

Thank You For Your Service

-WFOA Staff

Wayne Heikkila has retired from his position as Executive Director of the WFOA. Wayne spent over 20 years advocating on behalf of fishing families all along the West Coast. He served on numerous boards, government panels, and local organizations. He was beloved and will be remembered fondly for his friendly disposition, work ethic, and commitment to acting in the best interest of the fleet. Wayne plans on spending his retirement working on a long list of projects around the home and traveling with his wife.

When asked to recall some fond memories of his time leading the WFOA, Wayne recounted fondly the friends and relationships he has made throughout his years. He told stories about the fun that was had at WFOA annual meetings and expressed hope that the meetings would become an event to bring fishing families together in the future. He acknowledges the challenges facing the fleet and hopes that the fishing community will increase engagement and participation in the WFOA.

Wayne offered advice to the incoming Executive Director, explaining that the WFOA needs fishermen participation, and the fishermen are on the dock. So, it is important to get out there and let them know that the WFOA is working on their behalf and could use their help. He cautioned the next generation of young fishers not to take the industry for granted and encouraged anyone who has a personal stake in the industry to get involved. He articulated that it takes more than just catching fish and off-loading to keep the industry going. When asked about any last things he would convey to the membership, Wayne laughed and wished the fleet “good weather, good fishing, and safe travels.”



Charleston Harbor

New Beginnings

Welcome to our new Executive Director

Hello, my name is Clayton Thomas Wraith. I am the son of a fisherman, I was raised at sea, grew up on the back deck and made my way through college and law school catching Albacore tuna all along the West Coast. I've spent over forty days at sea, fished over a thousand miles offshore and personally tossed on over a 1,000 albacore in a single day... give or take, of course. I am now serving as the Executive Director of the WFOA. It is a privilege and a pleasure to be given this opportunity to serve the commercial fishing community.

My predecessor in this role, Wayne Heikkila, dedicated 20 years of his life to advocating for the best interest of the fleet. He fought for a fair shake for fishing families through better prices, open access to fishing grounds, and advocacy that directly impacted the folks reading this letter and beyond. I am honored to continue that fight. I guess it is a fight. Feels like a fight. Fight for the survival of the fisheries. Fight to make the boat payment. Fight to get folks engaged.

But my comments today are not about a fight, they are about collaboration. For decades, the WFOA has played a crucial role in ensuring that the best interests of hardworking fisherman are prioritized and that traditional fisheries are preserved. Now more than ever, it is pivotal that the WFOA continues to be a strong voice in ongoing discussions that directly impact our fisheries. As one of the oldest fishery advocacy groups, it is important the WFOA continues to grow and create benefits for all its members. It is clear to me that the industry is more complex than it has ever been.

In this newsletter alone there are comments on international treaties, harvest control rules, offshore wind development. To say nothing about crew shortages, unsustainable prices, and increasing costs of fuel and supplies. It doesn't take much to look around and spot the challenges facing the industry. However, I believe there are no issues that we face that can't be overcome if we engage the issues as a community.

I grew up in Brookings, Oregon and spent my formative years surrounded by the cast of characters that make up the day to day of life on the docks from San Diego to Westport. After graduating from the University of San Francisco School of Law and finishing my legal education at Vanderbilt, I pursued a career in the law. I found myself in board rooms, court rooms, conference rooms, and just about any other room there is. I learned the best comen and crooks wear suits, that scruffy beards and scars don't disqualify someone from being a scholar, and that Commercial Fisherman are a rare breed indeed. There aren't a lot of us out there and it's all the more reason to stick together.

So for my part and on behalf of the WFOA, I promise to engage as many folks as possible. To modernize the communication channels our organization uses. To keep folks up to date with ways to get involved and invite discourse that's honest and appropriate even if there are a few curses mixed in. To pursue opportunities that benefit the fleet. And yes, to fight. Together.

Acronyms in this issue:

- US EEZ : United States Exclusive Economic Zone
- HCR: Harvest Control Rules

- NMFS : National Marine Fisheries Service
- NPA : North Pacific Albacore

- RFMOs: Regional Fishery Management Organizations
- PFMC: Pacific Fishery Management Council

US-Canada Albacore Treaty Update

-WFOA Staff

As of May 13, there is no regime under the US/Canada Albacore Treaty. Late last year, Canada [proposed four changes to the Treaty's Annexes](#). It was envisioned that the following proposed changes would begin the negotiation process.

