

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE REPORT

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) appreciates the work done by Dr. Laurs and Dr. Powers on the albacore white paper. It gives a good historical perspective of the U.S. west coast albacore fishery as well as background on other nations' participation in the North Pacific albacore troll, and pole and line fisheries. Also it presents a wide range of management options and their pros and cons.

The original intent of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) resolutions that industry supported, were to cap effort of all member nations, and address overfishing in the Western Pacific. In 2005 overfishing was recognized as a legitimate issue in the western Pacific and part of the intent of the resolutions was to keep effort from shifting to the Eastern Pacific.

Consideration of unilateral management of U.S. fishermen was not the basis of these resolutions. Such present consideration may in fact create confusion, instead of addressing the real issues of potential overfishing of albacore. Unilateral management of the U.S. fleet, which lands about 16 percent of the total North Pacific catch, may result in less emphasis on addressing the actual problem.

The HMSAS feels that the white paper, although comprehensive in some aspects, does not address issues such as fleet structure, fleet operations, markets, socio-economics, climate and ocean conditions, and other factors that may have changed over the past five years. These issues will also weigh heavily in the future.

Given that "effort" has yet to be adequately defined and standardized by the Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMO's), and that a new stock assessment will not be completed until 2011:

**The HMSAS recommends that the Council direct the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) to further evaluate and make projections out to 6 years on issues such as fleet size, fleet structure, market changes and trends, vessels and operators potential to be in the fishery in 6 years, and other factors that may change the dynamics of the future fishery.**

Also, the white paper needs a thorough review by the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and in the future, the enforcement committee, and other appropriate bodies.

**The HMSAS also recommends that the Council direct the HMSMT to access the future impact by all other gear types and fisheries that land albacore both legal and illegal, on the fishery and/or stocks that may fall under any restrictive management schemes.**

The HMSAS will work with the authors in addressing errors that could affect the interpretations of the recommendations throughout the white paper.

**The HMSAS has concerns over the potential use of the white paper and recommends that the document be used only for information to assist in initiating deliberations for a framework process to maintain or limit fishing effort by the West Coast albacore fishery. The white paper should not be used or cited outside the Council.**

**The HMSAS moved to endorse the recommendations cited above and requests input and guidance from the Council on future actions with respect to the white paper.**

PFMC  
11/01/09