

**WESTERN FISHBOAT OWNERS ASSOCIATION**  
**POSITION STATEMENT ON HMS MANAGEMENT:**

Western Fishboat Owners Association (WFOA) position on Highly Migratory Species (HMS) management as approved by the board of directors on April 9, 1999. Is as follows:

1. WFOA acknowledges as fact that the major fishing nations of the world, including the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and other nations where WFOA members reside, have already formally agreed to conserve and manage albacore tuna and other HMS, as evidenced by signing and ratification of the UN Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Species Agreement under the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention by the aforementioned nations. WFOA's participation in the Multilateral High Level Conference process to draft a Western and Central Pacific Convention, and active participation in numerous and pertinent efforts to develop other regional and national albacore fishery management programs, is therefore recognized as essential for ensuring our members' continued access to the waters and fisheries of the Pacific Ocean.

2. WFOA recognizes that the Pacific albacore fisheries are very healthy and that the WFOA fleet fishes in a sustainable manner with near zero by-catch. WFOA will not settle for anything less than our traditional amounts harvested over history. We recognize this would only be an issue if Total Allowable Catch and/or fishing effort control programs, with associated allocation programs, were implemented.

3. Acknowledging the facts of item 1, WFOA supports the eventual and necessary involvement of the Federal Fisheries Management Councils in the HMS process according to their expressed interests, ability to contribute scientific and management information, expertise, and resources. WFOA encourages involvement and expertise of both the Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council and the Pacific Fisheries Management Council, and will strive to work with and expedite communication between both bodies as well as the fishing community.

4. WFOA recognizes that its international membership puts it in a unique position to be an advocate for the interests of the international jig fleet fishing for surface caught albacore. WFOA will monitor and coordinate, where and when possible, with other countries and entities, which have WFOA members, actions for the best interests of all. Additionally, WFOA is a California corporation, located in the United States, and therefore, it is more appropriate for it to focus on the interests of its' U.S. members, when and if a conflict emerges between the interests of the U.S. fleet and the interests of fleets from another flag state. Presently no such conflict exists.

5. WFOA recognizes that albacore tuna is a healthy, protein rich, staple food enjoyed and needed by hundreds of millions of people all over the world, and will continue to stress this at every opportunity.

# US-HMS MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Prepared for WFOA members  
by Fisheries Consultant Tana McHale

## PFMC White Paper in the Works

At their April 1999 meeting in Sacramento, the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC) agreed to the drafting of a "White Paper" to help them decide whether or not to proceed with developing a management program for highly migratory species, including albacore. Following a review of the not-yet-finished White Paper, PFMC is scheduled to make decision in June on whether or not to proceed with developing a formal HMS fishery management program structure.

Will PFMC decide to go ahead with developing a Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Pacific HMS? Probably. And considering the migratory nature of HMS, it is also likely that they will elect to do a joint FMP with the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (WPFMC). This is what WFOA has been advocating on various occasions and also through the PFMC HMS Advisory Panel -- ever since the WFOA Board has taken the position two years ago that no one Council should have exclusive authority to manage fish that swim in and out of different Council jurisdictions.

Note that the WPFMC has had an HMS FMP for their longline fishery since 1987. WFOA hasn't taken a position in support or opposition to that plan since it does not effect the jig-boat albacore fishery. However, that plan is one example (out of many) of how an FMP works, so it is worth taking a look at it.

The original WPFMC FMP defined pelagic management unit species along with basic observer and catch reporting requirements, and basically created the frame work for adopting additional management measures later on. The WPFMC has amended the plan a total of seven times since then. Highlights of some these amendments include:

1991: Requirements for Hawaiian longliners to have federal permits and maintain logbooks. A three-year moratorium on new entries into the Hawaiian longline fishery was also adopted, along with a 94-foot maximum longline vessel size limitation.

1992: A longline exclusion zone was established around the main Hawaiian islands to prevent gear conflicts and interactions between longliners and smaller fishing boats.

1994: As the permit moratorium expired, the WPFMC implemented a regular longline fishery limited entry program.

If PFMC decides to go ahead with developing an HMS FMP that would include albacore, does that mean we would have limited entry and exclusion zones too? Not necessarily. Fishermen, PFMC, WPFMC, and other interested parties could adopt any number of management regulations appropriate for meeting management goals -- goals which haven't been defined yet, and may largely depend on what happens in the international management process.

The point of mentioning the WPFMC longline-oriented FMP is to show how an initial FMP doesn't automatically mean that specific regulations would be implemented right away. Rather, an FMP establishes the framework for adopting regulations *either* right away *or* later on.

## Speculation on Future Albacore Management for US Fishermen

In recent weeks various NMFS personnel have made a number of casual, unsolicited comments on what they believe the future of albacore fishery management might involve. These comments have ranged from speculation about possibilities for a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) system to fishing effort controls for the albacore fishery. NMFS officials have also suggested that WFOA begin considering what kind of regulations would be best suited for the albacore fishery.