- *Changes to Annex C* (the US is generally supportive of these two proposed changes).
 1. Flexibility on the overall length of replacement vessels. This addresses concerns raised by the Canadian fleet about the loss of overall capacity under the current replacement vessels rules. Presently, a replacement Canadian vessel cannot exceed the overall length of the vessel it is intending to replace. The US fishing industry generally accepts giving the Canadians flexibility in getting back to the 2013 vessel length total, but not exceeding.
 2. Commitment to data sharing. The US is supportive of this. To the extent this will allow the US to get additional and new information (or get clarity on existing datasets), this is viewed as a positive change.

- *Changes to Annex A* (the US is generally opposed to both of these proposed changes)
 3. Increasing the number of Canadian vessels on the USA68 List authorized to fish in the United States exclusive economic zone and access designated ports to 110.
 4. Extending the length of the Canadian fishing season in the US EEZ to October 31, to match the season for American vessels in Canada's exclusive economic zone.

Industry has been supported in its opposition to the proposed changes to Annex A by the PFMC and the State Department. There have been two in-person bilateral consultations - one in Canada and one in the US. Industry was physically represented at both meetings and a number of fishermen took part virtually. The most recent meeting took place April 18 in Seattle. Dave Hogan, US State Department, led the delegation during both meetings and held firm in opposing the two proposed changes to Annex A.

There have been no counteroffers or proposals presented by the US or Canada. During the May 4, US stakeholder call, the US position was reaffirmed on the proposed changes to Annex A. There are planned informal talks with the Canadians' representatives to determine if there has been a change in their position. The Canadians have not indicated an interest in a bridge regime rolling-over the terms from the recently concluded regime.

There are concerns the Canadian government will not authorize port access for US albacore fishermen absent a regime. At this point the Canadian government is evaluating applications for entry on a case-by-case basis. Some WFOA members have already had issues with accessing Canadian ports. The WFOA Executive Director reached out to Dave Hogan personally to share the views he had obtained from Directors and members. Current members are encouraged to reach out to their local Directors or to the WFOA directly with any input they may have on the subject. We will provide updates as we learn more.



WFOA Member F/V Wide West

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

The latest updates

-WFOA Staff

The recertification of both the NPA and SPA fisheries will happen in May of next year. We are still in conversations with the consulting firm MRAG to determine if the new standard for this recertification will be used, or if we will ease into it via the audits. There is still uncertainty about how the new standards will be applied to fisheries covered by RFMOs.

Previously, we have had a condition on both fisheries related to harvest strategies and harvest control rules. The assumption is that if the HCR being developed by the US is able to be adopted at the international level, that would allow us to satisfy that condition. It is possible that a watered-down version could fail to meet the condition. This issue will be monitored and reported on as soon as more information is available.

President's Statement

Thoughts on Current Events

-Shawn Ryan, WFOA President

The US/Canadian Albacore treaty is in negotiation process. In my opinion, the current treaty should be renewed again, as is, for the third time. Not renewing the treaty will result in a long, tumultuous conflict between both parties with a possible outcome of termination of the treaty.

This termination would result in less production, lower stock assessment, and quotas for both countries. Renewing the treaty would allow for continued access to these fishery resources and help support the livelihoods of fishermen and fishing communities.

Renewing the treaty would strengthen this cooperation and help ensure that both countries work together to achieve the common goal of higher stock assessment for the North Pacific albacore stock. A larger sample (time and water) is directly correlated to a more accurate stock assessment.

In the event the treaty simply does not roll over, two points need to be addressed:

1. Better language concerning the allocation of albacore
2. Easier access to Canadian ports and markets



Offshore Wind Farms

Highlights

- Mike Conroy, WFOA Consultant



Off shore wind is a complicated topic. Most, if not all, of the companies behind OSW are foreign. There is one national group representing the commercial fishing industry - the [Responsible Offshore Development Alliance](#).

In 2021, the White House established the goal to deploy 30 gigawatts (GW) of OSW by 2030. Under current technologies, 1 GW requires roughly 115 sq miles of ocean. Due to the relatively quick drop off along the west coast, the technology to be utilized will be floating turbines. At present, there are no large-scale floating OSW facilities in existence.

In 2022, California established a 5 GW goal for 2030, and 25 GW by 2045. No other west coast states have planning goals for OSW.

However, OSW is being planned off both Oregon and Washington coasts.

The federal agency charged with leasing lands on the outer continental shelf is the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM). NMFS does have a role in OSW development as a cooperating Agency.

The BOEM process is constantly evolving/changing, and it can be a challenge to accurately estimate timelines associated with different areas. For example, it took more than four years from identification of Call Areas to holding lease sales off California in December of 2022. It is likely the timeline for Oregon will be less than half of that if leases are auctioned on or before early next year.

