

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON COUNCIL
RECOMMENDATIONS ON INTERNATIONAL HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES
MANAGEMENT

WCPFC8

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) supports that the Council advise the U.S. delegation that on bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack tuna fisheries, the conservation measures developed for the large purse seine and longline vessels are not appropriate to our smaller scale commercial fisheries (which are similar to what other countries refer to as “artisanal fisheries”). However, the following general recommendations are suggested:

- The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission should work with the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission in harmonizing regulations applicable to the overlap area.
- In establishing conservation and management measures, the goal should be to provide uniform implementation that achieves compliance in both Convention Areas.
- Uniform, complete and timely catch data is needed to insure fair and effective management measures.
- Observer requirements for larger U.S. purse seines and longline vessels are not suitable for smaller vessels.
- Support conservation measures that lead to recovery of the managed stocks.

The HMSAS also discussed the North Pacific albacore management framework contained in the Northern Committee workplan. As this framework is further developed, fisheries that do not target albacore but have albacore bycatch (or retained incidental catch) should be subject to the conservation measure.

U.S.-Canada Treaty

The HMSAS had a long discussion with Mr. Dave Hogan from the State Department, representatives from National Marine Fisheries Service, and west coast states government representatives. It is apparent that some of the albacore fishermen wish to have the treaty terminated for a variety of factors, including:

1. While a variety of market and regulatory roadblocks are hindering the U.S. fishery, the Canadians appear to have greater government support to expand their fishery and develop export markets.
2. The fleets are no longer comparable in terms of the composition of the fleet (vessel size, capacity, age, etc.), leaving the U.S. fleet at a competitive disadvantage to the Canadian fleet. This is reflected in the increasing size of Canadian vessels.
3. The aggressive and disruptive behavior of Canadian fishermen on the grounds reduces the catch of U.S. fishermen, in contravention of informal rules of behavior previously agreed to by U.S. and Canadian fishermen.
4. The recent catch histories in the respective Exclusive Economic Zones have strongly favored the Canadian fleet.

5. The Coast Guard is not equitable in its boarding and inspections of Canadian vessels versus U.S. vessels.

These opinions are not shared by all U.S. albacore fishermen.

In addition, it is apparent that U.S. processors and buyers of albacore tuna wish to continue the U.S.-Canada Treaty based on a perceived economic benefit to our coastal communities.

Given the above discussion, there are some points of agreement in the HMSAS and we request the Council to provide the following information to the U.S. delegation:

1. Compare 2011 Canadian fleet capacity and vessel size to what it was in 2001.
2. Determine the amount caught by Canadian vessels in U.S. waters and landed and sold in Canada compared to the U.S. landings from 2001 to 2011.
3. Research tonnage landed and unloaded by Canadian vessels in the U.S. that are actually sold and transported to Canadian buyers.
4. Research potential effects of treaty changes such as for Canadian vessels reducing areas of access in U.S. waters, reducing the length of season, reducing the number of vessels allowed in U.S. waters, and if any or all of these changes are implemented, whether the U.S. fleet would make up the difference in tonnage.
5. As noted above, the HMSAS did not achieve consensus on a Council recommendation to the U.S. Department of State to issue a letter of termination by December 31, 2011.
6. The HMSAS requests the Council task the Enforcement Consultants to report on the number of boardings and scope of inspections of Canadian albacore troll vessels fishing in U.S. waters.

PFMC
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