

WESTERN FISHBOAT OWNERS ASSOCIATION



P.O. Box 992723
Redding, CA 96099

Ph. (530) 229-1097
M. (530) 355-3151

wfoa@charter.net
<http://www.wfoa-tuna.org>

Members:

May 1, 2022

As the 2022 summer albacore season approaches and Covid fades, there has become an acceleration of management and regulatory proposals that have been on the back burner the past two years and now are being pushed by various interest groups "stakeholders". WFOA strongly recommends that members active in the albacore fishery keep tuned to these issues over the next couple years as changes are coming and need participants to speak up in order to steer management in more favorable directions.

Turnover of personnel is also happening in management and industry organizations with a realignment on a number of issues addressed below.

Also, included in this newsletter is WFOA's annual "Rules and Regs Update" for 2022 that give requirements for fishing albacore this coming season.

NOTICES:

Manager's Term: In March, I notified the WFOA board that barring unforeseen circumstances I intend to complete my present employment contract as the WFOA executive director on December 31, 2022. That will conclude my final year as WFOA's executive director, after 26 years.

Times are definitely changing in the fleet and industry as a whole. Adjustments need to be made for the future. It has been amazing that a totally voluntary group of independent boat owners maintained itself for 55 years. I hope it can continue. It has been a pleasure serving in this position and working with many who are still volunteering their time to WFOA.

Although the position will be advertised soon, we encourage those that might know a viable candidate to pass the information to WFOA and we can contact them. - wh

Peter Flournoy: Peter Flournoy retired as WFOA's legal counsel as of March 31st. He has diligently worked for WFOA and AFRF for about 30 years in various capacities especially attending countless HMS federal and international management meetings many times in far off places. Peter was great at what he did and made many connections in the management and regulatory world. He also ruffled feathers of many and some of those are memorable. WFOA wishes him well in his retirement but doubt if he is completely detached.

To replace Peter the WFOA board approved splitting the retainer fee for Mike Conroy who consulting for AAFA. Mike has been very active in west coast fishing issues and also is the [executive director of PCFFA](#). We expect him to do a great job concerning U.S. albacore tuna now and in the future.

BOARD MEETING: A virtual WFOA board of directors meeting was held on April 8th following up the meeting of January 27th. Issues covered were as follows.

Board Makeup: The board discussed and passed a motion that was tabled since January revamping the older board member requirements for WFOA. The new language now in the bylaws leaves it open for more diverse representation, such as retired active members can now serve on the board.

DIRECTORS 2022

BRITISH COLUMBIA
VACANT

PUGET SOUND
KARL JOHNSON
(V-President)
JOE MALLEY
JEREMY BROWN
BRUCE SAMUELSON

AST / WESTPORT
LOUIE HILL
ED BITTNER
DOUG FRICKE
(President)
LIBIE CAIN
RON HARPER

COOS / NEWPORT
HENRY deRONDEN
SHAWN RYAN

EUREKA / FT. BRAGG
AARON NEWMAN

SF / OAKLAND
VACANT

MOSS LANDING
TOM HART

MORRO BAY
WAYNE MOODY

SOCAL/HAWAII
JOHN LAGRANGE
ROB McADAM

NEW ZEALAND
VACANT

TERESA REEVES
(Secretary / Treasurer)

Three districts presently have board vacancies. Vacancies in NZ and BC will be placed on hold, but of the three there is a vacancy in the SF/Bodega Bay District that could be filled. Most of the other district also have directors whose terms are up.

WFOA has temporarily extended all present board members terms until the situation can be worked out or modified with in-person or focused meetings this fall.

Election of Officers 2022: Louie Hill citing health issues stepped aside as president which he has held for a long time but will remain a director. Doug Fricke was elected for this term; Karl Johnson remains Vice-President, and Teresa Reeves Secretary.

Dues: WFOA 2022 dues notice reminders were mailed about the time of this newsletters to those that have yet to pay for 2022. Please pay as soon as possible.

Tonnage Assessment 2022: WFOA again will be doing a voluntary tonnage assessment for the 2022 albacore season. Member response to these requests will determine the future of WFOA going through the 2022 season. Of course better catches would certainly help out all. Included in this newsletter for vessel-owner members is an informational letter and worksheet to use for 2022. The tonnage fees did help maintain WFOA in 2021 but we can certainly do better in collecting dues, new members, and assessments.

