



Intertek Fisheries Certification (IFC)

**AAFA and WFOA North Pacific Albacore tuna
Pole & Line and Troll/Jig Fishery**

2nd Annual Surveillance Report

Prepared for the American Albacore tuna Fishing Association (AAFA) and
the Western Fishboat Owners Association (WFOA)

Certificate code: MML-F-140

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Contents

General Information	1
Unit of assessment.....	1
Background.....	3
Changes since last published report.....	3
Changes to management systems.....	3
Changes to relevant regulations	3
Changes to personnel involved in science, management or industry	3
Changes to scientific base of information - including stock assessments	3
Any developments or changes within the fishery which impact traceability or the ability to segregate between fish from the Unit of Certification (UoC) and fish from outside the UoC (non-certified fish).....	4
TAC data	4
Assessment Process	6
Audit process	6
Scope and history of the assessments	6
Surveillance activities	7
Versions used.....	8
Results.....	8
Conclusion	15
Summary of findings	15
References.....	16
Appendix 1. Re-scoring evaluation tables	17
Appendix 2. Stakeholder submissions.....	24
Appendix 3. Revised surveillance program	25

General Information

Name of Fishery	AAFA and WFOA North Pacific Albacore tuna pole & line and troll/jig fishery		
Date certified	21 st December 2012	Date of expiry	20 th December 2017
Date of surveillance audit	Off site, May 28 th 2015		

Unit of assessment

Species	Albacore tuna (<i>Thunnus alalunga</i>)
Stock Name	North Pacific
Geographical Area	North Pacific
Fishing Method/s	Pole & line and troll/jig
Management System/s	Internationally through the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), with USA national measures as applied through the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC).
Client Group	AAFA and WFOA members and affiliated fishers.
Other Eligible Fishers	Other US pole & line and troll/jig fishers catching North Pacific albacore tuna.

Surveillance level and type	Level	5	Type	Off-site
	Any changes in surveillance activity since PCDR / previous surveillance report		This fishery has been moved to a Certification Requirement V2.0 surveillance audit process.	
Surveillance number (tick one)	1st Surveillance		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	2nd Surveillance		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	3rd Surveillance		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	4th Surveillance		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other (expedited etc)		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Surveillance program changed?			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Surveillance team	Lead assessor:		Dr. Rob Blyth-Skyrme	
	Assessor(s):		Mr. Kevin McLoughlin	
CAB name	Intertek Fisheries Certification Ltd. (IFC)			
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Background

Changes since last published report

Changes to management systems

No changes.

Changes to relevant regulations

No changes.

Changes to personnel involved in science, management or industry

Mark Helvey, Director of the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Branch of NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region, retired at the end of 2014; he was a member of the US Delegation to the WCPFC and IATTC. The Director's post and associated roles with the US Delegation have now been taken up by Barry Thorn and Heidi Taylor. It is not anticipated that there will be any significant change of focus for the HMS Branch as a result of this change of personnel.

Changes to scientific base of information - including stock assessments

An updated stock assessment for North Pacific albacore tuna was produced in 2014 by the ISC Albacore tuna Working Group (ALBWG). The 2014 assessment was carried out using fishery data through 2012 using the Stock Synthesis (SS) modelling platform (ALBWG 2014). The assessment assumes a single well-mixed stock of albacore tuna in the North Pacific Ocean. Estimates of total stock biomass (age-1 and older) show a long term decline from the early 1970s to 1990 followed by a recovery through the 1990s and subsequent fluctuations without trend in the 2000s. Recruitment has fluctuated around average historical levels since the 1990s. The ALBWG believes that North Pacific albacore tuna recruitment, as in other tuna species, is influenced by changes in environmental conditions and the stock-recruitment relationship (ALBWG 2014).

Formal reference points have not been established, although the ALBWG provides Kobe plots depicting stock status in relation to MSY-based and MSY proxy reference points (Figure 1) from the base case model. The Kobe plot suggests that the albacore tuna stock remains in a healthy state. Based on an evaluation of the estimated current F ($F_{2010-2012}$) against various F -based reference points, the North Pacific albacore tuna stock is **not currently experiencing overfishing** (Table 1 of ALBWG 2014) since the ratios for most candidate reference points, except F_{MED} and $F_{50\%}$, are below 1.0. In addition, there is little evidence from the 2014 assessment that fishing has reduced spawning stock biomass (SSB) below reasonable candidate biomass-based reference points the ALBWG concludes that the stock is likely **not in an overfished condition** at present. The ALBWG also concluded that current productivity is sufficient to sustain recent exploitation levels, assuming average historical recruitment continues (ALBWG 2014).

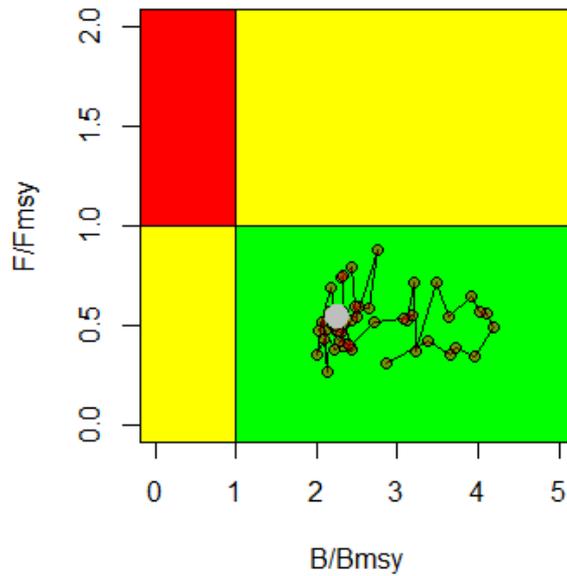


Figure 1. Kobe plot showing North Pacific albacore tuna (*Thunnus alalunga*) stock status based on $F_{2010-12}$ relative to MSY-based reference points. Grey dot is the terminal year 2012 of the assessment. Source: ALBWG 2014.

