

**NATIONAL OCEANIC AND  
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION  
(NOAA) UNITED STATES**

**FISHERIES AND OCEANS  
CANADA (DFO)**

**Canada-United States Albacore Treaty DATA WORKING GROUP (DWG)**

**MEETING**

Teleconference.

NOAA Southwest Fisheries Science Center, La Jolla, San Diego, CA

04 May 2016

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**ATTENDEES:**

Canadian Phone:

DFO: John Holmes (Vice-Chair)

U.S. Phone:

NOAA: Steve Teo (Chair), John Childers, Yuhong Gu, Stephen Stohs, Craig D' Angelo, Heidi Taylor

AAFA: Natalie Webster, Nicole Ricci, Carl Nish

AFRF: Peter Flournoy

WFOA: Wayne Heikkila, Rodney McVicker

WCSPA: Rod Moore, Lori Steele

**Opening of meeting 10:00 AM**

The Chair, Steven Teo, opened the meeting by presenting the proposed agenda. The agenda was accepted by the DWG (Appendix A).

**Review of minutes/actions/progress arising from previous DWG meeting in May 2015** (Agenda Item 1).

Steven Teo briefly summarized the minutes of the previous DWG meeting in May 2015. Stephen Stohs asked the Chair to clarify if the data exchange spreadsheet will be publicly available this year. Steve Teo clarified that the heads of the treaty negotiation teams have previously decided to public release the data exchange spreadsheet, and that decision will remain in force until they explicitly reverse that decision. Therefore, the data exchange spreadsheet for 2015 will be publicly available, likely as part of the U.S. Pacific Fishery Management Council's (PFMC) Highly Migratory Species Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Report (HMS SAFE Report; <http://www.pcouncil.org/highly-migratory-species/stock-assessment-and-fishery-evaluation-safe-documents/current-hms-safe-document/u-s-canada-albacore-treaty-data-exchange/>).

**Update of data exchange spreadsheet for 2014** (Agenda Item 2)

Table 1 - Catch.

John Holmes presented the Canadian catches in Table 1. Canadian catches for 2014 were

considered finalized. 2015 catches for Canada were still considered preliminary but substantial changes are not expected. Steve Teo presented the U.S. catches. The U.S. catches for 2014 were considered finalized. 2015 catches for the U.S. were still considered preliminary but substantial changes are not expected. John Holmes mentioned that Canadian vessels caught a higher than usual number of small albacore (“peanuts”) in 2015 and asked whether U.S. scientists observed the same for U.S. vessels. John Childers indicated that U.S. vessels have been catching more small fish as well, and U.S. industry representatives concurred, adding that most of these small fish were released and U.S. vessels typically move away from the areas with small fish because small fish have substantially lower economic value.

#### Table 2 – Landing Ports.

John Holmes presented the Canadian landing ports data in Table 2. Canadian data for 2014 were considered finalized but 2015 data were still considered preliminary but substantial changes are not expected. John Holmes noted that the DFO-estimates of number of landing vessels and total landings by Canadian vessels in US ports were higher than the NOAA-estimates in 2015. In contrast, the DFO-estimates of number of landings by Canadian vessels in U.S. ports was lower than the NOAA-estimates. As discussed in previous DWG meeting, the DFO-estimates of total landings, number of landings, and number of landing vessels for Canadian vessels in U.S. ports are typically lower than the NOAA-estimates. After some discussion, Craig D’Angelo (NOAA) and Wellsley Hamilton (DFO) were tasked to further investigate the 2015 estimated landings, and report their findings to the DWG.

Upon further review of the data after the meeting, a fish ticket submitted to DFO for a Canadian vessel with landings in the U.S. was used to determine that a landing recorded in the PacFIN database lacked a vessel identifier. This missing vessel identifier caused those data to be incorrectly attributed to a U.S. vessel. The data exchange spreadsheet was revised with changes to the U.S. values. The Canadian values remain unchanged.

John Childers presented the U.S. landing ports data. The U.S. data for 2014 were considered finalized but 2015 data were still considered preliminary but substantial changes are not expected. The DWG noted that the albacore landings at Alaskan ports are included as a footnote in previous years but do not appear to have been updated for 2015. Craig D’Angelo (NOAA) agreed to contact Cathy Tide for an update of landings at Alaskan ports, which will be included in a footnote of the final data exchange spreadsheet if NOAA’s confidentiality restrictions are not violated.

After the meeting, Craig D’Angelo updated the footnotes on the landings at Alaskan ports. As stated in previous DWG meetings, actual annual landings in Alaskan ports cannot be included in the data exchange spreadsheet due to confidentiality restrictions.

#### Table 3 – Effort.

John Holmes and Steve Teo presented the Canadian and U.S. effort data, respectively, in Table 3. Both Canadian and U.S. effort data were finalized for 2014 but 2015 data were still considered preliminary, although substantial changes are not expected. John Holmes

noted that there were 43 Canadian vessels that fished in the U.S. EEZ in 2015 but the data exchange spreadsheet only listed 42 vessels because one vessel was known to have fished in the U.S. EEZ through hailing records and other data sources but have not yet submitted its' logbook. This will be updated when the logbook data is submitted in the near future.

It was also noted that several of the footnotes in the data exchange spreadsheet appear to be outdated. Steve Teo will check that these footnotes are updated when the spreadsheet is finalized.

### **Any other business (Agenda Item 3)**

There were 3 main discussions in this agenda item.

