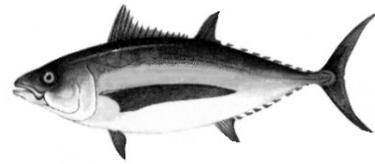


# WESTERN FISHBOAT OWNERS ASSOCIATION ©



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Members:

September 1, 2020

This newsletter is about two weeks later than I intended. About two weeks ago a lightening event took our computer hard drive resulting in a loss of files, data, and contacts back to 2014.

Fortunately, we had the files on an external drive and had a tech person help extract them to a useable level. Since then I have been restoring the files which are fairly easy but the contacts in email are difficult to find. Thus, this printed version of the regular WFOA newsletter is being sent to more of our members with the exception of the ones I know that have been receiving the newsletter by email.

To help us out - if you get the hard copy and have been getting the email PDF newsletters send us an email to [wfoa@charter.net](mailto:wfoa@charter.net) and I can renew your address on the correct group. Also, I really need the vessel emails if you have been receiving them on the boat. Its going to take a few more weeks to sort it all out but the best part is that the lists needed a good sorting out and updated.

We will also send out update cards in our 2021 dues invoices next month that you can return with your dues so we can catch anyone that got lost.

**Fishing and Market:** Albacore catches have ranged from fair to good depending on location and weather over the past couple of months. Effort has been down. Fish that were inshore off Oregon and Washington moved out and up a fair distance in the past three weeks. Some catches have been made in the Canadian EEZ. Some spots still pop up inshore but do not seem to hold up for jig boats. Fish have averaged from 12-14 pounds and very few small albacore have been reported as was the case for the past three seasons.

Although there is a demand from canned tuna and albacore in many regions the lack of an alternative

blast/bled market because of Covid-19 has put a damper on prices across the board. Top that off with the phenomenal coastal season Japan just had and its dramatic effect on cannery prices over the past few months has turned a robust year on marketing to a season where we just have to make it through at a reasonable level.

The future of albacore markets on the west coast will improve when blast markets reopen hopefully by next season. Unfortunately, many of the brine frozen buyers are not participating any longer. In the past 10 years around 13 albacore buyers on the west coast have dropped out or disappeared. It will be interesting to see where the future takes us, but as long as you produce a quality product in most years without viruses the markets should be competitive.

**MANAGEMENT:**

**North Pacific Albacore Stock Assessment:**  
The bottom-line appears to show that in the

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North Pacific ocean overfishing on albacore is NOT occurring on, nor is the fishery in an overfished state. There appears to show low recruitment in the 2015-2017 time frame which probably reflects the low catches in the past three seasons. Management for albacore given the better than expected stock status as mentioned below is at a sweet spot in the North Pacific. Although delayed by the virus, the Management Strategy Evaluations (MSE) both offshore and in the California current are still ongoing and may wrap up in 2021, laying out scenarios and options in case the assessment does at some point turn. However, international management in the North Pacific is more focused at this time on Bluefin. On the other hand the South Pacific may continue to be on another path.

WFOA and AFRF have always tried to protect the U.S. fleets' access to the south and emphasize the major difference between our fleets' location and age class they catch compared to the large effort of the longline fleets of other nations fishing far from where our fleet does. Our effort in the South is up but is still below the 35 year average number.

**Updated - Scientific Committee (SC) - Sixteenth Regular Session, Electronic Meeting, 12 - 19 August 2020:** Since bluefin and other species took up most of the agenda, the albacore stock assessment that came out of the ALBWG earlier this year was approved without much fanfare. The stock assessment basically shows NP albacore stocks to not be in any overfished state and the overfishing is not occurring. For the report go to: <https://tinyurl.com/yxj9cob5>

**Pacific Fishery Management Council:** The Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC or Council) and its advisory bodies will meet September 8-11 and 14-18, 2020 by webinar only, to address issues related to groundfish, Pacific Halibut, salmon, highly migratory species, coastal pelagic species, ecosystem, and administrative matters.

Agenda Items that may affect albacore fishermen are:

*Adopt Final Recommendations on Executive Order 13921 on Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth*

*Review Highly Migratory Species Exempted Fishing Permit Proposals and Consider Final Recommendations*

*Initiate the Biennial Highly Migratory Species Harvest Specifications and Management Measures Process*

A schedule of advisory body meetings is provided on the last pages of the attached proposed agenda. Copies of briefing materials prepared for the meeting can be found on website [www.pcouncil.org](http://www.pcouncil.org).

All meetings are open to the public. For more information on the meetings, refer to the attached proposed detailed agenda. Information is also available on the Council website <http://www.pcouncil.org> or by calling the Council office at 503-820-2280 or 866-806-7204 (tollfree).

**U.S. Canada Treaty:** Just a reminder that Canadian albacore vessels access to U.S. waters is from June 15th - September 15th, which is Tuesday September 15<sup>th</sup> at midnight. U.S. vessels can still fish in Canadian waters outside of 12nm until October 3, 2020.

Port Access Season: U.S. boats June 15 - Dec 31 under regime. Jan 1 - June 15 with approval and obtaining the application below.

If you still plan to fish in Canada you may register for the 2020 season, please respond to this email or call me at 562-980-4238 with your vessel name, vessel ID (Coast Guard documentation number/State registration number), vessel length, operator name, and hail port. We continue to accept emails through [albacore.fish@noaa.gov](mailto:albacore.fish@noaa.gov).

