

## HMS DOMESTIC REGULATORY ACTIVITIES

**Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Logbooks - Status Report:** A courtesy letter was mailed out to HMS albacore troll permit holders who made an albacore landing in 2004 and/or 2005, with a notice that completed future logbook sheets are to be mailed directly to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC), La Jolla, California. (Previously, permit holders were allowed to hand the completed logbook sheets to the albacore port samplers at the time of off-loading).

To date, a total of 45 albacore logbooks from 2004, and 1,157 albacore logbooks from 2005 have been received and processed by personnel at the SWFSC, La Jolla. The majority of the logbooks have been entered into an Oracle database and will be used to assist in, among other tasks, development of Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation reports and stock assessments.

**HMS Observers – Status Report:** NMFS Southwest Region (SWR) and SWFSC, La Jolla staff attended the National Observer Program Advisory Team (NOPAT) meetings slated for February 28-March 2 at Woods Hole, Mass. FY06 SWR Observer Program funding requests were decided, including funds for on-going observation of HMS fisheries. The proposal cycle for FY07 requests will begin anew this summer and the SWR and SWFSC will be submitting a joint-proposal that covers funding for needed observer “sea-days” as well as vital data management costs that have gone unfunded in previous years but are now a needed and major element to be considered.

A list of NMFS Observer Program trips completed, by gear type, is presented below for the period February 1, 2005 through January 31, 2006:

Drift Gillnet:	46 trips (~20% coverage of total annual sets)
Pelagic Longline:	1 trip
Albacore Troll:	3 trips (September 05, Westport, WA departures)
Harpoon:	0 trips (no trips planned at this time)
CPFV:	0 trips (trips to begin summer 2006)
Tuna Purse Seine:	3 trips (August 05, Southern California departures)

**Federal-State Observer Program Discussions:** NMFS SWR Observer Program staff conducted a series of informational and logistical meetings with State Observer Coordinators from California, Oregon, and Washington. The discussions focused on ways to work collaboratively to achieve maximum efficiency of stated HMS Fishery Management Plan (FMP) goals with the limited resources available. To this end, discussions were held on the possibility of utilizing State observers/samplers to assist in meeting the sampling objectives of the HMS FMP. The objective focuses on observing commercial passenger fishing vessel (trips in a pilot mode during the 2006 season to collect needed bycatch information. More information will be available once budget issues are solidified after the NOPAT meetings. The NMFS SWR Observer Program staff will be contacting the State Coordinators to schedule follow-up discussions and lay out a strategy to accomplish the stated goals.