Any developments or changes within the fishery which impact traceability or the ability to segregate between fish from the Unit of Certification (UoC) and fish from outside the UoC (non-certified fish)

No changes.

TAC data

Table 1. Catch Data

Total North Pacific albacore tuna catch (NB – no TAC is applied)	Year	2013	Amount	84,864 tonnes (estimated – ISC 2014)
Total UoA catch of North Pacific albacore tuna (NB – no TAC)	Year	2013	Amount	12,327 tonnes (estimated – ISC 2014)
Total UoC catch of North Pacific albacore tuna (NB – no TAC)	Year	2014	Amount	10,500 tonnes (estimated by client)
Total green weight catch by UoC	Year (most recent)	2014	Amount	10,500 tonnes (estimated by client)
	Year (second most recent)	2013	Amount	9,875 tonnes (data from client)

Table 2. Summary of assessment conditions

Condition number	Performance indicator (PI)	Status	PI original score	PI revised score
1	1.1.2	On target*	70	Not revised
2	1.2.2	On target*	60	Not revised

* It is noted that the fishery is considered to be on target with respect to the milestones as laid out in the public certification report (Blyth-Skyrme *et al.*, 2012).

It is also noted that the WCPFC has agreed to the development of a harvest strategy for this species (with the first step being the agreement of a timeframe for its development by December 2015) through adopting CMM 2014-06 (WCPFC 2015), and that the Northern Committee of the WCPFC agreed to undertake a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) to investigate appropriate reference points (RPs) and harvest control rules (HCRs) for stocks including North Pacific albacore (WCPFC 2014b).

These are very positive developments, and represent critical steps towards the introduction of RPs and HCRs. Nevertheless, while CMM 2014-06 indicated that the WCPFC may decide to implement interim harvest control rules prior to a full MSE being completed, the full MSE process is likely to take several years, such that it is unlikely that formal RPs and HCRs could be adopted before the end of the AAFA and WFOA fishery's existing certification period in December 2017.

More details are provided in the results section, below.

Assessment Process

Audit process

- December 23rd 2014 – Stakeholders informed of the intention to hold the second annual surveillance audit in March 2015.
- December 23rd 2014 – Stakeholders informed that the fishery will follow the new surveillance process as set out in the MSC Certification Requirements v. 2.0.
- April 28th 2015 - Stakeholders informed of the revised audit schedule and audit team composition.
- May 28th 2015 - Off-site audit meeting held with clients via teleconference.

Scope and history of the assessments

Details of the Unit/s of Assessment can be found in the General Information section of this report.

The AAFA and WFOA North Pacific albacore tuna pole & line and troll/jig fishery was first certified as an AAFA-only fishery only on September 6th 2007. The AAFA fishery was then recertified on December 21st 2012, while it was announced that the WFOA had entered in to a certificate-sharing agreement with AAFA on March 3rd 2014. WFOA was previously a co-client with the Canadian Highly Migratory Species Foundation in an MSC-certified North Pacific albacore tuna fishery (see Public Certification Report, here: <http://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/fisheries-in-the-program/certified/pacific/CHMSF-British-Columbia-North-Pacific-Albacore-tuna-Tuna/assessment-downloads-1/22.03.2010-chmsf-pcr.pdf>).

AAFA and WFOA representatives were present and actively involved in the first annual surveillance audit for the current certificate, which took place at the end of March 2014.

Albacore tuna (*Thunnus alalunga*) is a highly migratory species (HMS), and the North Pacific stock ranges across much of the North Pacific Ocean between about 10^o N and 50^o N. Albacore tuna therefore occur in waters under the jurisdiction of both the IATTC and the WCPFC.

The AAFA and WFOA North Pacific albacore tuna fishery is undertaken primarily off the US West Coast, between California and Washington, both within the US EEZ and well offshore in international waters. Through the US-Canada Treaty, US vessels may also be permitted to fish within the Canadian EEZ off British Columbia. When operating in the United States Exclusive Economic Zone (US EEZ) or under authorisation in the Canadian EEZ, as well as when operating in international waters when catches are landed in US ports, US highly migratory species (HMS) fisheries are managed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC).

The AAFA and WFOA fishery employs two fishing methods – trolling and pole & line fishing. Trolling for albacore tuna consists of towing artificial lures with barbless hooks behind a fishing vessel at a speed of about 6 knots. Individual trolling lines are generally 3 to 20 fathoms long and are often constructed from ¼-inch braided nylon line, with a 2 fathom leader made from 200 to 260 pound test nylon monofilament, to which is attached an artificial feathered jig with a barbless double hook. Fish are caught one at a time on the trolling line and, upon striking the jig, are retrieved immediately with a hydraulic gurdy or line-puller. Usually about 14 to 20 lines may be trolled by an albacore tuna fishing vessel,

however, typically not all lines are pulled during heavy fishing activity. Trolling vessels will customarily operate with a captain and one or sometimes two crew.

In pole & line fishing, fishers use a stout pole, formerly constructed of bamboo and now made of fibreglass or a high-technology composite, with a short line that has a single barbless hook with an artificial lure or, rarely, a livebait. Schools of albacore tuna are usually located by trolling and the vessel is stopped near the school of albacore tuna, which is kept close to the vessel by throwing small amounts of live fish chum, preferably northern anchovy. Each pole & line set-up is used by an individual fisher to catch one fish at a time that is lifted aboard the vessel. Pole & line vessels usually carry about three to six pole & line fishers and a captain, who usually also 'throws' chum.

