

American Fishermen's Research Foundation News ©

American Fishermens Research Foundation was founded in 1971 and continues to promote research and education for Pacific albacore specifically troll and baitboat caught. AFRF's projects such as archival tagging and selenium research benefit ALL troll albacore fishermen. We appreciate all of the support over the years from processors and fishermen alike.

AFRF Winter Directors Meeting: The AFRF board of directors met in Astoria, Oregon on March 27, 2007. Some issues discussed by the board were:

Election of Officers: For 2007-2008 John LaGrange, F/V Janthina was reelected President, Anthony Vuoso, Tri Marine Fish Co.- Vice President, and Bill Carvalho, Wild Planet Inc- Secretary / Treasurer.

Selenium /Mercury: AFRF has contributed \$30,000 to the University of North Dakota research project referred to as: "Selenium's role in the Seafood Safety Issue." Dr. Laurie Raymond gave an insightful presentation at the Astoria AGM luncheon on this project and past research showing selenium content in seafood have a beneficial and mitigating role when it comes to mercury. Dr. Raymond and Dr. Nick Ralston will be doing the project. The whole project will cost \$150,000 of which about \$100,000 is matching funds from government and others. Some albacore samples were shipped to North Dakota for sampling, however at this time the tests are being conducted on rats as far as selenium effects. The sampling of various albacore is just to determine selenium content and has nothing to do with the project.

Archival Tagging: The focus at this time is to have SWFSC to hire an analyst to compile the years of tag data on file. There are budgetary issues within NMFS and SWFSC. AFRF sent a letter to Dr. Fox, SWFSC Director, expressing our concern that the data is not being processed as expected. NMFS and AFRF agreed to a cost sharing in the project and AFRF does not have the funds to cover the NMFS shortfall. WFOA is hopeful that NMFS will be able to fund the analysis, but if funding is unavailable AFRF is exploring possibilities of a private sector company doing the data work. The budget situation is such that only one late season coastal charter off the Oregon and Washington coast is planned in 2007 with a release of up to 120 tags instead of 60-70 as in the past.

The Archival Tagging program has been a very successful cooperative effort between industry and government and WFOA does not want it discontinued. The program is producing valuable information on albacore distribution and behavior unattainable by other means. We want this program to continue since it is providing a view on how albacore

AFRF DIRECTORS '2007- 2008'

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Kevin McClain
Chicken of the Sea

Eddie Bensen
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Mark Halvorsen
WFOA

Frank Martins
(Special Advisor)

move and distribute and may become increasingly important as RFMOs start to manage and eventually allocate the resource. There is a strong desire to get more archival tags into the central and eastern Pacific, and AFRF is being to explore means of securing long term funding for this project to insure its continuance. An initial effort is underway to meet with House members from coastal districts to inform them of the AFRF program and to enlist their help to secure adequate funding.

One Tag Vessel Needed: The tagging trip would take place in late season as it has in the past two seasons. It will pay \$35,000 and the same conditions will apply as follows:

Vessel Requirements for Archival Tagging of Albacore: (SWFSC)

- 1. Carry and maintain 100 scoops of live bait (anchovies and sardines) for two weeks. Supply crowders, scoops, and water supply on deck for bait (technician will provide hand scoops and bait bags for chumming and baiting hooks if needed).*
 - 2. Water-level access (such as a rack) for transferring hooked fish into a hand-held sling or a suitable alternative for transferring hooked fish to the deck without damage to the fish. Fish cannot be lifted out of the water by the hook and leader.*
 - 3. A minimum of two crew members in addition to the captain, at least one of which is experienced in live bait fishing (rod & reel or lift poles).*
 - 4. Provide an accessible location near the stern rail to accommodate a tagging cradle (36" long x 20" wide x 12" high) for surgery (see figures below) and a relatively dry area for recording data.*
 - 5. Dry storage on deck for toolbox, surgical box (24" long x 12" wide x 12" high)*
 - 6. Provide a deck hose that can be adapted to a garden hose with adjustable pressure for irrigating the gills of the fish.*
- NMFS /AFRF will supply any equipment necessary to complete the project. The NMFS technician will carry insurance.*

If you are interested contact AFRF for an application.

Deadline for application will be June 15th and the board will make the selection on June 30th. If you have applied in the past there will be no need to fill out the form again, just let us know you are interested. Last year since all vessels were qualified, they were chosen by a random drawing, but selection process will be decided by the selection committee.

Onboard Sampling: AFRF has 12 measuring troughs in the fleet but many are not being used because boats lack of participation in the albacore fishery in the past two seasons. We request that fishermen with the devices commit to do it in 2007 or turn in the troughs to get them on other vessels. AFRF will give a \$200/vessel stipend for measuring in 2007.

Electronic Logbooks: This project at least through the government looks dead at this time. However, we are still interested in developing electronic logbooks for those with the technology in order to streamline the reporting. The CatchLog representative gave a presentation at the AGM and I have included their information in this newsletter for those

that may want to acquire a detailed record keeping system for not only logbooks but the boats operations and finances as well. They have been talking to NMFS n trying to make a short program and for the government to fund it. There is a possibility of something to be tried out on a few vessels this season.

