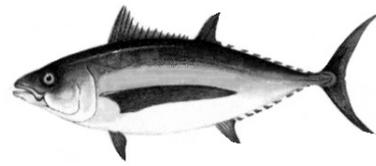


WESTERN FISHBOAT OWNERS ASSOCIATION ©



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Members:

March 1, 2014

Welcome to March and spring and a lead up to the next coastal albacore season. This is also the beginning of "Meeting Season," where a number of regulatory and management issues are front and center. We try to cover as many as we can in this issue and will have more in-depth details at our annual meeting later this month.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

☛ **Annual WFOA/AFRF Meeting 2014:** WFOA will hold its annual meeting from March 30 - April 2, 2014 at the Hallmark Resort Hotel, in Newport Oregon. We hope to see you there! The best day for regular members would be on April 1, 2014 with seminars, raffles, receptions and a dinner for WFOA members and guests. See inserted flyer for more details.

NORTH PACIFIC SEASON 2014:

South Pacific Season: About 12 boats are fishing in the South Pacific this season. Reports have been fair fishing on slightly smaller albacore than normal for the region. Fishing is also farther south than normal. Boats have been down south of 45° S, between 159° W - 167° W which is unusual for the region and may reflect in changing ocean conditions in the area. The New Zealand coastal fishery began very well this year but has tapered off in the past month.

Market: Brine frozen markets continue to teeter in Europe due to cheap subsidized albacore on the market and the continued unstable economy. Low priced albacore from South Africa has hit some of the markets lately. Fortunately, demand for blast / bled high quality albacore by Canadian and Asian buyers is better and fairly stable in comparison.

Albacore markets for the upcoming North Pacific season are yet to be determined and based on many factors as usual. These include surplus of albacore worldwide, cheap subsidized albacore, strength of the USD to the Euro, Yen etc. Regular brine frozen albacore is the type most

affected by issues and remains volatile. On a positive note, more local albacore is being consumed in North America. Unfortunately, local albacore tuna gets lumped in with all the negative campaigns on radiation, mercury, poisoned seas, and whatever else some groups need to fund-raise. It is also unfortunate despite our efforts the media still seems not to grasp the idea there is a local clean historical fishery at our doorstep that have no stock problems and no health issues other than good.

Article from Undercurrent News - Fiji Fisheries Face Total Collapse:

This is an interesting article which is one of a number that have come out recently expressing alarm at potential problems in the Western Pacific. Foreign pressure and subsidized fleets seem to be on the upswing and could be detrimental across the Pacific. It certainly shows that unilateral management measures applied only to U.S. trollers will not be what saves the fishery in the long run.

"Competition from foreign vessels and a lack of management leading to overfishing has plunged the Fiji tuna fishing industry into crisis, said local media reports.

The Fiji domestic tuna industry, "also dubbed as Fiji's \$300 million industry" is "close to its total collapse", with most of the major tuna companies being forced to cease operation, wrote the newspaper. "In a nutshell, Fiji domestic boats have been catching less than 50% of their break even for the last four-five years," said Southwick, who also heads the Fiji Tuna Boat

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Owners Association. "The catch rate in the Fiji zone has dropped from 200 albacore [tuna] a day five-six years ago, steadily declined to 80,50, and today averages 15/20 a day per boat."

Southwick said the situation was due to the "hundreds of state-subsidized foreign vessels which have surrounded Fiji". This was compounded by Fiji "issuing excessive domestic licenses against all advice, encouraging fly by night so called 'charter boat' operators who are in fact 100% foreign owned and controlled and have successfully infiltrated the domestic fishery", he told Sun Business.

In an email exchange with Undercurrent, Southwick said the industry could not compete with heavily subsidized Chinese vessels. Chinese vessels are built "under substantial subsidy", are financed at 1%, are often state-owned, receive cash subsidies of \$350,000 per year, per boat, and have their freight subsidized when shipping back to China, said the CEO.

The vessels also enjoy duty-free access to China, while Fiji companies need to pay a 23% import duty.