Pole & line and troll gears are inherently highly selective, with no seabed contact and very low levels of bycatch. Fish are caught one-at-a-time, and the gears are always attached to and worked in very close proximity to the vessel. The northern anchovy that is used as bait or chum is considered to be a retained species according to MSC requirements.

The US surface trolling and pole & line fisheries account for approximately 17% of the North Pacific albacore tuna landed by all nations. The bulk of the catch is canned and marketed as 'white meat' tuna. A relatively small amount of the catch is marketed in the fresh and fresh-frozen trade. The total quantities of albacore tuna landed by the US pole and troll fishery has varied over time, depending mainly on availability of the stock to fishermen (because of factors such as the fuel price, the distance required to travel to find the fish, and weather) and their vulnerability to capture, as well as on the market for albacore tuna.

More details on the fishery are available in the following locations:

- The Public Certification Report: http://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/fisheries-in-the-program/certified/pacific/aafa-pacific-albacore-tuna-tuna-north/reassessment-downloads-1/20121221_PCR_TUN3.pdf.
- The 1st Annual Surveillance Report: http://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/fisheries-in-the-program/certified/pacific/aafa-pacific-albacore-tuna-tuna-north/reassessment-downloads-1/20140429_SR_TUN3.pdf.
- The AAFA website: <http://www.americanalbacore-tuna.com/>.
- The WFOA website: <http://pacificalbacore-tuna.com/wfoa/>.
- The American Fishermen's Research Foundation: <http://pacificalbacore-tuna.com/afrf/>

IFC confirms that the AAFA and WFOA North Pacific albacore tuna fishery is in scope.

Surveillance activities

As noted in the 'Audit process' section, above, stakeholders were informed of the Year 2 surveillance audit through the notification placed on the MSC website. Known stakeholders were also contacted directly and informed of the off-site audit immediately following the publication of the surveillance audit notification on the MSC website in April 2015.

In addition to requesting an update on the fishery's activities and information on any changes to the management or regulatory regime from the client, the audit team was specifically interested in the clients' progress towards meeting the two conditions of certification placed on the fishery.

Versions used

MSC Sustainable Fishery Standard	v1.1
MSC Certification Requirements	V2.0
MSC Guidance to the Certification Requirements	V2.0

Results

Table 3: Condition 1

Performance Indicator(s) & Score(s)	Insert relevant PI number(s)	Insert relevant scoring issue/ scoring guidepost text	Score
	1.1.2	<p>SG 80:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reference points are appropriate for the stock and can be estimated (met). The limit reference point is set above the level at which there is an appreciable risk of impairing reproductive capacity (NOT met). The target reference point is such that the stock is maintained at a level consistent with B_{MSY} or some measure or surrogate with similar intent or outcome (NOT met). Key low trophic level species, the target reference point takes into account the ecological role of the stock (not relevant). 	70
Condition	<p>By the end of the fourth year of certification, the SG 80 scoring requirements above must be met in full. This will be achieved if the limit reference point used by the IATTC and WCPFC is set above the level at which there is an appreciable risk of impairing reproductive capacity, and if the target reference point used by the IATTC and WCPFC is such that the stock is maintained at a level consistent with B_{MSY} or some measure or surrogate with similar intent or outcome</p>		
Milestones (NB – original AAFA milestones adapted to include WFOA after certificate share)	<p>Year 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In conjunction with Condition 2, evidence should be provided that AAFA and WFOA are working actively through the PFMC and US RFMO Delegations to promote the adoption by the relevant RFMOS of appropriate target and limit reference points (or measures/surrogates with similar intent) for North Pacific albacore tuna. By the first annual surveillance audit, AAFA and WFOA will author a paper that states their recommendations for reference points and harvest control rules that they will work with the US Government to get adopted at the IATTC and WCPFC. <p>Year 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In conjunction with Condition 2, evidence should be provided of AAFA and 		

	<p>WFOA’s continued promotion through the PFMC and US RFMO Delegations of the adoption by the relevant RFMOs of appropriate target and limit reference points (or measures/surrogates with similar intent) for North Pacific albacore tuna, as described in the paper produced during Year 1.</p> <p>Year 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of consideration by the relevant RFMOs of appropriate target and limit reference points (or measures/surrogates with similar intent) for North Pacific albacore tuna should be provided. <p>Year 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence should be provided that appropriately precautionary, scientifically based, formal target and limit reference points (or measures/surrogates with similar intent) for North Pacific albacore tuna, that meet the MSC standard at SG80, are adopted by the IATTC and WCPFC.
<p>Client action plan (NB – original AAFA action plan adapted to include WFOA after certificate share)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the first year following grant of recertification, and thereafter as necessary, AAFA and WFOA will work actively through the PFMC and the US delegations to the IATTC and WCPFC to promote the development and determination of appropriate target and limit reference points (or measures or surrogates with similar intent or outcome) for the North Pacific albacore tuna stock. These efforts will be aligned with AAFA and WFOA’s support for appropriate measures to increase compliance with conservation and management measures of the appropriate RFMOs. AAFA and WFOA will also author a paper that states AAFA and WFOA’s recommendations for reference points and harvest control rules that they will work with the US Government to get adopted at the IATTC and WCPFC. • In the second year following grant of recertification, and thereafter as necessary, AAFA and WFOA will work actively through the PFMC and the US delegations to the IATTC and WCPFC to promote the adoption of appropriate target and limit reference points (or measures or surrogates with similar intent or outcome) for the North Pacific albacore tuna stock. • In the third year following grant of recertification, and thereafter as necessary, AAFA and WFOA will work actively toward having the IATTC and WCPFC (or their designated bodies) expressly consider appropriate target and limit reference points (or measures or surrogates with similar intent or outcome) for the North Pacific albacore tuna stock. Evidence of the work will be provided in the form of AAFA and WFOA letters to the relevant US regional managers and RFMO Delegations, and then evidence of the outcome of the RFMOs considering appropriate target and limit reference points (or measures or surrogates with similar intent or outcome) will be provided in the form of RFMO meeting papers and minutes. • In the fourth year following grant of recertification, and thereafter as necessary, AAFA and WFOA will work actively toward having the IATTC and WCPFC adopt appropriate target and limit reference points (or measures or surrogates with similar intent or outcome) for the North Pacific albacore tuna stock. Evidence of the work will be provided in the form of AAFA and WFOA letters to the relevant US regional managers and RFMO Delegations, and then evidence of the outcome of the RFMOs adopting appropriate target and limit reference points (or measures or surrogates with similar intent or outcome) will be provided in the form of RFMO meeting papers and minutes. • In accordance with these actions, AAFA and WFOA will report on efforts to

