

American Fishermen's Research Foundation News ©

AFRF is involved in archival tagging, selenium research, and management and regulatory issues. Fees paid to AFRF from processors and fishermen benefit ALL albacore trollers and baitboats from the U.S. and Canada. Most important we have gathered data on albacore for 38 years in order to maintain access to the stocks. AFRF was founded in 1971 and continues to promote research and education for Pacific troll and baitboat caught albacore. AFRF appreciates the support from processors and fishermen alike.

AFRF Board Meeting: The AFRF board will hold a conference call on March 4, 2008 to address ongoing projects such as tagging and selenium research. AFRF is expecting published reports on these projects to be available soon. The board will again meet for its' spring meeting during the WFOA/AFRF AGM in Astoria, Oregon on April 2, 2008. AFRF is always seeking ideas from fishermen, government, and academia for future research projects on albacore tuna.

Pacific Fisheries Technology Conference (PFT) & American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS): AFRF Science Consultant Dr. Vidar Wespestad attended two meetings on behalf of AFRF/WFOA in February. The first was the Pacific Fisheries Technologist annual meeting in San Francisco. He presented a paper entitled "The World Fisheries Crisis: what happened to the science in fisheries science" in a session moderated by Wayne Heikkila. The paper presented the problems with the advocacy papers published as science, the problems with these papers, and an overview of what works and the real problems in fisheries management. The presentation may be well received, but with a very tight schedule there wasn't time to take questions and gauge audience feedback. Vidar will make the same presentation in Astoria at the AGM on April 2nd.

The second meeting was the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) held March 14-18th in Boston as part of the Seafood Coalition's effort to provide a balance to the foundation funded "scientists." Nils Stolpe of Garden States Seafood Association and Brad Pettinger of Oregon Trawl Commission also attended and the three of them manned the booth.

In past years AFRF sponsored a scientific panel and a press reception, but this year we were limited to a booth, and passing out some seafood samples at the booth. For AFRF/WFOA related issues we did relatively well. Vidar put out AFRF and the selenium brochures and they all were taken. He also passed out cans of troll albacore to press people. Although AFRF had samples of fresh albacore loins, they arrived to late to be able to serve much, but those that did receive them were impressed and wanted to know where to purchase.

This years' AAAS was a relatively small meeting with low attendance. Part of the down turn is likely due to budget uncertainty and budgetary travel restrictions. Nevertheless, our reps were able to talk to many people about mercury, selenium, and the real problems in the sea. Writers from the PBS "Living on Earth" series and a few other reporters were interested in an alternative view.

In fact, Dr. Daniel Pauly UBC professor and a principal Pew funding recipient stopped by the booth and Vidar gave him a can of "sustainable" albacore. He talked to him about the results of tagging, which he was unaware of since it wasn't Pew sponsored, and about concerns about IUU. However, that didn't prevent them from getting into a good argument about his misuse of statistics in the session he presented.

AFRF DIRECTORS '2007- 2008'

Mike McGowan
Bumble Bee Seafoods

Kevin McClain
Chicken of the Sea

Eddie Bensen
Star Kist Seafoods

Anthony Vuoso
Tri-Marine
International

Pierre Marchand
Ilwaco Fish Company

Bill Carvalho
Wildplanet, Inc.

Larz Malony
Pacific Seafoods

Wayne Moody
WFOA

Jeremy Brown
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John LaGrange
WFOA

Stan Davis
WFOA

Lewis Hill
WFOA

Karl Johnson
WFOA

Mark Halvorsen
WFOA

Frank Martins
(Special Advisor)

Dr. Rosenberg also presented, and his message appeared to be that the management policies in New England could be improved by a limited entry program on Senators! His concluding message was that he teaches his students that whenever in doubt about recommending a harvest level always present the lowest number you can get away with. Vidar found that a bit offense from a scientist, since that is introduced bias, which is supposedly something to be seriously avoided, However, with five "Pew Scholars" on the panel he wasn't expecting much more. We ordered tapes of all the fishery presentations and hope to have them available for downloading at a later date.