In August, International Business Times (IBT) reported that China is spending about \$4.1 billion a year subsidizing its state-backed fishing enterprises."

For Full Story See: <http://tinyurl.com/lqulan9>

MANAGEMENT & REGULATION:

Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC): The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) and its advisory bodies will meet March 7-13, 2014 in Sacramento, California to address issues related to salmon, Pacific halibut, groundfish, coastal pelagic species, highly migratory species, and habitat matters. The March meeting of the Council and its advisory entities will be held at the following location:

Double Tree by Hilton Sacramento
2001 Point West Way
Sacramento, CA 95815
Phone: 916-929-8855 or 800-686-3775

Key agenda items for the March meeting include Council considerations to:

- Adopt a range of alternatives for the 2014 ocean salmon fisheries for public review.
- Consider recommendations on international management activities for North Pacific albacore tuna.

- Provide guidance for implementation of vessel monitoring systems in highly migratory species fisheries.

Establishment of Tuna Vessel Monitoring System in the Eastern Pacific Ocean: <http://tinyurl.com/nhq7rv9>

Proposed Rule; Request For Comments. NMFS proposes regulations under the Tuna Conventions Act to implement Resolution C-04-06 of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC). The regulations would establish requirements for a satellite-based vessel monitoring system (VMS) for U.S. commercial fishing vessels, 24 meters or more in overall length, used to target any fish of the genus *Thunnus* or of the species *Euthynnus (Katsuwonus) pelamis* (skipjack tuna) in the area bounded by the west coast of the Americas and on the north, south and west respectively, by the 50° N. and 50° S. parallels, and the 150° W. meridian. This action is necessary for the United States to satisfy its obligations as a member of the IATTC.

WFOA and other harvesters oppose the placement of VMS on albacore fishing vessels as they have no restrictions such as closed areas or permitted areas to be of concern. Also, we oppose on the cost of the units and charge for each ping which has been requested to be at every 15 minutes. Just the impositions of this may not be legal as the IATTC resolution in 2004 was directed at purse seine and longline vessels only. We also are concerned that placing VMS on vessels only over 24 meters (which is a very small number in the albacore fleet) does little more than give an opportunity at some point to make the requirement across the entire fleet.

There are other reasons to be sure to attend the discussions at the March Council meeting. The HMSAS has never had the opportunity to comment on the reauthorization of the MSA, despite written testimony and apparently live testimony from Don McIssac speaking for the Council. This is a serious lapse which needs to be corrected. The HMS-AS will finally have the opportunity to bring its views to the Council in March.

There needs to be a thorough discussion of the role of the Council vs. NMFS in fisheries management matters, particularly now that there is an FMP for HMS. Initially raised having to do with the emergency rule in the drift gillnet fishery in which the Council did not participate, there is also the issue about VMS on HMS vessels 24 meters and larger. The Council had decided to do this

regulation under the MSA, and had actually scheduled a 2 meeting process (which was NOT met because there was no HMS on the November 2013 Council meeting. NMFS suddenly decided to announce a proposed rule under the Tuna Conventions Act. This has been very frustrating for the PFMC.

The California statute by Fong which would ban drift gillnetting in California will be discussed at the Legislative Committee meeting and the Council. It would be "highly unusual" to have the Council comment on a state statute, however, the bill actually asks the PFMC to pass a resolution against gillnetting. Thus, it is important to be discussed at the legislative committee meeting as well as on the Council floor.

There will be discussions on advice to international organizations which we all should be thinking about -- should the Northern Committee of the WCPFC or the IATTC take the lead on HCRs and BRPs? The two RFMOs seem to be going down slightly different paths, and it is unclear whether they are compatible. The IATTC seems to prefer MSY which is where they think albacore is at the moment and the standard to which it should be managed. Canada seems to think there need to be different target and limit reference points set at various levels and iron clad harvest control rules to be set well in advance of any demonstrated need to act. The Council may also be moving in this direction which is opposed by the harvesters.