	<p>explore appropriate opportunities with other tuna fisheries, associations, or organizations with complimentary objectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition, AAFA and WFOA agree to fulfil Conditions 1 and 2 before proceeding beyond the site visit stage for the next recertification process.
<p>Progress on Condition [Year 1]</p>	<p>The audit team is confident that the efforts made by AAFA and WFOA towards supporting the introduction of reference points (and harvest control rules - Condition 2) provide an important boost to the management process. The recent development of a US published position on appropriate reference points and harvest control rules for the North Pacific albacore tuna is then a dramatic and welcome step forward for the AAFA and WFOA fishery and its certification.</p> <p>The audit team is conscious that the international context of North Pacific albacore tuna management presents particular challenges to closing out this condition within the required timescale. However, we are content that AAFA and WFOA have met the first annual milestone, and our finding is therefore that the fishery is currently on target to meet this condition. The score of this PI remains at 70.</p>
<p>Progress on Condition [Year 2]</p>	<p>The milestone from Year 1 was considered to be met, on the basis that, in conjunction with the US fishing industry, the US Government had published a position on appropriate reference points and harvest control rules for North Pacific albacore tuna. This course of action accelerated and improved upon the approach agreed originally through the Client Action Plan.</p> <p>The milestone for this Year 2 audit was then: <i>In conjunction with Condition 2, evidence should be provided of AAFA and WFOA's continued promotion through the PFMC and US RFMO Delegations of the adoption by the relevant RFMOs of appropriate target and limit reference points (or measures/surrogates with similar intent) for North Pacific albacore tuna, as described in the paper produced during Year 1.</i></p> <p>The Year 2 milestone was considered to be specific to the promotion of the US position to the relevant RFMOs. Evidence was provided to the audit team of letters submitted to the WCPFC Director (June 24, 2014) and IATTC Director (July 10, 2014) expressing a commitment to the introduction of scientifically-based reference points and harvest control rules. AAFA and the WFOA have also been represented at various WCPFC and IATTC meetings in the last 12 months, and it is accepted that the introduction of reference points and harvest control rules has been advocated appropriately.</p> <p>A complication for meeting both Condition 1 and Condition 2 within the established timeline is, however, now apparent. At the IATTC meeting in Lima, Peru, in July 2014, the US submitted a proposal to conduct a management strategy evaluation (MSE) of candidate TRPs, LRPs and the decision framework for North Pacific albacore tuna (IATTC 2014a). The IATTC did not adopt the proposal, but agreed to append the proposal to the minutes as guidelines for the IATTC scientific staff, noting that priority should be given to tropical tunas, such as bigeye tuna, before North Pacific albacore tuna. Subsequently, interim target and limit reference points for tropical tunas were adopted (IATTC 2014b).</p> <p>In September 2014, the Northern Committee of the WCPFC then adopted a proposal to develop a precautionary management framework for North Pacific</p>

	<p>albacore tuna that includes biological reference points and harvest control rules (WCPFC 2014b). The adopted proposal includes that an MSE of candidate TRPs, LRPs and the decision framework will be conducted. Subsequently, in December 2014, the WCPFC then adopted a proposal to agree a workplan and indicative timeframe to adopt or refine harvest strategies for species including North Pacific albacore tuna by no later than the 12th meeting of the WCPFC in December 2015 (WCPFC 2014a).</p> <p>The complication for the certification of the AAFA and WFOA North Pacific albacore tuna fishery is that, even if the MSE is conducted quickly, adoption of appropriate RPs and HCRs could not occur before the end of the fishery's existing certification period in December 2017, because the Canadian proposal adopted by the WCPFC notes that the framework will not be reviewed until after the 2017 stock assessment of North Pacific albacore tuna. This would suggest that the RPs and HCRs may not be adopted until as late as 2019, even if the work progresses smoothly.</p>
<p>Status of condition</p>	<p>Progress against the milestones specified in the Public Certification Report (PCR) for the AAFA and WFOA North Pacific is 'on target'.</p> <p>The WCPFC commitment to developing a harvest strategy for North Pacific albacore tuna is an important step towards meeting this condition, and the progress taken at the IATTC towards management of tuna in general is also welcome. However, given the WCPFC Northern Committee timescale for conducting an MSE of the North Pacific albacore tuna management options, it is now apparent that there is little likelihood that this condition can be closed within the timescale originally specified in 2012 (i.e., by year 4 audit, scheduled for late 2016/early 2017), or even by the end of the fishery's existing certification period in December 2017.</p> <p>IFC will review the situation at the next annual audit of the fishery. In recognition of the work being undertaken to introduce RPs and HCRs by the RFMOs, and if the MSE process has been initiated, it is anticipated that IFC will seek to extend the period of time over which Conditions 1 and 2 may be closed.</p>

