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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 February of 2018 and looks forward to certain events occurring in upcoming months.

Follow-up on January’s upcoming events:

1. March 8 – 15. Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting in Rohnert Park, Ca. At present, the entirety of HMS items focus on authorizing a Deep Set Buoy Gear fishery for swordfish. Albacore interest on the HMSAS may bring up the idea of a MSE webinar/workshop with NMFS and fishery participants.

Federal Register Items of Interest:

In past reports we have highlighted actions taken against Canadian importers and industry by the International Trade Administration of the Department of Commerce and The United States International Trade Commission. The intent was to show how there are some tensions between the two Nations on certain trade issues. We simply list the publication date in the Federal Register, the topic of the publication and provide a link if the reader wishes to learn more about the publication.

Date	Topic	Link
Feb 2	Request for NAFTA Panel Review of Softwood Lumber from Canada: Determinations	https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-02/pdf/2018-02135.pdf
Feb 6	Dept of Commerce & Intl Trade Administration issue preliminary results of Antidumping Duty Admin Review for n citric acid and certain citrate salts from Canada. Those results show no below normal value sales	https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-06/pdf/2018-02287.pdf
Feb 8	Request for NAFTA Panel Review of 100- to 150-Seat Large Civil Aircraft from Canada: Final Affirmative Countervailing Duty Determinations	https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-08/pdf/2018-02474.pdf
Feb 8	Request for NAFTA Panel Review of 100- to 150-Seat Large Civil Aircraft from Canada: Final Affirmative Determination of Sales at Less Than Fair Value	https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-08/pdf/2018-02475.pdf
Feb 20	International Trade Administration initiates a Less-Than-Fair-Market-Value investigation on Large Diameter Welded Pipe From Canada (and other nations)	https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-20/pdf/2018-03305.pdf
Feb 20	United States International Trade Commission finds an industry in the United States is “not materially injured or threatened with material injury, and the establishment of an industry in the United States is not materially retarded, by reason of imports of 100- to 150-seat large civil aircraft from Canada.	https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-20/pdf/2018-03317.pdf

1. February 6 – The Department of Commerce Issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking/Request for Comments on revisions to the Department of Commerce’s (Department) regulations under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Privacy Act. Amongst the changes, “Business Information” and being changed to read “Confidential commercial information”; but otherwise doesn’t appear to change the way FOIA requests are handled for those types of materials See - <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-06/pdf/2018-02039.pdf>.
2. February 7 – NMFS publishes the 2018 List of Fisheries, as required under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, which classifies every US based fishery into one of three categories based on that fishery’s interactions with marine mammals. The WA/OR/CA albacore surface hook and line fishery is once again Category III with no documented Marine mammal species and/or stocks incidentally killed or injured in the fishery. Many AAFA members participate in other fisheries and they can search out those fisheries in the link that follows: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-07/pdf/2018-02442.pdf>
3. February 8 – USCG request comments on potential establishment of Regulated Navigation Areas (RNAs) at harbor entrance bars to Crescent Harbor, Humboldt Bay, Noyo River, and Morro Bay. This would guard against hazards and keep mariners informed during hazardous weather conditions. See - <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-08/pdf/2018-02503.pdf>
4. February 14 – NMFS published its intent to submit to the Office of Management and Budget to extent the allowance for the collection of information obtained from the Pacific Hook and Line fishery (also known as the albacore troll and pole-and-line fishery) via logbooks. See <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-14/pdf/2018-02947.pdf>
5. February 27 – NMFS published regulations implementing Amendment 4 to the Highly Migratory Species Fisheries Management Plan. This Amendment was meant to be nothing more than a house-keeping type of Amendment which more accurately reflect timing of certain activities. See - <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-27/pdf/2018-03963.pdf>
6. February 27 – NMFS reopened the public comment period on a proposed rule published on December 4 regarding the amendment related to “the existing VMS Type-Approval regulations by removing the requirement for VMS vendors to periodically renew their EMTU/MTU type-approvals. This will reduce expense to fishermen and the vendors.” This was included in our December Report and was reopened because no public comments were submitted. See - <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-27/pdf/2018-03945.pdf>

Other items of interest:

1. *National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)*. The temporary extension of the exemption expired on January 19. As of Feb 1, there has been no action to extend this exemption; but there are numerous groups working on this in Washington DC. We have been told that this requirement will NOT be enforced, while efforts are underway to extend, or make permanent, this exemption.
2. *NOAA Fisheries Priorities and Annual Guidance for 2018*. Document showing the change in approach of NMFS with regard to implementing its strategic goals. See - https://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/IR2_NOAA-Priorities-2018_508_Mar2018BB.pdf

3. *Fishermen are harvesting more than half of the world's oceans.* A study was published which concluded that 55% of the world's oceans are subjected to fishing activity. This is based on AIS data from more than 70,000 vessels. A couple of questions which come to mind: (1) So what? We should be more concerned about the amount of fish taken, as opposed to where it is taken; and (2) Could the study's authors differentiate between AIS readings which reflect travelling v actual fishing activities. See - <http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2018/02/fishermen-are-harvesting-more-half-world-s-oceans>. Ray Hilborn (fisheries scientist from Univ of Washington) issued a response to the study which stated, in part, the Study "does not provide any new insight on the impact of fishing on the oceans." See - <https://www.savingseafood.org/science/dr-ray-hilborn-new-study-fishing-effort-not-provide-new-insight-fishing-impacts-oceans/>
4. *Study showing fishermen rely on fine-scale ocean features.* This study focuses on effort, catch locations and ocean features for three west coast fisheries: Albacore, Salmon and Pink Shrimp. What makes this study most concerning is that it used VMS data (as opposed to AIS data). Numerous questions have resulted from the use VMS data – for example, why was this data distributed since it is primarily an enforcement tool? See - <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmars.2018.00046/full>
5. *California Fish and Game Commission suspends license of sportfishing charter vessel.* The Commission sent a very strong message to fishermen who take in Marine Protected Areas by suspending the vessel's license for 5 years. See - <https://cdfgnews.wordpress.com/2018/02/07/commission-suspends-license-of-sportfishing-charter-boat-operator-for-poaching-in-southern-california-marine-protected-areas/>. This has resulted in legislation being proposed in the State Legislature which would increase penalties for such violations and would result in a revocation of permits in the event of a second conviction.

Upcoming items of interest

1. March 8 – 15. Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting in Rohnert Park, Ca. Highly Migratory Species have ½ of one day at this meeting with topics including: NMFS Rpt. (1 hr); EFPs – Initial Review/Final Approval (1 hr); Deep Set Buoy Gear Authorization, ROA/PPA (3 hr). I haven't been given any indication that Albacore will be a part of the Agenda, but I will keep an eye out.
2. March 28 – Workshop entitled, "Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) Workshop for the NOAA NMFS/OAR Project "From Physics to Fisheries: A Social-Ecological Management Strategy Evaluation for the California Current Large Marine Ecosystem". Albacore is just one of three fisheries being discussed – others include Sardine and Swordfish.
3. May 21-24, 2018 – Tuna Conference in Lake Arrowhead. The theme for this year is "Climate variability and ecosystem considerations in management of large pelagics". I plan to find out more about this during the upcoming PFMC meeting.