You will also need to obtain an EEZ fishing license from Canada DFO. You can find the form at <https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/licence-permis/forms/eez-zee-eng.html>. Check #7 for fishing. Completed applications can be sent to: Pacific Fishery Licence Unit Address: 401 Burrard St Suite 200, Vancouver BC V6C 3S4, Telephone: 1-877-

535-7307 [Ask for the Pacific Region],Email fishing-peche@dfo-mpo.gc.ca [Specify Pacific Region in subject line]”

**Pacific Marine Expo:** SEATTLE, WA—Aug 31, 2020 -- Diversified Communications, organizer of Pacific Marine Expo today announced that due to ongoing health and safety issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become necessary to cancel the 2020 edition that was planned for December of 2020.

More details about Expo Online will be made available in the coming weeks and further questions and inquiries regarding Pacific Marine Expo can be directed to [info@pacificmarineexpo.com](mailto:info@pacificmarineexpo.com).

**Oregon Cares Act:** Oregon’s plan for federal relief to fishery participants from the CARES Act was recently approved by NOAA, allowing us to begin the one-month application process (deadline Sep 8). The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission sent out more than two thousand postcards alerting potentially eligible license and certificate holders. Please do what you can to alert potentially eligible fishery participants a link to the PSMFC website <https://www.psmfc.org/>. PSMFC hopes to begin disbursements by late September.

**California Cares Act Information:** Timeline for Disbursement of Funds: Claim forms and self-certification affidavits have been distributed via US Mail to all potentially eligible applicants. Claim forms were mailed to the address on file in CDFW’s licensing database. Claimants must submit the completed and signed original application, self-certification form, and W9 to PSMFC, POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 08, 2020. Following the close of the response period, applications will be reviewed, final disbursement totals calculated, and relief checks issued to qualified applicants. Late applications will not be accepted.

It is important to confirm an up-to-date mailing address and availability to receive and respond to mail over a 30-day period in mid/late summer. If you have a temporary address and do not wish to change your address on file with CDFW, please contact PSMFC directly at: [cares@psmfc.org](mailto:cares@psmfc.org) or

1-877-695-3457. Questions from prospective applicants should be directed to: [CARESfisheriesInfo@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:CARESfisheriesInfo@wildlife.ca.gov)

See: [www://tinyurl.com/y3j88f3o](http://tinyurl.com/y3j88f3o)

**Marine Stewardship Council:** AAFA and WFOA recently submitted a request to MSC and MRAG certification body that the renewal date of the NP Certification MRAG-F-0052 assuming its expiration date has already been extended to December 13, 2023, be extended to June 13, 2024, and the SP Certification MRAG-F-0051 be extended to November 14, 2024.

In addition, WFOA and AAFA requested further extension of the next annual audit beyond the 6-month extension already established to at least June 2021. That date would hopefully get us past Covid-19 disruptions and give a better overview of the NP catch in 2020 as well as South Pacific Albacore catches later this year and early 2021.

HMS management and regulatory forums such as the IATTC, WCPFC, NC, TCC and SC will now be held virtually and/or are being rescheduled. Given current circumstances, these may be extended further into 2020 and 2021. Virtually held meetings by necessity are having condensed agendas and are meeting for shorter times with only priority issues being tabled. NPA, given its stock status compared to other internationally managed stocks in the Pacific, will probably be low on the agenda for all of these meetings. Any discussions on albacore management at the SC or the WCPFC will likely be low-priority. We also assume, without knowing, that work on the ongoing Management Strategy Evaluation for NPA will be further delayed.

Fortunately the recently released Draft Stock Assessment shows that NPA continues to be neither overfished nor subject to overfishing. Given the shrinkage of the local fleets, overfishing is not likely to occur anytime soon. Future stresses on the stock would be

more likely environmental, climate, and IUU related – all stressors that we have little control over.

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**American Fishermen’s Research Foundation:**

There is no AFRF newsletter included in this abbreviated newsletter. The researchers doing projects on albacore from the bio-sampling and tagging have been limited due to Covid-19. Also, and fortunately most of regulatory and science has been focused on bluefin tuna and other species. Most albacore management forums internationally have been postponed. Between the end of the season and 2021 AFRF will be having a serious discussion on its direction for the future and we will keep the members informed.

WFOA, AFRF, and Oregon Albacore Commission have launched a project to hire a boat and a professional photographer to capture new photos at sea and on land of the albacore fishery. This has not been done for many years and we will have the photos for use by members and supporting members for public relations, media, sales etc.

**Logbooks:** Please try to get your logbooks in on time and remind others that may not be aware of the details to do so.

Mail Federal logbooks to:  
NMFS Logbook Program  
Southwest Fisheries Science Center  
8901 La Jolla Shores Dr.  
La Jolla, CA 92037

**OTHER:**

**Chinese Vessels Fishing Near Galapagos:**

Reuters 2020QUITO, Aug 24 (Reuters) – Chinese fishing vessels operating in the vicinity of the Galapagos Islands are complying with international fishing regulations on the high seas and none have been reported for illegal activities, China’s ambassador to Ecuador said on Monday.

Ecuador’s armed forces last week said 149 of some 325 vessels still fishing near the ecologically sensitive islands had turned off tracking systems to prevent monitoring of their activities.

“Except for some delays or temporary loss of satellite signal, all Chinese ships keep operating and using monitoring systems normally,” Ambassador Chen Guoyou told the international relations commission of Ecuador’s congress, speaking through an interpreter.

Guoyou said the vessels are mostly fishing for squid, with a small percentage of them fishing for tuna.

He said the vessels comply “strictly” with the regulations created by of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations.

See: <https://tinyurl.com/yxmwhbzc>

**WFOA Manager Position:** As I mentioned in the June newsletter I plan to move on from WFOA and AFRF. When fishing is over I will have discussions with the board on the best way to carry out a transition. At the same time changes may have to be made in how WFOA is funded and how it supports the vessels owners that have supported this organization since 1971. More on this soon. Thanks for the support!!

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