Table 4: Condition 2

	<p>Insert relevant PI number(s)</p>	<p>Insert relevant scoring issue/ scoring guidepost text</p>	<p>Score</p>
<p>Performance Indicator(s) & Score(s)</p>	<p>1.2.2</p>	<p>SG 80:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well defined harvest control rules are in place that are consistent with the harvest strategy and ensure that the exploitation rate is reduced as limit reference points are approached (NOT met). The selection of the harvest control rules takes into account the main uncertainties (NOT met). Available evidence indicates that the tools in use are appropriate and effective in achieving 	<p>60</p>

	<p>the exploitation levels required under the harvest control rules (NOT met).</p>
<p>Condition</p>	<p>By the end of the fourth year of certification, the SG 80 scoring requirements above must be met in full. This will be achieved if well defined harvest control rules are in place at the IATTC and WCPFC that are consistent with the harvest strategy and ensure that the exploitation rate is reduced as limit reference points are approached, the selection of the harvest control rule takes into account the main uncertainties, and available evidence indicates that the tools in use are appropriate and effective in achieving the exploitation levels required under the harvest control rules</p>
<p>Milestones (NB – original AAFA milestones adapted to include WFOA after certificate share)</p>	<p>Year 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In conjunction with Condition 1, evidence should be provided that AAFA and WFOA are working actively through the PFMC and US RFMO Delegations to promote the adoption by the relevant RFMOs of an appropriate harvest control rule for North Pacific albacore tuna. By the first annual surveillance audit, AAFA and WFOA will author a paper that states their recommendations for reference points and harvest control rules that they will work with the USG to get adopted at the IATTC and WCPFC. <p>Year 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In conjunction with Condition 1, evidence should be provided of AAFA and WFOA's continued promotion through the PFMC and US RFMO Delegations of the adoption by the relevant RFMOs of an appropriate harvest control rule for North Pacific albacore tuna, as described in the paper produced during year 1. <p>Year 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of consideration by the relevant RFMOs of an appropriate harvest control rule for North Pacific albacore tuna should be provided. <p>Year 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence should be provided that an appropriate harvest control rule for North Pacific albacore tuna is adopted by the IATTC and WCPFC, the agreed formal binding harvest control rule, related to the adoption of formal and appropriately precautionary biological reference points by the IATTC and WCPFC, has been implemented, and there is a clear basis for considering that it will be successful in achieving the desired outcome and that it has taken into account the main uncertainties.
<p>Client action plan (NB – original AAFA action plan adapted to include WFOA after certificate share)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the first year following grant of recertification, and thereafter as necessary, AAFA and WFOA will work actively through the PFMC and the US delegations to the IATTC and WCPFC to promote the development and determination of an appropriate harvest control rule that applies uniformly and equitably to all fishery mortality of North Pacific albacore tuna stock. AAFA and WFOA will also author a paper that states their recommendations for reference points and harvest control rules that they will work with the US Government to get adopted at the IATTC and WCPFC. • In the second year following grant of recertification, and thereafter as necessary, AAFA and WFOA will work actively through the PFMC and the US delegations to the IATTC and WCPFC to promote the consideration toward

	<p>adoption of such an appropriate harvest control rule for North Pacific albacore tuna stock.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the third year following grant of recertification, and thereafter as necessary, AAFA and WFOA will work actively toward having the IATTC and WCPFC (or their designated bodies) expressly consider such an appropriate harvest control rule for North Pacific albacore tuna stock. Evidence of the work will be provided in the form of AAFA and WFOA letters to the relevant US regional managers and RFMO Delegations, and then evidence of the outcome of the RFMOs considering an appropriate harvest control rule will be provided in the form of RFMO meeting papers and minutes. • In the fourth year following grant of recertification, and thereafter as necessary, AAFA and WFOA will work actively toward having the IATTC and WCPFC adopt such an appropriate harvest control rule for North Pacific albacore tuna stock. Evidence of the work will be provided in the form of AAFA and WFOA letters to the relevant US regional managers and RFMO Delegations, and then evidence of the outcome of the RFMOs adopting an appropriate harvest control rule will be provided in the form of RFMO meeting papers and minutes. • In accordance with these actions, AAFA and WFOA will report on efforts to explore appropriate opportunities with other tuna fisheries, associations, or organizations with complimentary objectives. • In addition, AAFA and WFOA agree to fulfil Conditions 1 and 2 before proceeding beyond the site visit stage for the next recertification process.
<p>Progress on Condition [Year 1]</p>	<p>The audit team is confident that the efforts made by AAFA and WFOA towards supporting the introduction of harvest control rules (and reference points - Condition1) provide an important boost to the management process. The recent development of a US published position on appropriate reference points and harvest control rules for the North Pacific albacore tuna is then a dramatic and welcome step forward for the AAFA and WFOA fishery and its certification.</p> <p>The audit team is conscious that the international context of North Pacific albacore tuna management presents particular challenges to closing out this condition within the required timescale. However, we are content that AAFA and WFOA have met the first annual milestone, and our finding is therefore that the fishery is currently on target to meet this condition. The score of this PI remains at 60.</p>
<p>Progress on Condition [Year 2]</p>	<p>Progress against this condition with respect to harvest control rules is identical to that for Condition 1 (see above) with respect to reference points.</p> <p>It is noted that, following a clarification provided by MSC on the interpretation of this PI under CR v1.3, this PI has been re-evaluated using requirements set out in MSC's new fisheries standard version 2.0 (1 October 2014). There has been no change to scoring or to the Condition following the re-evaluation. Further details can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.</p>
<p>Status of condition</p>	<p>Progress against the milestones specified in the Public Certification Report (PCR) for the AAFA and WFOA North Pacific is 'on target'.</p> <p>The WCPFC commitment to developing a harvest strategy for North Pacific albacore tuna is an important step towards meeting this condition, and the</p>

progress taken at the IATTC towards management of tuna in general is welcome. However, given the WCPFC Northern Committee timescale for conducting an MSE of the North Pacific albacore tuna management options, it is now apparent that there is little likelihood that this condition can be closed within the timescale originally specified in 2012 (i.e., by year 4 audit, scheduled for late 2016/early 2017), or even by the end of the fishery's existing certification period in December 2017.

