

American Fishermen's Research Foundation News ©

The American Fishermen's Research Foundation has supported research and education of the albacore and pole and troll fishery since 1971. More than six million dollars have been spent on projects and research related to this fishery. The industry by contribution pays most of the funds beyond dock price of albacore. AFRF supports the entire albacore fishery with its' efforts, not just individuals and association members.

Spring Board Meeting: This was held on April 1, 2009 in Astoria, Oregon. Board Actions are as follows:

Coastal Survey: Approval of coastal surveys by (2) vessels inside of 200 miles early in the 2009 season. Criteria will be as follows and vessels owners may request an application from AFRF by calling 530-229-1097 or emailing wfoa@charter.net.

- ▶ (2) Vessels
- ▶ 15 days each on fishing grounds
- ▶ Place dart tags in at least 50 albacore
- ▶ Record daily catch, water temps, catch, weather
- ▶ Measure a quantity of the catch
- ▶ 30 fish maybe set aside for NMFS otolith studies or other research
- ▶ Make daily reports to AFRF via e-mail, inmarsat, or cell and sat phone
- ▶ Payment to vessel of \$6,000 each upon completion
- ▶ GeoEye has offered to place their imaging system on each boat for the trips duration

Frank Martins Award: AFRF voted at the winter meeting to give the second annual Frank Martins award to a well deserving individual at the April 1st luncheon in Astoria, OR. The recipient was Dr. Mike Laurs who was the luncheon speaker and was involved for a long time with NOAA/NMFS, and worked in the past with AFRF. He is now doing private consulting.

Public Education: The board voted to fund a segment of the WFOA Public Education campaign that deals specifically with consumer education concerning health and sustainability aspects of the albacore and fishery. This includes information distribution of selenium, omega-3's, sustainability, and related issues to educate the consumer.

Election: Officers elected for 2009 -2010: President - John LaGrange, Vice-President (WFOA) - Eddie Bensen,(StarKist Seafoods) and Secretary Treasurer - Bill Carvalho (Wild Planet Foods).

Canadian Buyer Participation: AFRF is approaching buyers in Canada to participate in the AFRF program. The WFOA/AFRF executive director and WFOA president attended the BCTFA/CHMSF annual meeting in Nanaimo on April 21, 2009 to inform Canadian fishermen and buyers of the need of AFRF to the future of the fishery and access to the ocean. We are waiting reaction from the buyers at this point. Some of the Canadian fishermen also will help to educate buyers about AFRF, and how it would be in the their best interest to take part.

Archival Tagging: SWFSC scientists are planning to conduct an albacore tagging charter early in the 2009 fishing season. It is expected that the trip will take place in July aboard the F/V Seadler off the Oregon/Washington coast depending upon when and where the fish show up. The team will deploy roughly 50 tags in the early season. To date 552 archival tags have been deployed and 22 have been recovered. The

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data are being analyzed and reveal a broad range of vertical and horizontal movements. In general, the tagged fish moved offshore and deeper between November to May and inhabited the surface fishery areas off the US west coast during the summer and early fall. Future archival tag deployments in the central north Pacific and the western Pacific would improve understanding of juvenile albacore throughout their range.

NOTE: Tag Reward Increase: The AFRF board voted to raise the reward on returned tags, as long as the fish was delivered whole to SWFSC to \$1,000. The past reward of \$500 will remain if only the tag or segment of the fish is returned. If you do catch one and think it may have a tag (some look like parasites) the best course of action is to bring it into port and notify your buyer, AFRF, or SWFSC immediately.

Stomach Content Project: Sarah Glaser defended her PhD thesis on "Food web ecology of albacore tuna in the California Current System" at Scripps Institute of Oceanography on February 17. Sarah received some AFRF funding to support her research and many WFOA captains helped collect albacore stomachs for her.

Selenium: Included in this newsletter is a two-pager prepared by Dr. Nick Ralston on the results of the EERC ongoing Selenium studies. They will also publish a detailed report soon in major publications on the subject. The goal is to change thinking on the mercury issue pertaining to the content within fish and selenium affects of mitigating any potential harm done by mercury. This will be especially true in fish such as tunas and salmon with high selenium content.

On-Board Measuring: AFRF is donating \$200 to any of the vessels with measuring troughs who will do at-sea measuring this season. In 2008 some vessels measured as many as 1,000 albacore tuna. This is a great benefit to the SWFSC and fills a void that is a result of having a curtailed shoreline measuring program. We encourage vessels with measuring troughs to continue this in 2009, or give your equipment to another vessel who will.

HMS Logbooks: These are required and need each page signed prior to sending them in at the end of each trip. Failure to send in a logbook may result in not receiving an HMS permit application in 2009. If you did not land albacore in 2008 you may/will need to call NMFS 562.980.4198 and request the logbook and permit for 2009 as they will only send them to vessels that landed over one metric ton. The logbook is mandatory for all waters and species included under the PFMC - FMP. An electronic version is now available from SWFSC, <<http://swfsc.noaa.gov/textblock.aspx?Division=FRD&ParentMenuId=139&id=1168>>

Management & Regulation: International Albacore Working Group Albacore Stock Assessment Update - Dr. Vidar Wespestad

The International Science Committee's Albacore Working (ALBWG) met in Shimizu, Japan in April to review the latest stock assessment model formulation and to analyze the most informative CPUE trends used in the model to trend and scale population estimates. The working group consisted of members from Canada, Japan, Taiwan, and The US. Dr. Vidar Wespestad, AFRF Science Advisee attended as part of the US delegation.

