

WESTERN FISHBOAT OWNERS ASSOCIATION ©



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Members:

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The North Pacific Albacore season has wound down. However, issues such as effort control on the albacore fleet and other regulations will be in the forefront over the winter. This newsletter contains some updates on those issues that will affect you. WFOA continues to support access to the ocean and promotion of local albacore. Support from members like you will be the only way to continue this effort.

In the next newsletter expected out around the holidays we will focus on potential management of albacore trollers and our public education campaign.

☛ *This newsletter may contain flyers and information from supporting members. As part of their membership package they may include information of interest and assistance to the WFOA membership. The content does not necessarily reflect the views, policies, or opinions of WFOA, its' officers, directors, or members.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

➔ **Dues:** We appreciate those who have already paid their 2010 dues and a special thanks to those that also contributed extra to the Public Education Fund.

➔ **District Membership Meetings:** Your district directors will be setting these up over the next month or so. A notice of time and location will be mailed to each member.

➔ **Fleet E-Lists:** WFOA operated a fleet information e-list to the boats at sea this season through skymate, ocens, and other providers. WFOA is soliciting new ideas for fleet informational e-mail distribution from providers for next season. If any supporting member has an option please contact WFOA so we can get the information to the boats before next season.

MARKET & CATCH:

Albacore Catch: Catches of albacore have slowed dramatically in October. Good, but spotty catches were had in August and September mainly off Central Oregon to the Washington coastal waters. Some good catches

were also reported around the 140W region, and across the Canadian border.

Vessels headed south in Mid-October found little albacore off Northern and Central California waters.

Although the figures are not in, we anticipate total catch for the year to be around the average of the past few seasons. This should be between 10,000 - 12,000 short tons. Canadian catches are expected to be lower as their effort was down considerably.

Markets: Most albacore landed in 2009 was shipped to Europe for processing. Prices in Europe were high early for their own fresh fish sold on local markets. However, as the regular season in Europe progressed, demand for U.S. albacore increased especially as the value of the U.S. dollar shrank.

The 2009 pricing for albacore has been a bright spot in bad economic times. Prices began lower than in 2008 and looked grim early. The initial ex-vessel brine prices were set at \$1,700/st in July. In late July prices actually fell to as low as \$1,600/st for brine but only lasted for one week. The \$1,600/st level was in-line with reduced major cannery

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prices minus freight and handling. Spain and Europe markets were still uncertain of local catch and prices. Between August 7th and August 20th prices for brine frozen albacore increased \$300 per ton at most west coast buyers. On August 28th InterOcean Seafoods raised the price of brine frozen to \$2,100/st, followed a week later by another raise to \$2,300/st. The final ex-vessel price for regular unbled & bled brine was \$2,300/st - \$2,400/st.

Fresh/Iced albacore remained at \$1,600/st to \$2,000/st. The higher price was being paid by Ilwaco Fish Company. Some of this was being frozen and sent to Europe and elsewhere. More encouraging is the amount being absorbed into local fresh markets and made available to the U.S. consumer.

Prices for blast-bled albacore remained been low after initial markets paid higher prices. Much of the blast/bled market has been the loin markets both domestically and foreign and not the higher paying sashimi markets. As of this week some buyers have been paying \$2,500 or more for blast/bled with a shrinking supply.

PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN: This is ongoing and the latest initiative centers on getting as much coverage as possible in various media outlets. This includes print, radio, and other. Coverage stresses the local wild aspect of the U.S. family-owned and operated albacore troll and pole fleet. After the very well received and attended Whole Food Demos in August in Portland and Seattle, Crocmedia has been pitching stories to the media. Some great articles have been published lately especially about Mirco-canners in the NW. These stories have been appearing nationwide. We also expect to be doing more cooking and talk shows. WFOA is also involved with Slow Foods as a member and working with them locally in Northern California to take part in local food demos and functions showcasing local products of all types. WFOA will send out a full update in the next newsletter, as your \$5/ton this season is helping us do this. We also appreciate the buyers who have matched the \$5/ton for Public Outreach.

MARINE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL (MSC): The process continues to move ahead. The certifiers have scored the fishery and WFOA & CHMSF have reviewed their respective reports. Peer review is underway. After that a public comment and an objection period will follow. When the two certifications are issued; one for WFOA-U.S. troll and baitboat albacore, and the CHMSF - Canadian troll certification, then in the U.S. case, all albacore troll vessels and baitboats fishing in the methods under the MSC certification will be covered and certified. WFOA will then assess the buyers purchasing

MSC albacore a small per ton fee to recover costs that have occurred and some for the future audits and re-certification.

MANAGEMENT & REGULATION:

WCPFC Northern Committee Meeting, Nagasaki, Japan, September 7-9, 2009: Of primary importance for the North Pacific albacore fishery were several decisions made at this fall's meeting. To place it in context I will briefly review how we arrived here. As most will recall, we were given information from the SWFSC in 2004 or early 2005 that it appeared the albacore stocks WFOA fished on were being adversely affected by the near shore Japanese longline fishery which was taking really small, less than juvenile sized, fish. The State Department suggested that to resolve this issue, the U.S. obtain the passage of a resolution in the IATTC first, because the U.S. not yet a member of the WCPFC. WFOA also came to believe that preventing an effort shift from the west to the east in the North Pacific by obtaining such a resolution was probably a good idea. Hence the 2005 IATTC North Pacific albacore resolution.