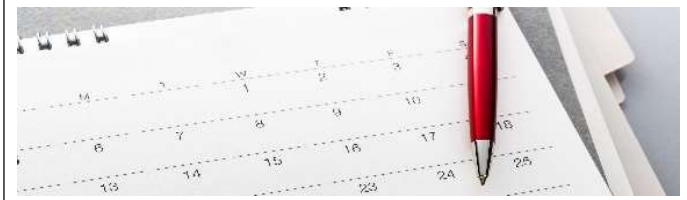
According to a member of the PFMC, “Offshore wind is the biggest threat to our west coast fisheries that I have ever seen.”

There are increasing concerns being expressed about OSW’s impacts on marine mammals, ecosystem function, and fisheries/fishing communities. Off the west coast, there are two fisheries with potential to be directly impacted (by loss of fishing grounds) - the groundfish fishery and HMS fisheries. To date - the HMS fisheries have not been active participants in conversations surrounding OSW. The WFOA encourages members who have comments or input regarding the subject of OSW to contact their Directors, the Executive Director, or the administrative office.

There are increasingly more conversations taking place about compensating the commercial fishing industry for impacts. There are different approaches being used in various parts of the Country. Federal legislative efforts are suspected to address this.

Upcoming Events

- 6/1: CEC - [Workshop on Assembly Bill 525: Identifying Additional Suitable Sea Space and Assessing Impacts and Mitigations for Offshore Wind Energy Development](#)
- 6/6: PFMC - [Marine Planning Committee Meeting](#)
- 6/15: IATTC - SAS & GAC Meeting
- 6/20-27: PFMC - [June meeting](#)
- 7/1: WFOA Annual Membership Meeting
- 7/6-7: NC - [Joint IATTC-WCPFC Northern Committee](#)



Albacore fishing on the WFOA Member F/V Peso II

Doug’s Corner

Thoughts on the future management of the North Pacific Albacore fishery

-Doug Fricke, WFOA Vice President

For those that do not know me, I am a retired albacore, salmon, and crab fisherman that has worked out of Westport for the last 40 years on a 46’ Little Hoquiam Blue Fin vessel. Since selling the boat, I have maintained my company as a consulting firm and concentrated on working for the future of the US albacore fishermen. I am still on the WFOA board and a representative of the industry on the Pacific Fisheries Management Council advisory board for Highly Migratory Species.

You have probably heard that the US Government has spearheaded a process (primarily with Canada and Japan) to obtain an international agreement on the management measures for controlling the harvest of North Pacific Albacore (NPA) across the entire North Pacific Ocean. No fisherman wants to see more regulations, but with the US pushing, we will be forced to come under the future management measures as interpreted by the US Government. My goal is to get the best management result for our industry.

The proposed international management measures are based on three things:

1. A complicated computer model known as MSE
2. A 2005 international agreement that each national effort will not exceed a 2002 to 2004 average effort
3. An international scientist regression model that estimates the NPA abundance every three years.

Right now international scientists are reporting that NPA is healthy and sustainable. If the proposed international agreement (which is proposed to be negotiated by the end of 2023) comes to completion by the end of 2023, likely our industry will not see any additional management measures. This assumes the biomass stays healthy and there is not a dramatic increase in the “days at sea” by the US fleet. “Days at sea” is the US means of measuring our US effort on NPA. However, if our effort goes up or the NPA biomass drops, we may be looking at a national total allowable catch, a national total allowable effort, a reduced number of vessels, or a reduced season length. Currently, the US industry is proposing that any future management measures that may be needed in the future would be managed under a “total allowable effort” metric.

As one of your representatives in these developing international negotiations, don’t hesitate to call for more information or give your views on how to move forward. - 360 580 3027

Administrative Updates

-WFOA Staff

The WFOA administrative office is in the process of updating various aspects of day-to-day operations. If you are in need of new member forms or need to pay your dues, please contact the office at the updated information provided below.

Updates to be on the lookout for include:

- New Website
- Social media presence
- Updated forms
- Benefits
- Streamlined outreach and member engagement opportunities
- And more!

Interested in sharing any stories, photos, art, or commentary with us? Please send submissions to info@wfoa-tuna.org. We would love to hear from you!

“Fishing is much more than fish. It is the great occasion when we may return to the fine simplicity of our forefathers.”

- Herbert Hoover

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Sponsors



The 2023 Albacore season is getting underway. It's time to test your systems and get your SeaView subscription renewed/updated today!

SeaView Fishing, by Ocean Imaging, wants to remind you that as a WFOA/AAFA/BCTFA member you are eligible for a \$100 discount on your first order of 2023* until July 1, 2023.

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