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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 July and looks forward to certain events occurring in upcoming months.

Follow-up on June’s upcoming events:

1. July 11 – 16 – ISC Plenary. Given the focus on Bluefin tuna, there was not much attention given to North Pacific Albacore. We replicate information contained in the ISC’s Report of the Plenary meeting. “The Albacore Working Group (WG) acknowledged that the original work plan [regarding Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE)] was overly ambitious and the MSE model runs would not be completed in time for the ISC Plenary in July 2018. Therefore, the WG decided to provide a progress report on the MSE work instead of a full MSE report. As part of the work plan after the ISC Plenary, the ALBWG agreed to hold a fourth MSE workshop with managers, stakeholders, NGO representatives, and scientists, mainly to (1) discuss preliminary MSE results in detail, (2) create a proposal for biological reference points and harvest control rules to present to the WCPFC-NC and IATTC based on those results, and (3) propose refinements to MSE.” The next MSE workshop is tentatively scheduled for March of 2019 and will take place in Japan. AAFA should seriously consider attending.

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
July 12	Dept of Commerce’s International Trade Administration revoked a Countervailing Duty Order which had been placed on certain Supercalendered Paper From Canada.	https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-07-12/pdf/2018-14921.pdf
July 12	Dept of Commerce’s International Trade Administration rescinded a Countervailing Duty Order which had been placed on certain (other) Supercalendered Paper From Canada.	https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-07-12/pdf/2018-14922.pdf

1. July 3 – Department of State announces a public meeting in the form of an information session regarding issues related to upcoming first United Nations Intergovernmental Conference on marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. See - <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-07-03/pdf/2018-14221.pdf>

2. July 25 –NOAA announces a series of public meetings (which they are calling listening sessions) to provide information and receive input regarding implementation of the 2018–2022 Strategic Plan. Focal topics will be implementation of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017, reducing the seafood trade deficit, supporting maritime commerce, fisheries, recreation and tourism. The meetings are regional and cover different topics in each region. For the West Coast there are two currently scheduled: Oct 4 in Seattle to discuss implementation of The Weather Act, including the development of a community-based weather model; and Nov 9 in San Diego to discuss opportunities to improve the efficiency of U.S. ports, promote domestic aquaculture production, and expand exploration of the nation’s Exclusive Economic Zone. <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-07-25/pdf/2018-15937.pdf>

Other items of interest:

1. July 9 – UnderCurrent News reported that tuna catches in the Eastern Pacific Ocean were down 8% for between January and June 3rd of this year when compared to 2017. This due, in large part, to drop in catch of Skipjack. See - <https://www.undercurrentnews.com/2018/07/09/tuna-catches-in-the-eastern-pacific-ocean-fall/>
2. July 11 – HR 200 - *The Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act* (aka reauthorization of the Magnuson- Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act) passed the US House of Representatives. It has some very pro-fishing provisions and is generally being well received by fishing interests. It is now in the Senate and it is unknown if it will be voted on before the midterm elections in November. A copy of the Bill was passed the House is available at <https://www.congress.gov/115/bills/hr200/BILLS-115hr200rfs.pdf>
3. July 25 public meeting regarding issues related to upcoming first United Nations Intergovernmental Conference on marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. The meeting was in Washington DC; but there was a call-in option. Its main purpose was to use information obtained from this session and any future meetings, to help The State Dept prepare for U.S. participation in international meetings and specifically U.S. participation in the Intergovernmental Conference (Sept 4 – 17 in NY). AAFA, WFOA and the American Tunaboat Association had participants attend/listen to the meeting. There were a great number of eNGOs in the meeting and on the call. The one thing we (fishery reps) tried to communicate is that fishery related decisions need to go through the Regional Fishery Management Organizations (IATTC and WCPFC).
4. July 26 – The US. Court of International Trade issued a lengthy opinion banning the import of fish/fish products from Mexican commercial fisheries that use gillnets within the vaquita's range. The vaquita is a highly endangered marine mammal in the Gulf of California (Mexico). This is the first court case to interpret the import provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act. This could have profound impacts on the ability of other nations to import fish/fish products into the US and those nation’s regulations are not comparable to US regulations as it relates to minimizing interactions with marine mammals. The opinion is lengthy; and can be found at https://www.cit.uscourts.gov/SlipOpinions/Slip_op18/18-92.pdf
5. Ongoing throughout July – the recertification of the South Pacific Albacore fishery under MSC is moving forward.

Upcoming items of interest

1. August 16 – 30 – IATTC & AIDCP Annual Meetings in San Diego, Ca. There doesn’t appear to be much time dedicated to North Pacific Albacore. In looking at the IATTC Staff Report, the only recommendation is that the current Resolutions (which are based on effort) are to be continued. See - https://www.iattc.org/Meetings/Meetings2018/IATTC-93/PDFs/Docs/English/IATTC-93-04%20EN_Conservation-recommendations-by-the-Commission-staff.pdf (Pages 6 – 7).

2. September 5 – 12 – Pacific Fishery Management Council Meeting in Seattle, Wa. Highly Migratory Species are on the Agenda; but no albacore specific items are on the Agenda. At this time, we are unaware of any albacore related items being on the Agenda; but there may be follow-up conversations on the License Requirement and/or other matters which may arise before the PFMC meeting.
3. Sept 4 – 17 – UN Intergovernmental Conference session in ABNJ/BBNJ. Additional information on this is available at <https://www.un.org/bbnj/>.