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Please share the following with the AAFA Board and Membership as it recounts items of interest that arose during the month of August and looks forward to certain events occurring in upcoming months.

Follow-up on July's upcoming events:

1. **August 9 – 11** –Contractor for AAFA MSC Re-Certification, 3rd MSC Certification, 2nd re-certification for AAFA did its site visit for the North and South Pacific Albacore fisheries. This occurred and should have been relatively painless; but wasn't as the MSC contractor was being audited and that added complexity and time that otherwise wasn't necessary. In short, I am not sure we could have made a better presentation. There are still some issues that need to be addressed – for example, lack of formal Harvest Control Rules; but the contractors don't believe this will be anything that would hold up recertification

Federal Register Items of Interest:

The following appeared in the Federal Register which may have an impact on AAFA vessels.

1. August 14 – Announcement of meeting of the Permanent Advisory Committee to Advise the U.S. Commissioners to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission. This meeting will be held via conference call on September 12 between 11AM and 1PM Hawaiian time. The purpose call is to discuss outcomes of: The 2017 regular session of the WCPFC Scientific Committee (SC13), the 2017 regular session of the WCPFC Northern Committee (NC13), and the Intersessional Meeting to progress the draft Bridging CMM on Tropical Tuna. See <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-08-14/pdf/2017-17121.pdf>

The SC13 report contains the following information:

In recent years, the U.S. troll fisheries for albacore in the WCPO have experienced a significant decline in participation. Six vessels participated in the South Pacific albacore troll fishery in 2016 (See - <https://www.wcpfc.int/system/files/AR-CCM-27%20USA%20PART%201%20Rev%202.pdf> page 20).

The NC13 report contains the following information:

Recommended that the Commission adopt a revision to the title of previously adopted precautionary management framework for North Pacific albacore, so that it may be recognized as a harvest strategy. This is attached as *Attachment A* to this document. See - <https://www.wcpfc.int/system/files/NC13%20Summary%20Report%20adopted%20-%20Final%20%28Update%29.pdf>

2. August 15 – United States International Trade Commission. The Commission issued a notice re Institution of Antidumping and Countervailing Duty Investigations against Uncoated Groundwood Paper from Canada. This wont directly impact AAFA; but along with other similar actions against Canadian importers show a potential thawing of trade relations. See - <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-08-15/pdf/2017-17177.pdf>
3. August 21 – The US Coast Guard issued a notice that it will impose conditions of entry on vessels arriving from the Federated States of Micronesia. Conditions of entry are intended to protect the United States from vessels arriving from countries that have been found to have deficient port anti-terrorism measures in place. If any AAFA vessels have any thoughts of trying the South Pacific this year, they may want to keep this in mind. See <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-08-21/pdf/2017-17652.pdf>.
4. August 22 – NMFS published its draft List of Foreign Fisheries (LOFF) for 2017. The draft LOFF reflects available information on marine mammal interactions in commercial fisheries exporting fish and fish products to the United States. Comments are sought on this first draft. In short – if an exporting nation cant show that its fisheries which interact with marine mammals – have rules and regulations which are “comparable in effectiveness” to US rules – those fisheries will not be allowed to import their seafood or seafood products into the US. This could have a profound impact on imports of tuna caught by longline vessels. Importing nations have until Jan 1, 2022 to make to required showing and be given a comparability finding. See <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-08-22/pdf/2017-17671.pdf>. This will be separately addressed in a later document as this could have real implications.
5. August 22 – NMFS published a “Notification of Receipt of a Petition to Ban Imports of All Fish and Fish Products From Mexico That Do Not Satisfy the Marine Mammal Protection Act Provisions.” This action is limited to fish and fish products taken in the range of the critically endangered Vaquita. While no tuna products are implicated, it is a first attempt by an ENGO to use the provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act to ban imports because a nation’s rules are not comparable in effectiveness to US rules. See - <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-08-22/pdf/2017-17717.pdf>
6. August 22 – the EPA extended the Public Comment period of the proposed rule revising the definition of “Waters of the United States”. See - <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-08-22/pdf/2017-17739.pdf>. Note - on August 28, the EPA also published a schedule of public meetings designed to address this subject. There will be 10 different calls each tailored to a specific stakeholder group. Tuesday, Oct 3rd is the scheduled date for hunters and anglers, September 19 for small businesses. I will try and determine which is the proper call to attend. See - <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-08-28/pdf/2017-18214.pdf>.
7. August 28 – NMFS issued a notice of closure of the commercial fishery for Pacific Bluefin Tuna due to achieving the quota for this year. If you had any Pacific Bluefin tuna onboard at the closure date, you have to deliver them on or before September 11, 2017. See - <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-08-28/pdf/2017-18157.pdf>.

Other items of interest:

1. Oceana was handed a defeat in a lawsuit challenging the NMFS Northeast region’s adoption of its Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology in 2015. In short, the Court found that the action complied with all applicable laws. If you are so inclined – you can read the judge’s opinion here - https://ecf.dcd.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/show_public_doc?2015cv1220-37
2. I had a chance to have a lengthy meeting with Dr. Gerard Dinardo and Kristen Koch (both of the SWFSC) about the tagging program. In short, because public funds are used, the raw data is subject to FOIA – but without a “key” to translate the raw data, it would all be worthless to the reader. Also – from the SC13 meeting notes, “the ISC will form an Ad-Hoc Working Group to explore development of an international

HMS tagging program with an initial focus on Pacific bluefin tuna and North Pacific albacore tuna under the auspices of ISC”. See - p6 -
<https://www.wcpfc.int/system/files/NC13%20Summary%20Report%20adopted%20-%20Final%20%28Update%29.pdf>

