

TO: Chairman Dave Ortmann

FROM: Rod Moore

On May 18, 2010, I attended the annual meeting of the parties to the U.S. / Canada Treaty on Pacific Albacore. Although I did not attend as a representative of the Council I was asked by Executive Director Don McIsaac to provide a brief review of the meeting.

Other Council members present were Dave Hogan (Department of State, U.S. delegation leader); Mark Helvey (NMFS SWR); and Brian Corrigan (USCG 13th District).

The annual meeting is an opportunity for both parties to exchange catch and effort data, discuss enforcement issues, and address any problems that may have occurred in the preceding year with implementation of the Treaty. Both parties agreed that implementation was going well and that there was a need to begin consultation on renewal of the Treaty, which is currently due to expire in 2011.

For 2009, the NMFS reported that the U.S. had begun charging a standard fee for permit renewals and that it had had no effect on the number of U.S. vessels fishing. Eight U.S. vessels reported landings in Canadian ports during the year, with the majority of effort in the U.S. EEZ. The number of Canadian vessels landing albacore in U.S. ports declined in 2009 from the level in 2008.

Canada reported that 110 Canadian vessels (the number allowed under the Treaty) fished in the U.S. EEZ at some time during the year. Approximately 5200 mt of albacore were taken in this fishery, with 2480 mt reported taken off Washington, 2719 mt reported taken off Oregon, and 1 mt reported taken off California. Approximately 397 mt were caught in the Canadian EEZ off British Columbia. Approximately 471 mt of albacore were landed in U.S. ports by Canadian vessels according to preliminary data compiled by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

The delegations discussed on-going work on the formation of advisory committees on data sampling and collection and replacement of vessels under procedures allowed in the treaty. The U.S. noted the need for it to take action on reviewing and circulating past minutes and requesting landings data from the Provincial government in British Columbia.

The USCG noted that AIS requirements were expected to come into force in the near future and that they would apply to both U.S. and Canadian vessels. USCG and NMFS OLE reported on continuing investigations of minor enforcement violations. One collision between a U.S. and a Canadian vessel was reported, with the U.S. vessel cited for not maintaining an adequate bridge watch. No citations were issued to the Canadian vessel but Canadian industry members reported that the vessel's insurance company judged it to be partially at fault. No injuries resulted from the incident. Compliance with U.S. requirements to submit logbooks increased substantially in 2009. Canada reported no major enforcement issues.

The delegations discussed the various rules on vessel identification mandated by the Treaty and other international agreements and agreed that efforts should be made to coordinate the various requirements.

Canadian and U.S. scientific staff present gave a brief update on efforts to conduct a stock assessment on albacore and establish reference points.

For the current year, NMFS described the process used in the U.S. to identify vessels which would be allowed to fish in the Canadian EEZ. DFO reported that they expected no change in the list of vessels

that would be allowed to fish in the U.S. EEZ. The USCG and DFO described efforts being made to potentially increase enforcement efforts in 2010, including additional over-flights by Canada. The U.S. and Canadian fleet representatives reported no problems on the fishing grounds.

The parties then discussed various international agreements that affect albacore and the work by the parties in each, including updates on the U.S. attempt to define current effort levels. Canada noted a preference for catch controls based on spawning stock biomass rather than current effort. This led to a lengthy discussion on how to design a management framework using reference points.

The parties agreed that Canada would host the next meeting, most likely in Vancouver, at a date to be mutually agreed upon.