The meeting was a productive one, with serious analysis of CPUE data sets, and the removal of several sets from the analysis. There are a few modeling issues remain; but, never-the-less, the analyses are moving in the right direction. This meeting has focused on data issues, biological reference points, and modeling methods and estimators.

One of the most significant points of the meeting was a realization of the effect of the model growth curve on the estimates of stock size. There was a great deal of discussion and presentations on the subject. The key is to obtain age, length and weight data from fish of all sizes. AFRF entered into an agreement to do this a number of years ago, and nothing really developed. There is an ISC meeting to Pusan, Korea in July to try and establish protocol for collecting biological data; however, this won't produce data. It

isn't too expensive to collect and analyze the data and there are several easy ways to collect and process samples. It's in everyone's interest to get better growth data since all indications are that more data will produce estimates of growth and indirectly survival rates. The net result should be a larger stock size estimate.

Overall the meeting successful with participants accepting the need for simplification and refinement of model input data and parameters. The meeting concluded with recommendations to reexamine some of the CPUE data sets, and a nearly completely tested assessment model. The next step is a meeting October 6-14, 2009 (likely in La Jolla, but possibly in Taiwan), for final model preparation for the 2010 stock assessment. The ALBWG will finalized all fisheries data and CPUE indices through 2008. The actual stock assessment will be carried out 16-23 March 2010

The good news is that despite effort to try and produce lower estimates of abundance the model results strongly suggest that the current abundance of albacore remains at high levels in the North Pacific Ocean and current fishing levels are not causing over fishing. We reviewed the guidance from the ISC on biological reference points and are developing albacore reference points that conform to the ISC standards.

AB 1217 – SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD: This is being proposed in California. It may have consequences beyond what is being proposed considering OPC has connections with a number of ENGO's promoting issues not good for the albacore industry. As the rush to create more an more sustainably bodies and criteria, good, hard working fishermen and processors could become caught in NGO's and State agencies such as OPC dictating policies from everything from fish handling, labor laws and other which already are regulated.

This bill establishes a program for voluntary sustainable California seafood promotion to be administered by the Ocean Protection Council (OPC). The program consists of a statewide protocol to guide the certification of sustainable seafood to internationally-accepted standards, a competitive grant and loan program for the purpose of assisting California fisheries to qualify and pay the costs of certification, and a marketing assistance program for seafood caught in California that is certified as sustainable.

This bill defines the criteria for the term "internationally-accepted standards for sustainable seafood." These standards will need to meet particular principles intended to conduct fishing in a manner that does not lead to overfishing or depletion of the exploited populations, and ensure that only credible, transparent, and scientifically rigorous certification bodies are included.

Ensures a statewide protocol be adopted by the OPC to guide the certification of sustainable seafood to internationally-accepted standards.

Provides authority to the OPC to develop a grant program to help fisheries become certified

Provides authority to the OPC to aid a certified California fishery with a marketing program

Tuna and Billfish Conference: The Tuna Conference, sponsored annually by the Southwest Fisheries Science Center, NOAA/NMFS and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, is a meeting of persons with scientific or commercial interest in tunas and tuna fisheries. It is also a forum for discussing progress in research on all aspects of tunas and other large pelagic marine species. The informal setting at the Lake Arrowhead Conference Center provides a unique opportunity to present ongoing results and developing theories, allowing for stimulating interchange of views and opinions. The conference will be held from 18 to 21 May at the Lake Arrowhead Conference Center in California. "High-Tech Science for the Large Pelagics: What Have We

Learned From It and How Should It Be Integrated Into Management and Conservation?" will be the theme of the 2009 Tuna Conference. For more information see www.tunaconference.org/Home.htm.

Albacore Landings By Port - 2008 - PacFin Data			
Port	Pounds	MT	%
Crescent City	152,342	69	0.62%
Eureka	79,450	36	0.32%
Mission Bay	586	0	0.00%
Morro Bay	17,350	8	0.07%
Moss Landing	67,566	31	0.28%
Princeton/Half Moon Bay	17,399	8	0.07%
San Francisco	1,327	1	0.01%
San Pedro	1,948	1	0.01%
Ventura	4,443	2	0.02%
Other California Ports	490,283	223	2.00%
Astoria (US Flag)	1,579,690	717	6.46%
Astoria (Canadian Flag)	1,086,891	493	4.44%
Brookings	36,208	16	0.15%
Charleston (Coos Bay)	2,513,295	1,141	10.27%
Depoe Bay	2,694	1	0.01%
Garibaldi (Tillamook)	226,845	103	0.93%
Newport (US Flag)	2,493,763	1,132	10.19%
Newport (Canadian Flag)	744,271	338	3.04%
Pacific City	7,727	4	0.03%
Winchester City	134,594	61	0.55%
Other Oregon Ports	37,688	17	0.15%
Ilwaco (US Flag)	4,700,189	2,134	19.21%
Ilwaco (Canadian Flag)	1,165,258	529	4.76%
Wesport	8,570,595	3,891	35.03%
Other Washington Ports	333,948	152	1.36%
Totals	24,466,350	11,108	100.00%

AFRF Fees: We want to remind WFOA members that with a mix of new markets this season, AFRF fees still are required to be paid at the rate of \$20/st by the vessel unloading at any Non-AFRF buyer. All AFRF buyers are listed below.

AFRF Contracted Buyers: Arrowac Fisheries, Bluewater Fisheries, Bornstein Seafoods Inc., Bumble Bee Seafoods, 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, Wild Planet Inc

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