IFC will review the situation at the next annual audit of the fishery. In recognition of the work being undertaken to introduce RPs and HCRs by the RFMOs, and if the MSE process has been initiated, it is anticipated that IFC will seek to extend the period of time over which Conditions 1 and 2 may be closed.

Conclusion

Summary of findings

IFC confirms that the AAFA and WFOA North Pacific albacore tuna pole & line and troll/jig fishery is certified, and continues to meet the MSC Standard for sustainable fishing.

- Based on an evaluation of the estimated current F ($F_{2010-2012}$) against various F-based reference points, the North Pacific albacore tuna stock is **not currently experiencing overfishing** and the stock is likely **not in an overfished condition** at present (ALBWG 2014).
- Conditions 1 and 2 are on target relative to milestones.
- The WCPFC has committed to agreeing a timeframe for the development of a harvest strategy for North Pacific albacore tuna. This will include a management strategy evaluation (MSE) of the candidate reference points and harvest control rules for North Pacific albacore (WCPFC 2014a, WCPFC 2014b).

This is a key step for the management of North Pacific albacore tuna, but the full MSE process is likely to take several years, such that it appears very unlikely that a formal harvest strategy could be adopted before the end of the AAFA and WFOA fishery's existing certification period in December 2017.

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Appendix 1. Re-scoring evaluation tables

The following update was provided by the MSC on November 24th 2014:

“Scoring of ‘available’ Harvest Control Rules (HCRs) in CRv1.3 fisheries – **Important Information**”

Following examination by ASI of a complaint raised by a Stakeholder, MSC is aware that there has been some variability in the interpretation and scoring of PI 1.2.2 (CR v1.3, v1.2, v1.1). A number of certified fisheries have been scored as meeting 1.2.2 scoring issue (c) using an interpretation that harvest control tools are available but not necessarily in use within the fishery, which was not in accordance with the requirements in CR v1.3. This incorrect interpretation has not been used by all CABs or assessment teams.

The issue of HCRs was debated between all stakeholders during the recent Fishery Standard Review (2013-2014), and resulted in MSC’s new fisheries standard version 2.0 (1 October 2014) providing clarification as well as additional explicit requirements for scoring PI 1.2.2. Version 2.0 maintains the previous general requirement whereby a 60 score can be achieved by the HCR being ‘generally understood and in place’ but also allows HCRs to be only ‘available’ in the specific situation that the stock has been above B_{MSY} for a recent period of time and is not expected to decline below B_{MSY} in the medium term (i.e. where $B > B_{MSY}$ and $F < F_{MSY}$; and in some other special cases). However, to be ‘available’ HCRs must be effectively used in some other fisheries under the control of the management body, or there must be an agreement in place to adopt an HCR before the stock declines to B_{MSY} .

MSC advises that to avoid promulgation of the incorrect interpretation of PI1.2.2 under v1.3 (or earlier versions) and also to avoid conflicting harmonization conclusions between fisheries using v1.3 and v2.0, any CABs that identify certified or in-assessment fisheries scored using v1.3 or earlier that they consider have used the early misinterpretation of PI1.2.2 may rescore them using the clarified requirements set out in PI1.2.2 version 2.0. Scoring justification should be made explicitly addressing paragraphs SA2.5.2-2.5.3 and SA2.5.5-2.5.7.1 and associated guidance from v2.0, as related to the scoring of the SG60 level in scoring issues (a) and (c). CABs should advise MSC for which fisheries they intend to do this.

In order to avoid disruption to fisheries and CAB activities, MSC advises CABs to undertake this activity at an early opportunity, including for instance at their next surveillance audit, but that an expedited audit may not be necessary. Harmonisation discussions should be held where appropriate between CABs in the case of overlapping fisheries.

These changes should only affect the SG60 scoring level. MSC does not expect that any changes to conditions or action plans should result from this action.

In order to avoid complications of harmonisation between different versions of the standard, MSC strongly advises any fishery for which the above solution is adopted to apply Version 2.0 in its entirety at the next reassessment. In particular, CABs should note that the v2.0 guidance recognizes that the timescales for closing out conditions may be relaxed in the case that stock abundance remains high (above B_{MSY} levels, again with the expectation that it will not decline rapidly, i.e. $F < F_{MSY}$) and HCRs are regarded as ‘available’ but not yet ‘well defined’ (see guidance in FCR section GSA2.5.2-2.5.5, page 397). CABs should note that extensions to existing PI1.2.2 condition timelines beyond a recertification date on the basis of this guidance shall only be accepted for fisheries undertaking reassessment against v2.0 in its entirety.

Fisheries completing their conditions at reassessment will no longer need to apply the 2.0 interpretation to PI 1.2.2 and may continue to undertake reassessment against v1.3, if applicable (i.e. if reassessment takes place before 1 October 2017).

To assist CABs in considering this request, MSC is able to provide listings of fisheries and the scoring rationales that have been provided by CABs, for PI 1.2.2 or other PIs as requested. Please let us know if you would like MSC to assist in this or any other way.”

