



WESTERN FISHBOAT OWNERS ASSOCIATION®

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June 1, 2010

Chairman David Ortmann
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Re: Biological Reference Points - PFMC Input

Dear Chairman Ortmann:

I'm writing on behalf of the Western Fishboat Owners Association (WFOA) to request that the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC) provide input to the efforts by the International Science Committee - Albacore Working Group member nations to provide input on relating to biological reference point analysis being conducted by the International Albacore Working Group. This will form the basis of management advice to the RFMOs charged with management of Pacific albacore.

As you may be aware, WFOA recently received Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification for albacore landed by all U.S. troll and baitboat fishermen. Under the conditions of the certification WFOA is required to encourage all levels of management to develop biological reference points (BPR's) for monitoring the state of the harvest relative to stock status. However, regardless of any conditions set forth by the MSC certification, WFOA regards the fair, consistent, and scientifically based establishment of BPR's by all relative RFMO's.

As vice chair of the HMS advisory panel, I will be discussing the need for BRP's with the panel and ask that the PFMC support the on-going international effort to reach a mutually agreed upon set of biological reference points to gauge the current status of albacore.

The Albacore Working Group has been actively engaged in developing a framework of recommendations to the International Science Committee that advises WCPFC and IATTC. At the recent meeting of the working group in Shimizu, Japan in April of this year the subject of biological reference points was discussed extensively. The working group has developed a consensus that focus be on lower limit reference points to prevent recruitment overfishing. At the current time the WG is examining various proposed minimum biomass estimates (SSB10%, SSB25% or ATHL). The working group will be presenting options to the NC to consider.

The WG is looking for input from managers to the process of establishing biological reference points. Specifically, it would be helpful to obtain input on:

1. management objectives for the stock, noting that an interim objective is in place for north Pacific albacore,
2. specification of the management strategy, e.g., control rules,
3. specification of the risk management strategy, i.e., risk tolerant, risk adverse,
4. decisions on reference points and control rules for albacore.

WFOA believes the Albacore WG is moving forward toward a consensus BRP. It is commonly agreed that the minimum biomass is an unacceptable reference point and will examine all suggested methods. We would hope the PFMC would communicate their concerns to the appropriate RFMOs and associated scientific bodies with information or direction on the form of BPRs. The albacore working group will be meeting in Victoria BC in mid-July to consider this subject further and welcomes all input to the effort of establishing BRPs for north Pacific albacore.

Sincerely,



Wayne Heikkila
Executive Director

cc: WFOA Board of Directors