Next year the meeting is in Chicago, and we are planning a program that highlights fishing methods and the relative of "collateral damage." We are giving up on the reception and focusing on the booth and giving out seafood samples rather than a press reception. The Seafood Coalition was able to raise enough money from member parties; which included a significant contribution from AFRF, to meet expenses and actually have some seed money left over to start organizing right away.

Albacore Working Group Etc.: Upcoming on the science side is the annual meeting of the North Pacific Albacore Stock Assessment Working Group in La Jolla the 1st week of March. The agenda of this meeting is to review recent data and to conduct analysis of data used in determining stock status. Following this meeting is the Pacific Fishery Management Council Meeting where the Councils roll in albacore stock assessment will be discussed. Vidar Wespestad recently appointed to the PFMC Scientific and Statistical Committee will be participating in these discussions.

Archival Tagging: Since we did not get any tags deployed in 2007, AFRF and NMFS will be redoubling our efforts in 2008 to either deploy the 2007 tags and additional tags again in NW waters, or offshore is logistics can be figured out. Information will be available by the time of the annual meeting.

AFRF & NMFS - SWFSC has been tagging since late 2001 and more than 500 tags have been deployed. The data and information however has been piling up at SWFSC due to budget issues. SWFSC has hired a person to do the data compilation and she has been working on this since Mid-August and I am told making good progress. A full draft report is scheduled to be available about the time of the annual WFOA/AFRF meeting.

Selenium Research Update: Dr. Laurie Raymond will again speak on this issue at the spring AGM on April 1, 2008 in Astoria. The research is getting close to being complete and she should have a good update on where it stands at this point. In the December 2008 newsletter there was a good discussion of the selenium research and can be accessed on the AFRF website at: <http://afrf.org/newsletters/afrfnewsdecember2007.pdf>

MANAGEMENT ISSUES:

Peter Flournoys Report of the 4th WCPFC Meeting - Guam 2007 (Part Two:)

American Fishermen's Research Foundation Closing Statement at the WCPFC 4th Annual Meeting, Tumon, Guam, December 7, 2006

Mr. Chairman and Delegates:

The American Fishermen's Research Foundation is honored to have been accepted by the WPFMC and the IATTC as an observer organization. AFRF is supported by fishermen, buyers, and processors of north and south Pacific troll caught albacore.

We hope that over the last ten years we have gained a certain amount of understanding of both organizations. We have come to appreciate some of the different methods of operating and coming to

decisions in both organizations. We have also tried to understand the differing cultural aspects of the members of both organizations. We believe some of these differences may impede the accomplishment of the main goals of both organizations, which is conserving and utilizing in a sustainable manner the highly migratory species of the Pacific.

We attended the meeting on cooperation last evening between the IATTC and the WCPFC and were greatly disappointed. We do not think upon reflection that last evening will go down in either organization's history as its finest hour.

It is absolutely critical for the health of north and south Pacific albacore stocks that the scientists, the secretariats, and the members of both organizations actually respect each others' views and procedures, and cooperate fully with each other in every aspect of science, conservation, management, and compliance relating to the stocks.

My depression from last evening was at least partially lifted by the statements this morning by several WCPFC member's statements during the discussion of cooperating non-member applications. The statements this morning seemed to emphasize respect and cooperation. Later this afternoon when the applications of three out of four of cooperating non-parties were declined, my doubts resurfaced. I am hopeful, however, that those countries and other entities which are members of both organizations will, between now and June when the next co-operation meeting is to occur in Panama, will work to bring the two organizations together.

Finally, I hope both organizations will focus together on ending the illegal high seas large scale drift netting of tunas, particularly albacore, by cooperative enforcement actions.

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IUU: The following are excerpts from the 2006 report the Secretary of Commerce gives to the Congress each year concerning U.S. actions taken on Foreign Large Scale High Seas Driftnet Fishing pursuant to M-S Act Section 206(e), as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996 (this section was further amended by the 2006 Amendments to the M-S Act. The reason for doing this is to give WFOA members a better understanding of the nature of the problem of IUU fishing and what various nations are doing about it. Most of the relevant parts of this report come from cooperative actions by the members of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) which has an area of jurisdiction on the high seas extending southward from the Arctic to 33 degrees North Latitude. NPAFC members are Japan, the U.S., Canada, Korea, and Russia. In addition actions have taken place under the authority of the High Seas Driftnet Enforcement Act Title VI of the Fisheries Act of 1995 entitle the High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection Act.

