

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON ALBACORE MANAGEMENT

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) notes that the current U.S.-Canada Albacore treaty generally favors Canadian vessels fishing in U.S. waters in comparison to U.S. vessels fishing in Canadian waters. Nonetheless, there may be some benefits to U.S. processors near the Canadian border because of deliveries to them by Canadian vessels. Recognizing these considerations, the HMSAS recommends that the Council advise the U.S. Department of State and NMFS to proceed with termination of the U.S.-Canada Albacore Treaty under provisions of the treaty. Other reasons discussed for terminating the treaty is that termination may advantage U.S. albacore fisheries in the event that national quotas are implemented for North Pacific albacore, and if eventual caps or limited entry is imposed on U.S. fishermen, Canadian fishermen in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) should be restricted first.

Recognizing the adoption of resolutions by the IATTC and the WCPFC calling on members to not increase fishing effort on North Pacific albacore reflecting scientific concerns about the status of the stock, the HMSAS recommends the Council explore several avenues to address this issue. As a first step, the Council should implement a coastwide recreational bag limit for commercial passenger fishing vessels, or alternatively, call on the states to implement such bag limits. The HMSAS supports Council direction to the HMSMT to develop the information and work in cooperation with relevant management bodies to define the “current level of fishing effort” of U.S. fisheries targeting North Pacific albacore, including both recreational and commercial fisheries, as stated in the IATTC and WCPFC resolutions on albacore.

The HMSAS also is requesting clarification on whether the March 9, 2000 control date is still legally viable or should be updated in anticipation of effort controls.

PFMC
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