

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.

AFRF Fall Board Meeting: The AFRF board of directors will hold its' fall directors meeting by teleconference sometime in November or early December. The winter meeting will likely occur in late January or early February 2010 in Southern California. Issues such as AFRF's priorities and cooperative research in light of administrative changes in NOAA/NMFS will be high on the agenda. The spring meeting will be concurrent with the WFOA annual meeting in Rocklin, CA at the end of March 2010.

Archival Tagging: The F/V Seeadler placed 60 more archival tags off Oregon in early September. This brings the total to close to 600 tags since the program began in 2001. We have had 22 recoveries so far and none yet in 2009.

Tag recoveries at times are mistaken for parasites and vice versa. They protrude from the posterior of the albacore and generally will have a dart tag on the anterior. If you have any reason to believe you have caught one of these fish just freeze or ice it and bring it into port. Contact your buyer, AFRF, or SWFSC. Pictures of tags and parasites can be seen on the links of the fish-report web-page at: <http://wfoa-tuna.org/fishreports/>

NOTE: Tag Reward Increase: The AFRF board voted to raise the reward on returned tags, as long as the fish is 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.

Archival Tag Article: There is a great article on a recreational website written by one person who recovered a tag in 2008. The information is well put together and illustrated. It a good read in anticipation of a report out of SWFSC. See:

<http://www.bloodydecks.com/forums/offshore-reports-southern-california-usa/164757-tagged-albacore-travels-14-582-380-days.html>

On-Board Measuring: AFRF is donating \$200 to any of the vessels with measuring troughs who will do at-sea measuring this season. This is a great benefit to the SWFSC and fills a void that is a result of having a curtailed shoreline measuring program. Any vessel that has completed this for 2009 and sent the information into SWFSC should let AFRF know.

HMS Logbooks: If you fished and landed albacore you are required to send these in, 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 the future. The logbook is mandatory for all waters and species included under the PFMC - FMP.

Coastal Survey / AFRF Dart Tags: AFRF tagged 200 albacore off Washington and Oregon this season and collected samples of albacore on-board the F/V Hans Halvor. These are orange and are on the top part of the fish. Anyone recovering one of these should record the area of catch, date of catch, weight and length, and return it to AFRF, P.O. Box 992723, Redding, CA 96099 with your name and address. Tags will be

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entered in a drawing at the end of the season for a yet to be determined prize.

Mark Halvorsen reported daily conditions and catches, measured fish for Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC), tagged 200 albacore with dart tags for AFRF, and took sample fish in for stomach content and otolith studies. Daily condition reports were posted at www.wfoa-tuna.org/fishreports.

The samples collected were whole albacore and saved in freezers for use by NMFS or other entities. See Below.

SCIENCE AT SEA - By Vidar Wespestad (Full version with pictures is at afrf.org)

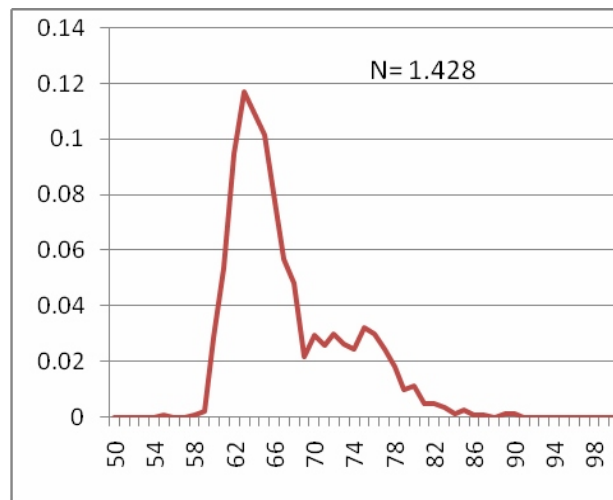
The American Fishermen's Research Foundation has a preseason survey designed to ascertain the distribution of albacore prior to the general fishing season. This year the survey was awarded to Marc Halvorsen and his vessel the *Hans Halvor*. Part of Marc's crew is his son Wyatt, who aspires to be an oceanographer, and was interested in doing some scientific work while on the survey. It has become increasingly clear, as more refined abundance estimators are developed for North Pacific albacore tuna, that there is an important need for better biological data for albacore. So, with need for data and an offer of free labor assisted by Skipper/Dad Marc as quality control supervisor, AFRF Science Advisor Dr. Vidar Wespestad prepared a sampling kit with instructions and forms for data collection.

The boat headed to sea in late June and Wyatt started to work on his tasks. The goals were to collect 10 fish from 10 cm. length intervals, record the length, weight of the fish, and collect and freeze heads and dorsal spines for age determination, stomachs to examine food habits, gonads to measure degree of maturity, and to tag 200 fish in a test of recovery rates when tagged in high concentration areas that the fleet will fish later.

The first task, a collection of length frequency sample resulted in a sample of 1,428 albacore that ranges in length from 55 cm to 91 cm with a strong mode at 62 cm. The fish were captured off the Oregon coast between 41 and 45 N during July and August, 2009

An additional 39 albacore were fully sampled and body parts saved for aging, food habits, and maturity.