Rather than just wondering what NMFS might be trying to imply, WFOA asked NMFS SW Regional Administrator Bill Hogarth directly for his opinion of what NMFS might advocate. Dr. Hogarth quickly pointed out that NMFS looks to the councils to draft FMPs when appropriate. Yet he also noted:

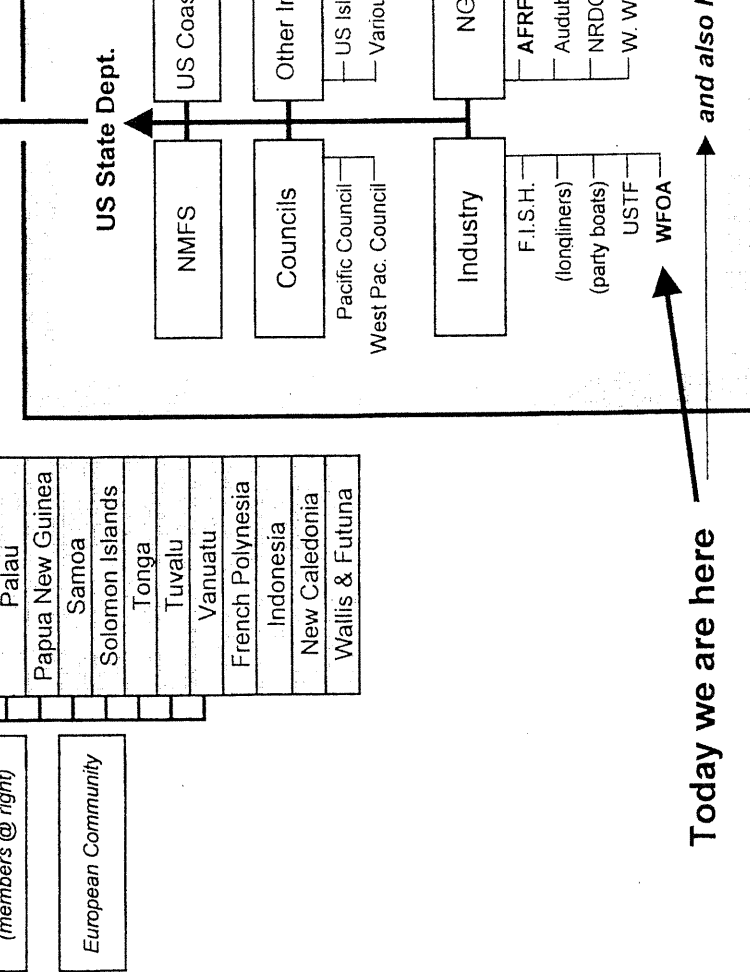
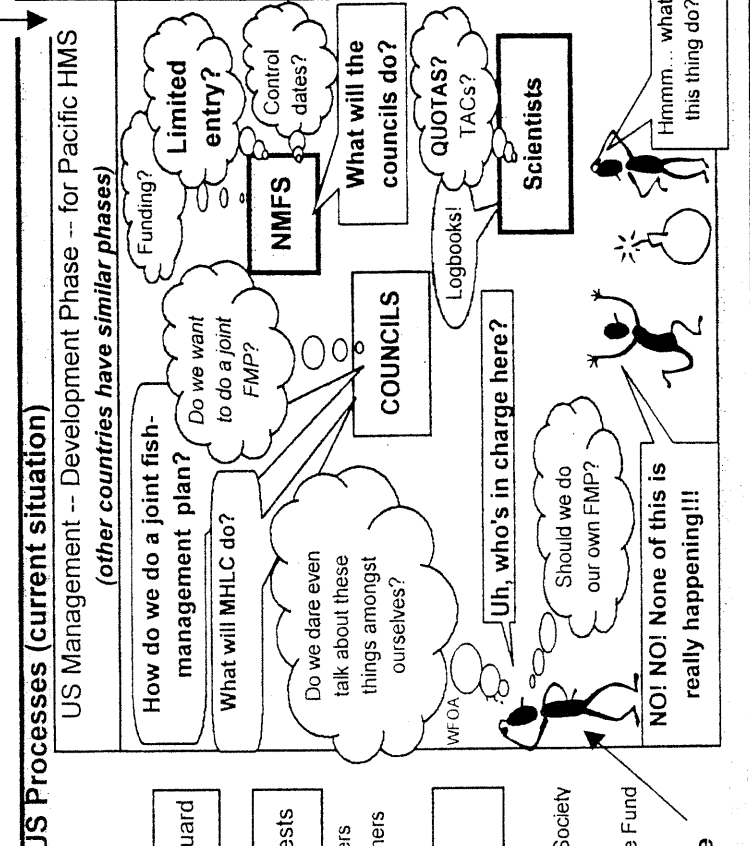
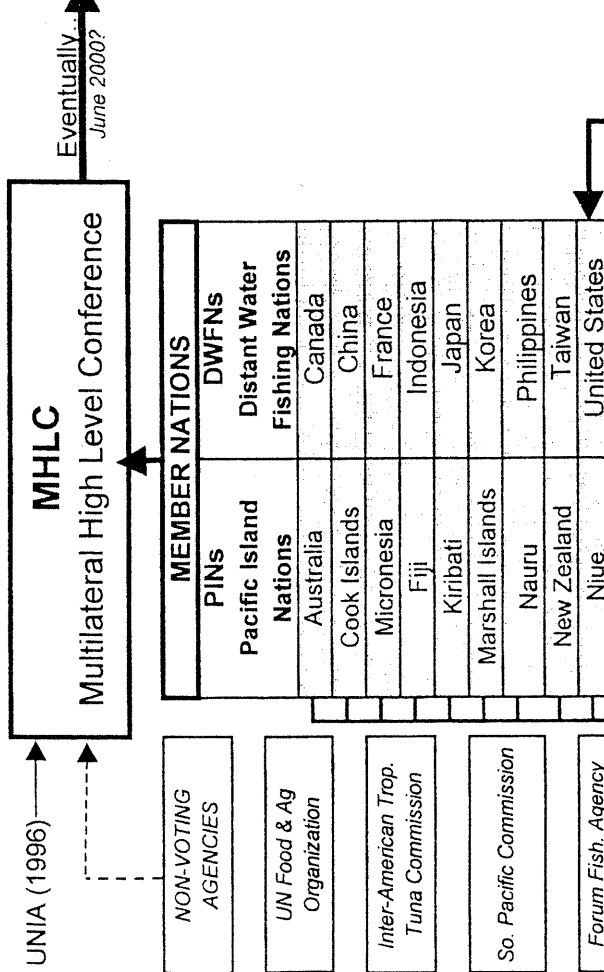
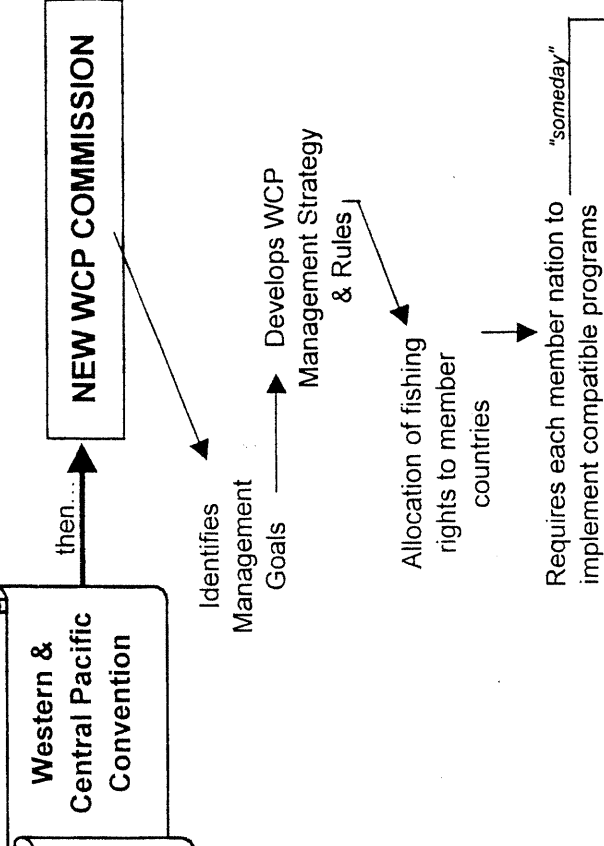
"While I don't want to prejudge the Council's [future] proposals, I can say that NMFS generally supports attempts to match harvesting capacity with available fish stocks; and we generally support efforts to avoid economically inefficient fisheries. If there were a TAC allocation to the US under some international arrangement (not a likely outcome for at least a couple of years), we would support measures that recognize shared commercial and recreational interests; that are as 'simple' as possible for the fleets; and that are readily monitored and enforced. More likely than not, the management program would include framework procedures for 'adaptive management' rather than absolute quotas or catch limits, given the difficulty of predicting runs of albacore with any certainty from year to year."

Thus, future editions of the WFOA newsletters will begin to explore the issues of harvest capacity, allocations, jig boat fishery economics, recreational fishing for albacore and other issues relevant to Dr. Hogarth's statement -- as well as other management-related topics that WFOA members may want to learn more about.

## Making Sense of It All

General Manager Wayne Heikkila requested the development of a flowchart showing all the players currently involved with international and US HMS management efforts. This proved to be a difficult task -- particularly due to the "work-in-progress" nature of domestic HMS management processes -- yet an attempt is included on the reverse for WFOA membership review.

# One Way of Viewing the Pacific HMS Management -- An Overview of Some Players & Processes



Today we are here