

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE REPORT ON
HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT

International Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fisheries

The United States and Canada met April 15-16, 2003, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, to continue discussions on implementation of the U.S./Canada Albacore Fishing Treaty and its recent amendments. The United States informed Canada that legislation had not been enacted to authorize regulations to implement the Treaty and that there was little prospect of such legislation in the immediate future. Canada and the United States then agreed it would not be possible to implement the Treaty by June 2003 as had been intended. Therefore, the fishing limits envisioned will be implemented beginning in 2004. Given this conclusion, it was also agreed new reporting requirements that would be needed to implement the fishing limits will not be put into force in 2003. However, efforts to develop reporting mechanisms that will be sufficient for both Parties will continue, and there will be close monitoring of vessel activity in 2003 to the extent resources allow. It was agreed, if there is a benefit from this delay, it is that both Parties will have additional time to work with their respective industries to establish reporting mechanisms that will be efficient and effective at minimal cost to the industries. In the meantime, the April meeting did provide an opportunity for the first official exchange of fishery data by the two Parties covering 2002 fishing as well as a report on the results of the latest North Pacific Albacore Working Group.

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) is scheduled to meet June 24-27, 2003, in Antigua, Guatemala. The United States is clearing appointment of new U.S. Commissioners to the IATTC and hopes to have the appointments complete by the time of the meeting. If so, it will be the first time in many years that the United States will have its full complement of four Commissioners. An agenda for the IATTC and associated meetings, and background papers, are available on the IATTC web site (www.IATTC.org). Among the topics will be consideration of action on the revised Convention text developed as a result of the meeting of the Working Group on Negotiations March 18-23, 2003, in La Jolla, California; review of progress in compliance with IATTC recommendations; progress and problems in implementing the purse seine capacity limitation program; and the IATTC research program and budget for 2003-2004. Results of the meeting will be reported to the Council for its September meeting.

PFMC
06/03/03