Length bin (cm)	N	avg. Wt (Kg.)
51-60	13	3.8
61-70	9	5.2
71-80	7	9.6
81-90	10	12.9



Two blue fin tunas were also taken and measurements and biological samples were taken from them as well.

The 2009 preseason survey also tagged 200 albacore with t-tags to examine recovery rates. Captain Halvorsen selected strong albacore that were quickly measured, tagged and released. These fish were taken and released between 45 and 43 N. There have been no reported recoveries to date. If anyone

has taken a tagged fish, please send in the recovery information to AFRF.

As Wyatt learned collecting the samples is the beginning of the process and converting data to information requires some time recording and formatting into a form that can be analyzed. The 2009 Hans Halvorsen crew demonstrated that meaningful data can be obtained and made available for science. Unfortunately, it appears that NOAA Fisheries is going through reorganization and we were informed that there was no interest in the samples, since they didn't fit within their sampling plans. There are new individuals involved and it appears the SWFSC/AFRF cooperative agreement that was agreed to nearly a decade ago needs to be revisited.

The good news is that there is interest in retaining the samples and processing the samples. The Canadian Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) will take the samples and the Chairman of the Albacore Working Group will attempt to get the samples distributed to interested WG members and attempt to secure some funds to process the samples and prepare for long term storage, if required. The Western Pacific Fisheries Science Center in Honolulu is establishing an aging lab and is very interested in obtaining aging structures from the smaller albacore that aren't available in their sampling program.

WFOA and AFRF own Capt. Halvorsen and his onboard science specialist Wyatt Halvorsen thanks for carrying out a very useful collection program that will provide valuable input into the albacore assessment process. Their efforts also set a high standard in industry data collection, and hopefully one that serves as a basis for future efforts.

WCPFC NORTHERN COMMITTEE MEETING, NAGASAKI, JAPAN, SEPTEMBER 7-9, 2009: - From Peter Flournoy (Additional Report in WFOA section)

The ISC announced that due to personnel and money limitations the expected 2010 full assessment of North Pacific albacore would not be done until 2011.

Some of what the Northern Committee report stated follows:

Gary Sakagawa summarized ISC results on status of the albacore stock that was carried out by the ISC's ALBWG under the leadership of new Chairman, John Holmes [Canada]. The latest stock assessment was completed in 2006 with data up to 2005. No new stock assessment has been conducted since then and a full stock assessment is planned for 2011. A qualitative analyses with limited fishery data for 2008 and 2009 was undertaken in 2008 and 2009 to determine levels of recent recruitment and to assess the continued existence of historical high levels of recent adult biomass that were identified in the 2006 assessment. The analyses proved to be inconclusive; hence, the ISC has no new information on stock status and conservation advice to offer beyond that provided in 2007, i.e., current F is high relative to most of the F reference points commonly used in fisheries management and hence, the recommendation of not increasing F from current level (F= 0.75) is still valid. The ISC, however, recognizes that not having available a more recent stock assessment than the 2006 assessment increases the uncertainty about recent stock status and this advice.

Of course to some "uncertainty" is a buzz word for "we have to do something", just as "open access" is a buzz word for "this fishery is out of control and we must manage it"

There was also considerable discussion if the biological reference point set at NC-4 should be described as a "target" reference point or a "limit" reference point. If it is a target reference point you don't have to be concerned if you go over it a little. If it is a limit reference point exceeding it generally means you need to take immediate management measures. Here also Japan disagreed with the U.S.

and Canada who thought the reference point should be a "limit". Japan though it should be a "target".

As set forth in the Northern Committee Report:

The USA disagreed stating that would not be sufficiently precautionary. The USA reiterated the reference point proposed is a limit reference point. It was noted that the current stock assessment is several years old with some indication that the current F is below the reference point. The USA appealed to the Committee to give some consideration to the image of the Committee in both the Commission and in the international community where it needs to demonstrate responsible management.

California Passes AB 1217 Relating to funding For Sustainable Fisheries: Legislation authored by state Assemblyman Bill Monning, D-Carmel, (Kathy Fosmark protected us on this one) and signed into law by the Governor would add sustainable seafood labeling to the food vernacular securitized by regulators. Under the law, the state's Ocean Protection Council will develop standards for what constitutes sustainable fishing practices and initiate labeling for seafood that meets these standards. The efforts proposed in AB 1217 are expected to correlate with the Monterey Bay Aquarium's popular Seafood Watch program, which researched what seafood is fished responsibly and provides guidance to millions of seafood consumers.

The legislation was written with support of both the Monterey Bay Aquarium as well as the fishing industry group Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations. Monning says he expects the program not only to benefit fish but fishermen who can use the sustainable label as a marketing point. 'We think it would give California exporters an advantage in the competitive market,' he said. Participation in the labeling program is voluntary, under the new law. In addition to calling for labeling, the new law also directs the Ocean Protection Council to provide advice to fishermen interested in being certified under the program as well as market the new sustainable label. It seems to me we now need to get on the band wagon with the Ocean Protection Council, even if we don't always agree with their approach to ocean resources.. This is now another potential source for funds for our public education and marketing campaign for local sustainable fisheries. We might have to start off loading a few more fish in California to get the funding.

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 have until December 31, 2009 to pay on the 2009 summer season. We thank all of you for your efforts.

AFRF Contracted Buyers: 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, JK Fisheries, 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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