#### 1. Procedure for additional data requests

Several US industry representatives indicated that they would be interested in requesting specific data from the DWG to help understand the fishery operations of both countries' fleets in each other's EEZs. While the DWG decided such requests were within the purview of the DWG, the DWG also decided that a procedure needed to be developed for the DWG to receive, evaluate, and prioritize such data requests so that the DWG would remain efficient and not overburdened with secondary objectives.

After much discussion, the DWG decided on the following procedure for future data requests:

- 1) The DWG should provide a draft data exchange spreadsheet and meeting agenda to meeting participants when the DWG meeting is announced, ideally about 3 – 4 weeks in advance of the meeting date;
- 2) Data requests should be submitted in writing to the Chair of the DWG, at least one week before the scheduled meeting, detailing the data request and the reasons for the request;
- 3) Data requests may be submitted verbally during the meeting but the DWG may give lower priority to such requests;
- 4) Data requests by the treaty negotiating teams will be given higher priority;
- 5) Data requests will be evaluated and prioritized by the DWG;
- 6) The DWG may be able to provide the data requested during the meeting, if the data request is received early, relatively simple, high priority, and approved by the DWG. Otherwise, if the data requests are approved by the DWG, the data requested may be provided at subsequent meetings or in the meeting minutes.

#### 2. Catch in territorial waters

Peter Flournoy informed the DWG that the Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) of the U.S. PFMC had submitted a data request for the catches of Canadian vessels in Canadian territorial waters (i.e., <12 nmi of the coast). However, Peter Flournoy stated that he was not making the data request, just reporting what occurred at the HMSAS. The U.S. scientists responded that they were unaware of this request and would investigate further. It was unclear during the meeting if there was actually such a request from either the participants in the meeting, the negotiating teams, or the PFMC.

John Holmes noted that this kind of data request is complex and would require substantial work to complete. The purpose of this request was also unclear.

After the meeting, Stephen Stohs clarified that the HMSAS had made such a request in their March report to the PFMC on international issues ([http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/F4c\\_Sup\\_HMSAS\\_Rpt\\_MAR2016BB.pdf](http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/F4c_Sup_HMSAS_Rpt_MAR2016BB.pdf)). However, even though the request was discussed by the PFMC, the request was not included by the PFMC in the Recommendations for International Management Activities in their March 2016 Council Meeting Decision Summary Document (<http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/0316decisions.pdf>). Therefore, the DWG considered that there was no pending data request before this DWG meeting but did discuss the idea for information purposes. The DWG recommends that if some stakeholders are interested in this information, the stakeholders should make this data request through their respective negotiating team.

### 3. Distribution of vessel catch in the counterparties' EEZ

Nicole Ricci made a request for the number of U.S. vessels that fished in the Canadian EEZ but did not catch any albacore in 2013 - 2015. The idea was to provide a simple measure of success (or lack thereof) of vessels that fished within the other country's EEZ. The DWG discussed this request and approved this request because the request was relatively simple to perform and directly relevant to the negotiating teams. After some discussion, the DWG decided to provide a table with this information, while also noting that the contents would have to abide by the confidentiality restrictions of DFO and NOAA. A suggestion was made to exclude 2 US vessels that are not able to fish in U.S. waters because of U.S. regulations on foreign hulls. However, the DWG noted that these vessels cannot be excluded because doing so would reveal the catches of these two vessels by subtraction and would therefore contravene NOAA's confidentiality restrictions. After the meeting, the DWG developed the following table of the catches of Canadian and US vessels in each other's EEZs (Table A).

**Table A.** Number of Canadian and US vessels fishing in the US and Canadian EEZs, respectively, with various amounts of total catch in 2013 – 2015. For US vessels, <3 indicates where revealing the number of vessels would contravene confidentiality restrictions and indicates 0 – 2 vessels. Total number of vessels can be found in Table 3 of the data exchange spreadsheet.

Year	Number of Canadian vessels in the US EEZ with various amounts of catch (t)				Number of US vessels in the Canadian EEZ with various amounts of catch (t)			
	0	>0-25	>25-50	>50	0	>0-25	>25-50	>50
2013	0	5	19	19	<3	20	<3	<3
2014	0	7	18	19	<3	26	7	<3
2015	0	11	22	9	<3	37	<3	<3

The Chair noted that the next meeting of the DWG will likely be in late May 2017 unless there are new requests and/or tasks from the respective delegations. There was no other business.

**Next Steps:** The meeting was closed with the following actions summarized by the Chair:

- Craig D'Angelo (NOAA) will work with Wellsley Hamilton (DFO) to further investigate the 2015 estimated landings, and report their findings to the DWG;
- Craig D'Angelo (NOAA) will provide an update of landings at Alaskan ports (completed);
- Steve Teo (Chair) will update the footnotes of the data exchange spreadsheet (completed);
- The DWG will develop a table of the catches of Canadian and US vessels in each other's EEZs (completed; see Table A).
- The next DWG meeting will likely be a conference call in late May 2017 to review and adopt data for 2016.

**Chair adjourns meeting at 11:30 AM**

## Appendix A

Agenda of the Meeting of the US-Canada Albacore Treaty  
Data Working Group  
May 4th, 2016, 10:00 AM (Pacific time)

Teleconference  
1-866-692-3582; Passcode: xxx xxx x #

Web Conference  
<http://www.webex.com>; Meeting Number: 747 936 802; Password: xxxxxx

**Objective of the Working Group:** *Develop an optimum reporting and monitoring system for the U.S. Canada Albacore Treaty, Troll and Pole-and-Line Fisheries*

- Review of minutes/actions/progress arising from previous meeting in May 2015 (Steve Teo);
- Update data exchange spreadsheet for 2015 (Steve Teo and John Holmes);
- Any other business.