changed and the same issues keep coming up again and again. Limited entry, Catch Shares, Canadian vessels, VMS, Observers, No fishing here or no fishing there, and on and on. How do we finance the work which WFOA and AFRF do for the albacore harvesters. Oh, there is a good place to start.*

Albacore harvesters: *Let's change the label. There is no albacore "industry". It doesn't exist, and never has. Fishing for albacore by U.S. vessels has always been the story of family owned and run small businesses. There never have been*

“industrial sized” albacore vessels off the West Coast. So let’s start 2014 by changing the language – we can do it – albacore harvesters from now on – and particularly not albacore fishers (weasels?).

Support AFRF: *It gets more and more difficult to finance AFRF. First, the demands, due to government regulation, international regulation, poor science and poor cooperation from some government entities, keep growing. VMS on albacore vessels. Never has been a reason to do that, and yet we are in a fight to get the correct interpretation of an international mandate. Are we getting help from the government? In a word “no”, and we have been forced months ago to file a freedom of information act request. Recognition of the congressionally mandated right to pick up foreign crew members at U.S. ports of entry. Cooperation – “no”. Instead 2 or more years trying to fight our way into the black box of the Department of Homeland Security (an oxymoron when it comes to feeding Americans with American caught albacore?). Basic scientific research into life history of the species? No again. Continually dwindling funding by Congress, despite AFRF’s continuing efforts. Limited entry and catch shares? Not yet, but it is a perineal topic from government regulators.*

All these are issues AFRF advocates for solutions on behalf of ALL albacore harvesters. Maybe it is time for those loyal and regular members of WFOA to make a resolution to each bring in one new member who understands what AFRF does and can help support it. It is particularly important to bring in the smaller vessels and the iceboats.

Successes: *There have been many, and they haven’t all been just stopping unwanted interference. There is a growing recognition of the U.S. interest in both the North and South Pacific albacore troll fisheries. This year we stopped the closure of the high seas to the troll fleet in the western and southern Pacific. AFRF also submitted a white paper to the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) plenary on the history of the U.S. albacore troll fishery which was developed there in the 1980s. This past year we were also successful in limiting the number of Canadian vessels which have been fishing for decades in the U.S. EEZ. And we have government recognition that the long term solution is a phase out leaving open the ability to agree to a new and fair reciprocal structure in case the fish move further north. We have improved our working relationship with the Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) and what was the Western Regional NOAA/NMFS office. We have gotten help from both entities with issues relating to the “transfer effect” when Americans substitute foreign fish for American caught fish, and increasing public knowledge that the troll albacore fishery is a fully sustainable fishery with no bycatch. We have made the albacore harvesters presence known to Congressional delegations in Washington with regard to the pending*

enabling legislation for the Antigua Convention.

The Future: *Here are my New Year’s Resolutions for AFRF. Get the IATTC implementing legislation passed with the protections for U.S. fishermen when foreign countries ignore international resolutions which the USG intends to enforce on U.S. fishermen. Avoid VMS requirements for albacore vessels. Obtain better representation on the PFMC. Get the upper echelons of the new Western Region Office to recognize and give priority to HMS issues. Finally resolve the issue of foreign crew members disembarking in U.S. ports of entry. Increase funding for scientific research. Increase funding for AFRF initiatives. Obtain a long term resolution to the U.S. albacore treaty with Canada. Continue to keep open ocean areas for the albacore troll harvesters (which may include involvement with marine spatial planning and internationally proposed marine protected areas). Avoid unnecessary, ill conceived, and costly regulations on U.S. albacore harvesters. Continue to assure the American public that troll caught albacore is sustainable and safe to consume.” PHF*

Marked Albacore: WFOA appreciates those fishermen who sent in photos of marked (net & other) albacore last season. We have passed them around to science, management, and enforcement for their information.

Mark Schneider: Longtime fisherman and WFOA member, Oregon Albacore Commissioner Mark Schneider passed away earlier this month while on vacation in Costa Rica. A celebration of his life will be held on Saturday, January 11, 2014. See below for time and location.

Mark's Life Journey/Memorial: Please join us for a celebration of Mark's life on Saturday, January 11, 2014 from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM at Laurelhurst Club, 3721 SE Ankeny Street, Portland, Oregon 97214. For directions:

<http://www.thelaurelhurstclub.com/contact-us/>

Please do not send flowers. Donations are welcome. Please send them to: 1706 N Schofield St, Portland, OR 97217 in care of Kay Schneider for Cynthia Schneider.

Please RSVP to: schneider.debra@rocketmail.com

New WFOA Members since October 2013

F/V Action Pak	Dave Driver	Astoria/Westport
F/V Orion	Ken Bearden	Astoria/Westport

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