No large scale driftnet fishing vessels were intercepted on the high seas of the North Pacific Ocean in 2006. However, 98 vessels capable of driftnet fishing were sighted operating in the Northwestern Pacific. (3) Under the NPAFC cooperative enforcement activities no vessels were detected using large scale driftnets to fish for salmon. However, sightings, boardings, and fishing vessel seizures from 2003-2006 indicate that the high seas driftnet threat in the North Pacific Ocean may be increasing and shifting fishing effort from salmon to squid and albacore tuna. At least 26 vessels suspected of high seas driftnet fishing were sighted in 2003, 22 vessels in 2004, 24 vessels in 2005, and 98 vessels in 2006. (4-5)

Two-thirds of the 2006 sightings occurred in the September-November time frame. In 2005 Japan made 17 of its 24 sightings of driftnet vessels in the September-October time frame. The NPAFC has only limited enforcement authority against non-salmon, non-Party high seas driftnet fishing. The parties agreed in 2006 that they would maintain their enforcement levels in 2007 comparable to their 2006 efforts. (5)

The report contains a chart of information on the sighting country, location, flag of the fishing boat and name if discernible, and the date of the 98 sightings. Canada had 25 sightings, Japan 68, and Taiwan 5. Only 8 vessels had names which were discernable. Of these only two could be identified as operating under the Chinese flag, one under the Russian flag, and one under the Indonesian flag. However, from the characteristics of the vessels and some of the writing on the vessels, 68 other vessels were suspected as being from China. The sightings were from June 3 through November 5th, with most of the sightings being in September (36), October (20), and August (17). All the sightings were north of 38 degrees North, and East of 154 East. (6-9)

U.S. efforts began in April and ceased in October. It consisted of five aircraft deployments for 218 hours, and two cutter deployments, one from mid-June through early August, and the other for 2 days. U.S.C.G. patrols did not detect any vessels engaged in high seas driftnetting and made only one boarding. (9-10)

Canada air patrols detected 815 radar targets of which 282 fit the profile of a fishing vessel. Sixty-one of these were investigated and 26 were rigged for driftnetting, with 12 vessels actually having their nets in the water. None of the vessels could be positively identified. (11-14) Japan reported no salmon driftnet fishing but did report 67 sightings of driftnet profile vessels, however, only three of these vessels were fishing. Japan believes the majority of the vessels belong to China and that they are fishing for squid and albacore. (14-15)

The relevant part of the report concludes by trying to access the threat in 2007. It is reported that the driftnet fishing vessel targets have moved from salmon to squid and albacore. This threat is thought to be highest in May through November. Targeted area include waters with a sea surface temperature between 14-17 degrees Celsius, which waters typically occur between 38-48 degrees North and 150 to 165 West. (17)

On October 11, 1993 the Secretaries of Commerce, Transportation, and Defense entered into an MOU establishing a mechanism for use of DOD's surveillance capabilities for locating and identifying vessels violating U.S. law and international agreements. A copy of the MOU is attached to the 1993 report to Congress. (22)

WFOA will be eagerly awaiting the 207 report to Congress and will investigate the extent to which the 1993 MOU might be utilized to stop the high seas fishing for albacore.

AFRF Buyers: Arrowac Fisheries, Bluewater Fisheries, Bornstein Fisheries Inc., Bumble Bee Seafoods, Carvalho Fisheries, Chicken of the Sea International, Driscoll's Wharf, Interocean Fisheries, Island Trollers Inc., Jessie's Ilwaco Fish Company, Ilwaco Landing LLC, Mary-Lu Seafoods, New Day Fisheries, Pacific Seafood Group, Papa George Gourmet Albacore, Pelican Packers Inc., Seafood Producers Co-op, Shamrock Fisheries, Star Kist Seafoods, Starvin Marvin Seafoods, Trident Seafoods, Tri-Marine International, Whole Foods Select Fish

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