Surprisingly, in the same year, the U.S. was able to obtain a similar resolution in the Northern Committee meeting in September, even though the U.S. remained just an Observer in the WCPFC, or a cooperating non-party. In December 2005 the NC resolution went to the WCPFC as a whole, where primarily the New Zealand delegation, (actually concerned about the high seas long line fisheries), wanted an effort limitation on South Pacific albacore, even though there was no scientific evidence that the surface fishery for albacore needed to be limited. At the most, the SPC and the SC had said that there would be no real gain in production from increasing the long line fishery. This resulted in the WCPFC's resolutions for both north and south Pacific albacore that effort could be maintained at current levels but should not be increased. All this was accomplished prior to the finalization of the last albacore assessment by the ISC in 2006.

While since then there have been some encouraging information from the ISC's Albacore Working Group, what generally gets reported from the ISC to the WCPFC-NC and the WCPFC SC has a slightly different emphasis. The description which Laurs [draft paper entitled "North Pacific Albacore 'White Paper'" Agenda Item f.1.a, Attachment 1 for the PFMC November meeting] gives in section 7 of the White Paper is more along the lines of what is said by the ISC at NC meetings -- i.e. there hasn't been a stock assessment in a long time, therefore, there is increasing uncertainty.

With that “uncertainty” comes an increasing need to be “precautionary”. The ISC does not report to the NC “from the newer information and modeling we have since 2004 “we think the stock is in better shape” or “we think the mortality rate is lower than before.” The 2009 ISC report also emphasizes that the model they used “indicated a noticeable trend of over-estimation of stock biomass over the last two assessment cycles.”

From the description of the new model and the old model being used by the ISC Albacore Working Group, (7.1 of the White Paper), the kind of research which needs to be done, is the research AFRF and WFOA just attempted this summer to do in conjunction with the SWFSC. Unfortunately this effort with the SWFSC was unsuccessful. The new model could among other things “allow spatial dynamics and spatial management to be explored”. If correctly understood, this phrase means there could actually be ISC suggested management scenarios that would treat different fisheries (such as longline and troll) differently, depending upon their overall effect on the stock. AFRF and WFOA are now working with the Hono lab of NMFS and the Canadians to pursue this research.

As we have discussed many times, the US effort on North Pacific albacore seems to be declining due to continued attrition in the fleet as older fishermen and vessels phase out. Nevertheless, there appears to be a concerted effort being made by the SW Region of NOAA-NMFS to begin a process of management of the fishery by imposing a system of limited entry or individual quotas. To many people this makes no sense, however, with the new administration at NOAA, and the philosophy of the new NOAA Administrator, it seems almost a foregone conclusion that some form of additional government management of the albacore troll fishery will be imposed in the next 3-4 years. This, of course, has implications not only for the U.S. fleet, but for the Canadian vessels fishing under treaty in the U.S. EEZ.

One of the questions the PFMC has invested a lot of time and effort in researching was how the phrase “current effort” should be defined for the IATTC and WCPFC resolutions. In June, prior to the annual meeting of the IATTC, AFRF was able to convince the IATTC Secretariat that there should be an ad hoc working group meeting in conjunction with the IATTC 2010 Annual Meeting for those interested nation’s to develop an agreed to definition. Again, unfortunately, the WCPFC-NC, ignoring the work done by the PFMC which had arrived at a definition which would have taken into consideration 10 years of effort data, decided that current effort should be defined by the average of data

from 2002-2004. The basis for this time period is the that this is the period of time which the ISC 2006 Assessment used. Of course the resolutions were passed in 2005, however, that did not seem to deter anyone from using information which had not been analyzed when the resolutions were passed as the proper standard. This data and the figures for 2006, for comparison, are listed below:

Year	Catch	Effort Days	Vessel Numbers	Total Catch
2002	10,387	25,350	641	14,646 * 4,052 10,593
2003	14,102	23,442	836	18,741 2,972 15,769
2004	13,346	23,979	734	16,009 1,221 14,788
2006	12,645	34,860	574	13,443 376 13067

* Tons on right represent in order top to bottom (3 fig) Total catch, west of 150 W, and east of 150W

At this point it is not clear whether the IATTC and the WCPFC will settle on a common definition of “current effort”.

What “effort” means is still undefined. It could be the number of vessels. It could be the amount of fish caught. The PFMC paper chose to define it in terms of the number of days fished. The Briefing Paper prepared for the WCPFC-NC-5 meeting spoke of effort in terms of days fished, but used the 2002-2004 time period which does not come out with as high an average number as using the 10 year period that the PFMC used. So effort could be defined in several ways.