The update above applies to the AAFA and WFOA North Pacific albacore tuna pole & line and troll/jig fishery, and so in the course of this surveillance audit PI 1.2.2 has been evaluated using CR v2.0. The following text is an excerpt of the MSC Certification Requirements v2.0, PI 1.2.2:

SA2.5 Harvest control rules and tools PI (PI 1.2.2) ❗

Table SA5: PI 1.2.2 Harvest control rules and tools PISGs

Component	PI	Scoring issues	SG60	SG80	SG100
Harvest strategy	<p>Harvest control rules and tools</p> <p>1.2.2</p> <p>There are well defined and effective harvest control rules (HCRs) in place.</p>	(a) HCRs design and application	Generally understood HCRs are in place or available that are expected to reduce the exploitation rate as the point of recruitment impairment (PRI) is approached.	Well defined HCRs are in place that ensure that the exploitation rate is reduced as the PRI is approached, are expected to keep the stock fluctuating around a target level consistent with (or above) MSY, or for key LTL species a level consistent with ecosystem needs.	The HCRs are expected to keep the stock fluctuating at or above a target level consistent with MSY, or another more appropriate level taking into account the ecological role of the stock, most of the time.
		(b) HCRs robustness to uncertainty ❗		The HCRs are likely to be robust to the main uncertainties.	The HCRs take account of a wide range of uncertainties including the ecological role of the stock, and there is evidence that the HCRs are robust to the main uncertainties.
		(c) HCRs evaluation ❗	There is some evidence that tools used or available to implement HCRs are appropriate and effective in controlling exploitation.	Available evidence indicates that the tools in use are appropriate and effective in achieving the exploitation levels required under the HCRs.	Evidence clearly shows that the tools in use are effective in achieving the exploitation levels required under the HCRs.

SA2.5.1 Teams should require additional precaution to be built into the HCR at SG100 so

the HCR keeps stocks well above limit reference points.

Scoring 'available' HCRs at SG60 🚩

- SA2.5.2 In scoring issue (a) at the SG60 level, teams shall accept 'available' HCRs (instead of HCRs that are 'in place') in cases where: 🚩
- Stock biomass has not previously been reduced below the MSY level or has been maintained at that level for a recent period of time that is at least longer than 2 generation times of the species, and is not predicted to be reduced below B_{MSY} within the next 5 years; or
 - In UoAs where B_{MSY} estimates are not available, the stock has been maintained to date by the measures in use at levels that have not declined significantly over time, nor shown any evidence of recruitment impairment.
- SA2.5.3 Teams shall recognise 'available' HCRs as 'expected to reduce the exploitation rate as the point of recruitment impairment is approached' only in cases where: 🚩
- HCRs are effectively used in some other UoAs, that are under the control of the same management body and of a similar size and scale as the UoA; or
 - An agreement or framework is in place that requires the management body to adopt HCRs before the stock declines below B_{MSY} .
- SA2.5.4 In scoring issue (a) at the SG100 level, where quantitative simulation testing is available, "most of the time" should be interpreted as the stock being maintained at or above MSY or some ecologically more relevant target point at least 70% of the time. 🟩
- SA2.5.5 In scoring issue (c) at the SG60 level, where HCRs are recognised as 'available', teams shall include in their rationale: 🚩
- Evidence that HCRs are being 'effectively' used in other named UoAs, also managed by the same management body, including the basis on which they are regarded as 'effective'; or
 - A description of the formal agreement or legal framework that the management body has defined, and the indicators and trigger levels that will require the development of HCRs.

Evaluating the effectiveness of HCRs 🟩

- SA2.5.6 In scoring issue (c) for "evidence" teams shall include consideration of the current levels of exploitation in the UoA, such as measured by the fishing mortality rate or harvest rate, where available. 🟩
- SA2.5.7 Where information is not available on the exploitation rate consistent with achieving a long term MSY, proxy indicators and reference points may be used to evaluate the effectiveness of HCRs in scoring issue (c). 🟩
- SA2.5.7.1 Where proxies are used to score scoring issue (c), the team shall justify their use as reasonable proxies of the exploitation rate.

Generally understood' HCRs at SG60 vs 'well-defined' HCRs at SG80

HCRs should be regarded as 'well-defined' in the sense required to achieve an 80 score when they exist in some written form that has been agreed by the management agency, ideally with stakeholders, and clearly state what actions will be taken at what specific trigger reference point levels.

HCRs should be regarded as only 'generally understood' as required to achieve a 60 score in cases where they can be shown to have been applied in some way in the past, but have not been explicitly defined or agreed.

GSA2.5.2 – 2.5.5 Scoring 'available' HCRs at SG60 ▲

In scoring issue (a), and the requirements given in SA2.5.2 to SA2.5.5, the expectation is that 'available' HCRs may meet the SG60 level in cases where stock biomass has not previously been reduced below the B_{MSY} level or has been above it for a sufficiently long recent time, and it is 'expected' that the management authority will introduce HCRs for this species in the future if needed.

Under clause 2.5.3.a, teams may provide a rationale that this could reasonably be 'expected' for the target species in cases where HCRs are currently being 'effectively' used by the same management agency on at least one other species of similar importance (i.e., of a similar average catch levels and value).

As an alternative, teams may provide a rationale under clause 2.5.3.b in cases where there is some sort of arrangement in place that clearly requires that management will put HCRs in place as and when the fishery reaches some pre-defined trigger level within the vicinity of B_{MSY} . Such arrangements would normally relate to lightly exploited fisheries that are still in the development stage, but should be explicit in requiring action at some defined point.

Although potentially driven by information and triggers, such arrangements are different to the actual HCRs as they relate to the development of the HCRs themselves while the HCRs define how management measures will be adjusted in response to changes in fishery status.

In all cases, there should be a real confidence backed up by 'evidence' (as reported against SI1.2.2c) that the management agency can and will act effectively and in a timely fashion when needed (such evidence being as described in SA2.5.5).

In cases where the stock has not yet been reduced and 'available' HCRs are scored as meeting the 60 level, the condition assigned to this PI may allow longer than the normal five year time period for delivery. While there will be advantages in designing and putting into place a 'well-defined' HCR during the certification period, it may also be acceptable to do this over a longer time period, for example if other conditions are being delivered first. This allowance is made on the basis that the stock remains abundant and the criteria given in SA2.5.2 are still met. As soon as these criteria are no longer met, the fishery will need to have at least 'generally understood' HCRs in place to score 60.