AAFA/WFOA Working Group: The board discussed mutual cooperation between WFOA and AAFA moving forward, and starting with management and access to the ocean. Thus, an informal working group dealing with management and ocean access has been set up between the two organizations to find agreement and speak as one voice for albacore fishermen in the U.S. when they arise. This is especially important given the slow steady attrition of the fleet and the people that make it work, which has reduced our fishing effort nearly 50% over the past five years. We have had a few meetings on these matters since late 2021 and approved a statement that will be distributed either in this newsletter or separately.

FISHING:

South Pacific: Albacore troll fishing was reported to be fairly consistent early on in the South Pacific for the 20 or so vessels that ventured down. The boats seemed to have a season better than last years and prices for blast/ albacore are quite high for high quality blast frozen albacore.

The NZ coastal albacore fishery was slower than normal with a few spurts of better catches. Weather was a factor as well as boats switching the bluefin during the season.

Fuel pricing continues to be a factor and we expect prices to continue upwards given world events making fuel a factor for the upcoming NP season. In the past couple weeks the per barrel prices of crude have fallen back closer to \$100 from a high of around \$125.

North Pacific: The last three seasons on the coast have steadily declined in total landings. It possibly could be lower numbers of available fish, catchability factors, IUU pressure, more effort in WesPac on spawners, sea surface conditions, movement of forage species, diminished late season catch of larger albacore by bait boats, and other unknowns. There have been low periods off and on over the past 60 years or more but some were only targeted in the near shore regions and not followed ocean wide like now. There also has been three La Nina events in a row and there have never been four which we are possibly seeing for this summer. El Niño years in the NP have generally produced more albacore at least on the coast.

In 2021 season the U.S. vessels landed 4.630/st of albacore while Canadians landed 2,638/st. Canadians trollers caught 28% of their 2021 catch within the US EEZ, while U.S. vessels caught 14% of their catch within the Canadian EEZ.

Albacore size landed in 2021 from dockside sampling were about a pound less than historical average. That could be a sign of the lack or movement of forage species.

Looking forward to the 2022 season it looks like markets especially domestically remain strong but markets overseas or processing overseas for canned albacore remain hampered by inflated

freight and handling costs. Blast prices remain very strong and cannery grade albacore prices have increased in Pago and other places lately.

MANAGEMENT:

North Pacific: On April 5th National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA) hosted a workshop called Reference Points and the Harvest Strategy for North Pacific Albacore Fisheries. The purpose was to get feedback from fishermen, buyers/processors, ENGOs, etc. on the development of a harvest strategy. Participants were sent a long document which describes what a harvest strategy is and potential options for a limit reference point and a target reference point.

The creation of potential management measures for the NPA fishery will involve three steps, at least how we see it unfolding.

1. development and adoption (internationally) of a harvest strategy. This is the stage we are in now.

2. implementing the agreed upon harvest strategy by defining and adopting harvest control rules. This task would be focused on defining management actions to be taken if the stock shows signs of becoming depleted. The MSE exercise discussed potential effort controls on surface fisheries and catch controls on fisheries which incidentally interact w/ NPA (i.e. longline fleets)

3. developing domestic regulations implementing the agreed upon harvest control rules.

The description above is simplistic as the process overall has been very confusing to those that have taken part in the past 3-5 years. WFOA will maintain involvement as well as possible moving forward and report to members any potential changes upcoming that may need responses. Our main concern is adoption of a TAC or total allowable catch across the North Pacific. If there are any management measures for the EPO it should be a TAE total allowable effort plan instead. The US albacore effort and fleet size is 50% of what it was 6 years ago and continues to shrink. Effort and catch restrictions need to fall on those that are expanding

South Pacific: Discussions have been ongoing the past few years about management measures that can be taken for SP albacore. The U.S. effort in the

SP remains a very small segment and far from the longline fishing regions where potential problems may be occurring. The U.S. albacore fishery scouted to SP regions in the mid 1980's and have had a presence there since then with between 6 – 50 vessels taking part. Over the past 15 years the number has remained from 10-24. Our impact on the stocks is minimal and self-regulated by distance and costs involved. We have to keep the U.S. government managers and negotiators aware of that moving forward.

PROPOSED WCPFC SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE ROADMAP INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP 2022 WORKPLAN – From NOAA Hawaii

This is proposed to be held on Sunday, 15 May for the WG to discuss:

the SPA Harvest Strategy/Management Procedure in line with the Harvest Strategy Workplan; and

a new SPA CMM, incorporating the SPA harvest strategy/management procedure.