A WFOA/AFRF representative traveled to Washington, D.C. in February to discuss the Magnuson Stevens Act reauthorization and the implementing legislation with staffers from the relevant Senate and House committees. Additionally, there were discussions with the right people at the Department of Homeland Security to begin to resolve the issues surrounding the use and travel of foreign crewman on albacore vessels. Enabling albacore vessels to come into port with foreign crew without being hassled is a high priority. So is the restoration of the ability to pick up foreign crew members in U.S. ports to crew on vessels fishing for HMS on the high seas.

U.S./Canada Treaty: The U.S. and Canada met in Vancouver, BC on January 21st for preliminary talks on the treaty. Some highlights are as follows:

This was a short meeting and not a negotiating meeting,

primarily because the State Department did not have Cir. 175 negotiating authority yet.

The first negotiating session is set to be scheduled will be April 16-17, 2014 in Portland, OR.

- The U.S. and Canada agreed to send a joint diplomatic note (a demarche) to China to encourage China to report all catches of North Pacific albacore and improve the timeliness and accuracy of their data.
- The U.S. and Canada will work to improve the enforcement patrols and efforts against IUU fishing in the areas where there may be IUU fishing for albacore.
- The U.S. harvesters agreed to supply Canadian harvesters with pictures of net marked fish so the Canadians could look for and report similar scars.
- There were no enforcement incidents of any concern.
- There was agreement that Canada and the US should encourage the development of whatever documentation was required to give the ISC the status of a legal international organization. This should help get data and participation by China, as well as making it easier for the contribution to the ISC of monies to be spent on research.
- The U.S. made clear that the previously negotiated agreement where each country gets the catch history of the other country's vessels in their EEZ, was non-negotiable.
- Canadians indicated they would like a long term agreement, a longer season that in 2013, a cap on US effort in the Canadian EEZ. They also indicated they wanted to change the current limit on the size of replacement vessels. The U.S. indicated the focus of any new regime should be the eventual phase out of all Canadian fishing in the US EEZ.

WFOA continues along with AAFA, OAC, and WTA to support a termination of the fishing regime. If you have opinions as members let your directors know soon.

LoBiondo's Permanent Moratorium on Fines for Incidental Discharges from Commercial Fishing Vessels

Approved by House Committee - WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Congressman Frank A. LoBiondo (NJ-02), a senior member of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, today applauded passage by the Committee of his language to place a permanent moratorium from Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), state regulations and fines governing incidental discharges on commercial fishing vessels and all other commercial vessels less than 79 feet. The “Commercial Vessel Discharges Reform Act of 2013” as introduced by LoBiondo in November was included in H.R. 4005, the “Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act.”

“Starting this December, commercial fishermen, charter and tour boat operators, and owners of other commercial vessels less than 79 feet will have to apply for and receive individual permits from the EPA to discharge from their vessels such things as deck wash, bilge water, and the condensation from air conditioning units. Vessels that operate without these permits could be subject to citizen lawsuits and daily fines that exceed \$32,000 per violation,” said LoBiondo. .

The “Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation Act” (H.R. 4005) now moves to the full House for consideration.

Note: Concerning this the “Seafood Coalition” of which WFOA belongs signed onto a letter (included) supporting the Commercial Vessel Discharges Reform Act of 2013, part of H.R.4005.

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC): WFOA and AAFA have completed the process of merging our two certifications into one. The certification will cover ALL U.S. HMS permitted pole and troll albacore vessels in the North and South Pacific.

Public Outreach: WFOA over the past five seasons has been pursuing 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. 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.

NFI Launches www.FukushimaFishFacts.com

After a March 2011 earthquake damaged Japan’s Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant on the country’s coast, fears over radiation leaks have fueled speculation, misreporting, and hyperbole about the safety of seafood from the Pacific.

Some of you have received questions from your customers about the incident and its impact on seafood. Others have reported a significant uptick in social media postings about the safety of seafood. The science on this issue is unified and clear: seafood is and will continue to be safe to eat in the wake of the tragedy in Japan.

The site includes sections on What Experts Are Saying, What the Government & Global Organizations are Saying, What Research Tells Us and the latest accurate reporting In The News.

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