U.S. Canada Treaty Issues: The treaty in it’s first year of the new three year regime seemed to function without many glitches. Actual effort from Canadian trollers was about one-half of normal levels, and U.S. effort in Canadian waters was low and generally close to the border.

There were a few cases of vessels failing to check in on the NMFS list prior to heading to Canadian waters, and a couple of instances of failing to check-in with Tofino CG. Given that Ship Com check-in is no longer required may have led to some of the confusion. Boats that did not check in will probably receive a letter from NMFS enforcement.

2010 Oregon Permit Fees: (2009 amounts in parenthesis)

Resident Commercial Boat License - \$325 (\$200)
Resident Commercial Fishing License \$80 (\$50)
Nonresident Commercial Fishing License \$290 (\$290)
Commercial Crew Fishing License \$125 (\$85)
Nonresident Commercial Crew \$350 (NEW)
Commercial Fisheries Permit Transfer \$100 (\$0)
Vessel Permit, Ocean Troll Salmon Fishery \$100 (\$75)
Vessel Permit, Ocean Dungeness Crab Fishery \$125 (\$75)
Nonresident Vessel Permit, Dungeness Crab Fishery \$290 (NEW)
Nonresident Vessel Permit, Troll Salmon Fishery \$290 (NEW)
Albacore Landing License (Commercially Licensed Boats) \$20
Albacore Tuna Landing License (Unlicensed Boats) \$125 (NEW)

http://www.dfw.state.or.us/agency/budget/docs/Post_Legislation_Final_Fees.pdf

2010 ANNUAL MEETING: WFOA will hold the next WFOA/AFRF Annual Meeting 2010 in the Rocklin, CA from March 29 - April 1, 2009. The hotel venue will be the Marriott's Springhill and Townplace Suites which are side by side and brand new. They will be offering WFOA a rate of \$79/night. The reception will be held on the 30th at the Townplace, with the Luncheon on April 1, 2010 at the Whitney Oaks Golf Club <http://www.whitneyoaksgolf.com/Club/Scripts/Home/home.asp> in foothills of Rocklin.

WFOA has enjoyed great hospitality from the Placer Valley Tourism Agency www.placertourism.com. They will also be setting up a registration and events website for members to access soon.

We have found great rates on new hotels, and many things to see and do in the immediate area. Large shopping malls (Galleria, The Fountains), wineries, golf courses, spas, fish hatcheries, restaurants, Sun-splash waterpark, and Thundervalley casino are a few activities in the immediate area. The venue is located at the junction of I-80 and Highway 65 about 20 miles NE of Sacramento, and 110 miles from Reno.

We encourage members and supporting members to attend and support WFOA/AFRF as you have in the past. We are considering less seminars and maybe some more offsite activities for members such as wine tours and other. We will have at least four seminars and maybe up to six but are asking for issues if interest and quality to albacore fishermen.

Other:

2009 Pacific Marine Expo on 19-20 November: Pacific Marine Expo is the largest commercial marine tradeshow on the West Coast. Serving all aspects of the market, including commercial vessels owners, commercial fishermen, boat builders and seafood processors, this annual event covers it all. Commercial vessel

owners/operators, passenger vessel owners/operators, charter boat owner/operators, shipyards, commercial boat builders, recreational boat builders, engineers and architects, captains, operators and owners of large charter and pleasure yachts, seafood processors, port officials and port engineers, harbor masters, marina operators, marine surveyors, military buyers and governmental officials, and all others affiliated with the marine industry are invited to attend.

This year's expo will be held in Tacoma, WA at the Qwest Field Event Center on 19 and 20 November. A "Show Passport" gets you entrance to all conference sessions, keynote speakers, exhibit hall, and special events and can be purchased for \$20 at: www.pacificmarineexpo.com/09/public/MainHall.aspx?ID=17838&sortMenu=101000.

NMFS Inquiry: An official inquiry into the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) is currently underway by the US Department of Commerce (DOC) Office of Inspector General. It was suggested that some people in the Seafood Industry may be interested in helping with the DOC OIG federal investigation. The investigators want any and all folks who have knowledge of NOAA NMFS OLE misconduct or overly harsh punishments or reprisals to contact the DOC OIG office at the email addresses listed below so as to set up interviews, either by phone or in person. Telephone numbers in Washington, DC are: 202 482-4661 or 202-482-5974. NOAAFisheriesreview@oig.doc.gov, gsebbsen@oig.doc.gov, SBerenberg@oig.doc.gov

WA F&W Director: Former Westport charter boat skipper Phil Anderson has been chosen to head Washington's Department of Fish and Wildlife. A 15-year veteran of the department, Anderson told an Olympia newspaper that he wants to enhance hunting, fishing and wildlife watching opportunities in the state.

California's Department Of Fish And Game: The Director of the California Department of Fish and Game, Donald Koch has resigned citing personal reasons.

New Members: Since August 20, 2009:

F/V St. Kristine	Matt Donovanick	Aberdeen, WA
F/V Vinland	Eric Fosmark	Seaside, CA
F/V Yerda Marie	Michael Forbes	Westport, WA

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