Contact Alex below for more information or to participate

L. Alex Kahl, Ph.D.
International Fisheries Division, Pacific Islands
Regional Office NOAA Fisheries
Honolulu, Hawaii
Office: (808) 725-5031, <alex.kahl@noaa.gov>

From WCPFC Chair (Edited) - *The Commission noted the priorities for the SP albacore Roadmap IWG for 2022, in particular, the development of a Harvest Strategy for SPA or SPA fisheries, the setting of a TAC, and allocation, and encouraged CCMs to continue to work cooperatively in the IWG.*

The Commission noted that the review of CMM 2015-02 Conservation and Management Measure for South Pacific Albacore is ongoing as part of the work of the SP Albacore Roadmap Working Group. The Commission encouraged the SPA Roadmap IWG to speed up its process and progress with its Recommendations.

U.S./Canada Albacore Treaty: This is the final year of the present fishing regime under the treaty and will again be renegotiated beginning after this coming season. So far there seems to be a

recognition that there will probably be an extension again with some discussion of streamlining some of the procedures. We do not expect the U.S. government to support anything other than that in the near future. However if anyone has had any incidents or issue checking in or out, or with the permits, customs, coast guard please let us know. Fishing in Canada requirements are in the Rules and Regs section enclosed.

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC): Our annual audit is now ongoing and recertification begins a year from now. It is becoming costly for AAFA and WFOA and we are seeking financial incentive's from MSC to carry this on.

Some that originally advocated for MSC a decade ago have dropped it entirely while others either small or vary large buyers and food conglomerates are promoting MSC at this time. Pressure is coming from the larger companies and NGOs to make MSC conditions stricter on many fisheries including albacore. Our albacore certifications are under timelines to comply with new conditions in both the North and South Pacific. The North Pacific is basically covered under the MSE process and the deadline is as far out as mid-2024, while SP may have to be met in 2023 but there is much to sort out by MSC itself before we know.

OTHER:

Administration Advances Offshore Wind Energy Leasing on Atlantic and Pacific Coasts -

WASHINGTON — The Department of the Interior today announced that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) will publish two separate Calls for Information and Nominations for possible leasing in areas that are determined to be suitable off the coast of Oregon and in the Central Atlantic.

The Oregon Call, the first action of its type off the Oregon coast, requests information on two areas that together comprise approximately 1,158,400 acres. Both areas – the Coos Bay Call Area and the Brookings Call Area – begin about 12 nautical miles from shore at their closest points, off the coast of central and southern Oregon, respectively. Publication of this Call will initiate a 60-day public comment period, which will end at

11:59 p.m. ET on June 28. For more information on the Call, including a map of the areas and instructions for commenting, see BOEM's Oregon webpage. See: <https://tinyurl.com/y4khesgr>

WFOA and AAFA as well as many other fishing and industry groups have been and continue to question offshore wind ramifications to the west coast commercial and recreational fisheries.

Administrative Changes at Oregon Albacore and Salmon Commissions: The Oregon Salmon Commission (OSC) and Oregon Albacore Commission (OAC), state commodity commissions dedicated to promoting the region's fisheries, announced Ericka Carlson as their new administrator. Carlson will be stepping into long-time Executive Director Nancy Fitzpatrick's role in July 2022 following a three-month transition period. Fitzpatrick retires in July after 33 years with the OSC and 16 with the OAC.

Note: Ericka is also the administrator of AFRF since the spring of 2021

See: <https://tinyurl.com/yya3fgyw>

WFOA Raffle Winners: Thanks to those that bought the \$20 WFOA seasonal tickets for the 2022 raffle this season. We also thank Englund Marine Supply and Ocean Imaging for their donations of prizes. Congratulations on the winners – John Gibbs, David Ericksen, Ron Harper, Jeremy Brown, Shawn Ryan, and Tom McCray. Since we have tickets left over, we will run another raffle this year with the surplus tickets again at \$20/ticket.

Barry Nelson: Barry Nelson of Winchester Bay, OR passed away on March 29, 2022. He served as a Director to the WFOA (Western Fishboat Owner's Association) for a number of years, was an Oregon Salmon Commissioner for 25 years, as well as a Port Commissioner for Winchester Bay, Oregon for 16 years. He owned and fished the vessels F/V JJ, the F/V Atlas, and the F/V Mystic.

Full obituary read: <https://tinyurl.com/y65j4uyd>

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