

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON
ALBACORE MANAGEMENT PLANNING

The Highly Migratory Species (HMSAS) recommends the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) consider a range of bag limits for the recreationally caught tunas to include a limit of ten fish of any one species per person per day. The range of the bag limits should reflect current effort as well as concerns about utilization and waste.

The HMSAS believes it is premature to precede with any effort controls on the West Coast commercial albacore fleet at this time. Until a resolution is passed by the Western Central Pacific Fishery Commission (WCPFC) similar to the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Resolution on albacore that addresses effort in the Western Pacific, until reasonable scientific reference points are agreed on for biomass removal, or until overfishing or overfished condition exists in the North Pacific albacore fishery, no unilateral effort controls are necessary for the U.S. fleet, which is not presently expanding.

Regarding enforcement of illegal, unreported, and undocumented (IUU) fishing (eliminating long high seas netting and illegal marketing), the HMSAS recommends the Council encourage the Coast Guard and National Marine Fisheries Service Enforcement to step up surveillance and international coordination to eliminate the illegal take of fish important to US fishermen. Commercial advisors are getting a sense from their constituents that illegal high seas driftnetting is increasing.

Concerning the interaction with the WCPFC, the HMSAS requests that the Council make the following recommendations to the U.S. Delegation:

1. Promote the adoption by the WCPFC of a resolution following that adopted by the IATTC to not increase the total fishing effort for the Western North Pacific albacore beyond current levels.
2. Emphasize the need to reduce fishing levels commensurate with the long term sustainability of the resource.
3. Keep the Council informed on the actions of the WCPFC so that the Council can consider the need for further action relative to the West Coast albacore fleet.