3. Chinese fishermen jailed for illegal take of fish and sharks in the Galapagos. See - <http://www.news.com.au/technology/science/animals/chinese-fishermen-jailed-for-massive-illegal-fish-and-shark-haul-in-the-galapagos-islands/news-story/6498a0d0fa7d62b808f1383622c87aa9>
4. A study came out which refutes claims (which we have all seen) that highly migratory species in the Pacific are tainted by Fukushima radioactivity. See - <https://phys.org/news/2017-08-negates-radioactivity-migratory-seafood.html>
5. Then there is this article which discusses pollutants found in Yellowfin tuna - -but the Title of the article mentions Tuna. <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-tuna-toxins-20170807-story.html>. Natalie and I had a chance to speak with Amro Hamdoun, supervisor of the scientist mentioned in the article – we made our concerns well known and I think he appreciated those.
6. On August 31, I spoke with Ken Bates (Humboldt Bay fisherman) who may try to have Fish and Game Code Section 8183 amended so that access to the anchovy resource as bait for the albacore fleet will be less limited. I will keep everyone updated if this gets addressed next year.
7. On August 17, Natalie and I had a conversation with a representative from WWF about Rights Based Management (Catch Shares, etc). I will incorporate the results of that conversation after the season in a document addressing the potential for some sort of Limited Access Privilege Program for the fishery.
8. NIOSH report on top dangers in commercial fishing industry by region. See - <http://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/16109-niosh-regional-reports-highlight-top-dangers-in-commercial-fishing-industry>
9. Around August 19, a net pen in Washington State waters was destroyed and the inhabitants, Atlantic Salmon, escaped. See - <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/oops-after-accidental-release-of-atlantic-salmon-fisherman-being-told-catch-as-many-as-you-want/>. As a result, Gov Inslee issued a moratorium on any new or pending permits for fish farming in Washington while the State investigates why the net pen facility failed - <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/state-puts-hold-on-new-pens-for-farmed-atlantic-salmon-after-mass-escape-in-puget-sound/>
10. If you think your day is going bad – at least you aren’t this guy. <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDHSCG/bulletins/1af641c?reqfrom=share>
11. The fishermen on the East Coast who lost their suit re paying the costs of observers have filed an appeal to the US Supreme Court. Note – the appeal is not on the merits of the fishermen’s claims; but merely on the stature of limitations issue. See - <https://www.nationalfisherman.com/northeast/northeast-fishermen-appeal-supreme-court-monitoring-lawsuit/>.
12. NAFTA renegotiations to begin. See - <http://www.foxbusiness.com/politics/2017/08/13/nafta-renegotiation-talks-to-begin-what-need-to-know.html>
13. A legal challenge to the Seafood Import Monitoring Program (SIMP) was rejected on August 28 - <https://www.seafoodsource.com/news/supply-trade/industrys-challenge-to-seafood-import-monitoring-program-rejected> .

Upcoming items of interest

1. September 11 – 18 – Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting to be held in Boise, Idaho. Nothing on the Agenda specific to albacore!

ATTACHMENT A

Replica of
The Commission for the Conservation and Management of
Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean

Northern Committee
Thirteenth Regular Session

August 28 – September 1, 2017
Busan, Korea

Interim Harvest Strategy for North Pacific Albacore Fishery
Harvest Strategy 2017-XX

This Interim Harvest Strategy replaces the “precautionary management framework for north pacific albacore” adopted at the 11th regular session of the Commission, which is based on the recommendation of the Northern Committee at its 10th regular session.

1. Interim management objective

The management objective for the North Pacific albacore fishery is to maintain the biomass, with reasonable variability, around its current level in order to allow recent exploitation levels to continue and with a low risk of breaching the limit reference point.

2. Biological reference points

Based on ISC’s stock assessment advice and following the hierarchical approach adopted by the Commission, North Pacific albacore is to be treated as a Level 2 stock. The following is based on an average recruitment scenario:

- The limit reference point (LRP) for this stock is established at $20\%SSB_{current_{F=0}}$.

This LRP is consistent with the Annex II of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) and recent WCPFC decisions on LRPs for the three tropical tuna species and South Pacific albacore, where $20\%SSB_{current_{F=0}}$ was adopted. If this point is breached, management actions will be taken to return the stock to a predetermined level as outlined in the subsequent section on Decision Rules.

- The target reference point (TRP) for this stock will be determined following a comprehensive analysis under a management strategy evaluation (MSE) approach as outlined in section 4 on “Future Work”. Historical fishing activity, anticipated fishing activity, and the source of increased fishing mortality will also be considered when evaluating a suitable TRP. Socioeconomic factors, as per UNFSA Article 6.3.c., will be further considered. The existing conservation and management measure (CMM) for the stock (WCPFC 2005-03) establishes through limits on current effort an overall management regime for the stock.

3. Decision rules

NC recommends a management strategy for the stock that ensures that the risk of the biomass decreasing below the LRP is low.

LRP rule: In the event that, based on information from ISC, the spawning stock size decreases below the LRP at any time, NC will, at its next regular session or intersessionally if warranted, adopt a reasonable timeline, but no longer than 10 years, for rebuilding the spawning stock to at least the LRP and recommend a CMM that can be expected to

achieve such rebuilding within that timeline. NC will take into account historical fishing activity and the source of increased fishing mortality when developing management strategies to rebuild the stock, including in establishing effort reductions. NC will further consider socioeconomic factors, as per UNFSA Article 6.3.c., as well as which NC members, if any, contributed to exceeding the LRP.

4. Future work

This framework may be periodically reviewed and revised. To support such revisions, NC endorses the ongoing development and implementation of an MSE for the stock and fishery, which would yield new information that would enhance the robustness of this framework.