Histamines in albacore: The FDA approach to the issue of vessel record keeping was discussed at the winter and spring meetings. While it appears there will be no action from FDA this season AFRF will be planning a project in conjunction with OSU to satisfy FDA and collaborate their past research determining that albacore basically have no histamine potential unless throughly abused in handling.

Public Education: The issue of AFRF's role in albacore promotion was brought up for discussion at the AFRF meeting. Comparisons were made with the Canadian Highly Migratory Species Foundation (<http://www.canadianalbacoretuna.com/index.html>) which is doing a great job of promoting Canadian albacore under their own endorsement. Although AFRF's tax status may not allow similar promotion it was generally agreed AFRF should do more generic promotion/education of troll caught albacore. WFOA also maybe taking on a larger role in this type of activity. A committee was set up to discuss the options. It consists of John LaGrange, Bill Carvalho, Pierre Marchand, Kevin Bixler, and Jeremy Brown. Any comments should be transmitted to them.

Thanks to Pelican Packers AFRF has purchased another 800 - 3.5 oz cans for distribution one can at a time for public education. These are labeled with an AFRF label and end up in the hands people involved in management issues for the most part. In the past Tri-Marine, Chicken of the Sea, and Carvalho Fisheries have supplied the cans.

MANAGEMENT ISSUES: by Peter Flournoy

Magnuson-Stevens Act 2006 Amendments: In the last newsletter I mentioned that one potential problem for albacore fishermen is the increasing possibility that NMFS will declare North Pacific albacore to be in a state where overfishing is occurring, and that under the Magnuson Act provisions the Councils will be required to pass unilateral management measures which would only effect the U.S. fleet and not their international competitors. A caveat included in the M-S Act Amendments was that the Councils in managing any international fishery "shall take into account the traditional participation in the fishery, relative to other nations" by U.S. fishermen.

The first, fairly inconsequential, step required is to advise the Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) of the Act's provisions in this regard. While attempting to distinguish international fisheries from domestic fisheries in terms of what Councils are required to do, a new section of the Magnuson-Stevens Act exempts an international fishery from the requirement to formulate and implement a rebuilding plan within 2 years (the old requirement was to only formulate a rebuilding plan within 1 year).

However, the new section which applies to international fisheries may have pitfalls of its own. It mandates, *inter alia* that the Council within one year shall "develop

recommendations for *domestic regulations* to address the relative impact of fishing vessels of the United States on the stock.” It is assumed, however, that this section, at least with regard to fisheries being managed by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), must be read in conjunction with the Tuna Conventions Act, which authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to implement international conservation measures by making domestic regulations, however, such regulations may only be applied when the other countries in the national fishery have similar regulations in effect for their fleets. Furthermore, such regulations must be suspended if another country doesn’t enforce or keep in place its regulations. This would seem to protect the albacore troll fleet from the unilateral application of U.S. regulations at least in the North Pacific East of 150 degrees West..

Another new provision of the amended M-S Act which bears watching is the requirement that Councils set “annual catch limits” for each fishery under their jurisdiction. NMFS apparently has assumed these ACLs will be set lower than MSY levels to provide a “buffer” to enable Councils to better avoid overfishing. There are parts of the same section that seem to exempt international fisheries, but only if NMFS determines the relevant RFMO has a similar system for management and conservation to avoid overfishing. At the moment NMFS has rolled this question into a proposed revision of the M-S Act’s National Standard 1 which deals with overfishing. WFOA and AFRF have submitted comments during the scoping process which argue that ACL have no realistic function in the international HMS fisheries in which the U.S. participates in the Pacific. Here also it appears the provisions of the Tuna Conventions Act will protect the albacore fleet in the Eastern Pacific. The scoping sessions and different comment opportunities will likely continue for sometime, although NMFS has set the end of 2007 to come up with a final rule since they estimate it will take 18 months to two years for Councils to amend their FMPs with the new ACLs.

It will also be important to follow closely the implementing legislation for the Antigua Convention (which is the newly revised IATTC Convention) to be sure that its provisions do not contradict the provisions of the Tuna Conventions Act. In addition, efforts will be made to afford the same resources to the IATTC GAC, as has been done with the WCPFC Advisory Council such as reimbursing advisory committee members for their out of pockets expenses.

AFRF Buyers: The following have signed AFRF contracts, and WFOA members selling to others not listed here are responsible to pay the \$20/st AFRF fees. In reality if you do sell to a non-AFRF buyer they should pay you \$20 more per ton to cover this, otherwise they have a \$20 advantage over all that have signed:

Arrowac Fisheries, Bluewater Fisheries, Bumble Bee Seafoods, Carvalho Fisheries, Chicken of the Sea International, Driscoll's Wharf, Interocean Fisheries, Island Trollers Inc., Jessie's Ilwaco Fish Company, 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, Tri-Marine International.

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