

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL HIGHLY
MIGRATORY SPECIES ACTIVITIES

U.S.– Canada Albacore Treaty

A bilateral meeting with Canada was held November 30-December 1, 2011, to discuss a possible fishing regime for the 2012 fishing season and beyond. The meeting was conducted against the backdrop of a joint letter from the two harvesting sector organizations (American Albacore Fishing Association Western Fishboat Owners Association) that requested the fishing regime be suspended for the 2012 season. One of the major factors behind the letter appears to be aggressive and crowding style of fishing displayed by the Canadian fishermen while in U.S. waters. While no agreement was reached, both Parties did agree that further work needed to be undertaken in the next several months before any further discussions on a specific fishing regime could move forward. These tasks include: 1) Canada's further reviewing the U.S. request for extending the timeline for catch history going to the country where the fish were caught; 2) developing a process for third-party administration of a self-imposed levy of approximately \$500 per vessel on Canadian fishermen that would be used for albacore research; 3) continue further discussions on the number of vessels, length of season, and vessel size; 4) reconvene the Data Working group (which did occur January 17); 5) initiate a study that looks at the economic benefits of the Treaty to U.S. port businesses; and 6) harvesters endorsing a mutually agreed upon Code of Fishing Conduct for how they behave on the water and a resolution process for handling disputes.

With regard to item 5 above, an Economic Working Group was formed with government representatives from both Parties. The group is still developing its Terms of Reference but it did begin looking at estimating the economic impact of Canadian vessel landings of albacore to U.S. west coast ports using the IO-PAC Model.

A followup meeting was scheduled for mid-March but it appears that may be postponed till mid-April.

PFMC
02/10/12