Stocks that change status and thereby fail to meet the SA2.5.2 criteria during the course of a certificate will need to put HCRs in place (in either a 'generally understood' sense or 'well defined'). Given the specific timeframes indicated in SA2.5.2, HCRs (either 'generally understood' or 'well defined') should be in place before a stock declines below B_{MSY} . Similar to the situation with the rebuilding PI (section GSA2.3) fisheries should be allowed one year to put HCRs in place, so that the fishery need not be immediately failed if the SG60 level is not met in this first year. If such fisheries fail to put in place either 'generally understood' or 'well defined' HCRs within one year, they should be suspended by the CAB as not meeting the SG60 level.

Scoring Issue (c) – Evaluating the effectiveness of HCRs (SA2.5.6 – SA2.5.7)



In the third scoring issue, teams must review the ability of the tools associated with the HCRs to achieve the exploitation levels. Such tools would include management measures like total allowable catches (TACs) and fishing limits, and arrangements for sharing TACs between participants in the fishery, including between states in shared stock fisheries. The examination here may consider the overall history of effectiveness of the tools used in the fishery (i.e., their ability to achieve the desired exploitation rates and biomass levels) as well as the current status.

Section SA2.5.6 requires that teams examine the current exploitation levels in the fishery, as part of the evidence that the HCRs are working. Evidence that current F is equal to or less than F_{MSY} should usually be taken as evidence that the HCR is effective. Current F levels greater than F_{MSY} may also sometimes be accepted in cases where stock biomass is currently higher than B_{MSY} or where stock assessment information is comprehensive, and it is appropriate to treat F_{MSY} as a target reference point (see Box GSA3). Teams should be confident in these cases that any such higher levels of F are not likely to lead to overcapacity in the fishery or to create a situation where B is likely to fall below a level at which it is regarded as 'fluctuating around B_{MSY} '. Lower levels of F should be expected when biomass is reduced, consistent with the scoring of the rebuilding PI. In any case, teams should justify how the current levels of fishing mortality are consistent with maintaining the stock fluctuating around a target level consistent with (or above) B_{MSY} .

Teams may also make allowance for the gradual adjustment of fishing mortality rates down to appropriate levels in cases where the pace of change is limited to avoid severe socio-economic impacts in a fishery. In these cases, projections of stock status should confirm that the expected future adjustments in F will still lead to fluctuations around MSY levels within a reasonable timescale.

Where proxy indicators and reference points are used in the fishery instead of explicit estimates of F and F_{MSY} (as allowed in SA2.5.7), higher scores should be assigned where greater confidence is provided by the proxy information, similar to the scoring of PI 1.1.1. Where higher scores are justified by the use of two or more proxy indicators, they should be independent of each other and also reasonably be expected to be proxies of the quantity of interest (such as mean fish size in the case of exploitation rates). The team should present a rationale for how the proxies conform to these principles.

As with the case of using proxies for scoring stock biomass in PI 1.1.1, it may sometimes be argued that one good proxy is better than two or more weak proxies.

As a result of the MSC update from 24th November 2014, PI 1.2.2 of the AAFA and WFOA North Pacific albacore tuna fishery was reassessed by the Year 2 audit team. The new scoring text is provided below in Table 1, below. This is intended to be consistent with the assessment of other North Pacific albacore tuna fisheries, and specifically that of the Canadian Highly Migratory Species Foundation, which was recertified in June 2015 (see https://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/fisheries-in-the-program/certified/pacific/CHMSF-British-Columbia-North-Pacific-Albacore-tuna-Tuna/reassessment-downloads-folder/MSC_CHMSF_Albacore_tuna_tuna_fishery_PCR_June2015.pdf).

It is noted that the AAFA and WFOA North Pacific albacore tuna fishery scored 60 for PI 1.2.2 when it was reassessed against the MSC standard in 2012 (Blyth-Skyrme *et al.* 2012). The fishery also scored 60 in this new, revised assessment of PI 1.2.2 at the Year 2 audit. As such, there is no change to the score of PI 1.2.2 or to the score of Principle 1 for the AAFA and WFOA North Pacific albacore tuna troll fishery following the MSC update.

Table 1: Revised scoring table for PI 1.2.2 (from Cr v.2.0)

PI 1.2.2		There are well defined and effective harvest control rules in place		
Scoring Issue		SG 60	SG 80	SG 100
a	Guide post	<p>Generally understood HCRs are in place or available that are expected to reduce the exploitation rate as the point of recruitment impairment (PRI) is approached.</p>	<p>Well defined HCRs are in place that ensure that the exploitation rate is reduced as the PRI is approached, are expected to keep the stock fluctuating around a target level consistent with (or above) MSY, or for key LTL species a level consistent with ecosystem needs.</p>	<p>The HCRs are expected to keep the stock fluctuating at or above a target level consistent with MSY, or another more appropriate level taking into account the ecological role of the stock, most of the time.</p>
	Met?	Y	N	
	Justification	<p>There are generally understood harvest control rules through the WCPFC and IATTC that exploitation rates will be reduced when the stock approaches or falls below the level producing MSY.</p> <p>In response to the scientific advice resulting from North Pacific albacore tuna stock assessments conducted by the Albacore Tuna Working Group (ALBWG), the IATTC and the WCPFC both adopted management measures for this stock in 2005. IATTC's Resolution C-05-02 resolved that: "<i>The total level of fishing effort for North Pacific albacore tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean not to be increased beyond current levels.</i>" Amongst other measures, the resolution also requires all fishing entities within the IATTC Convention Area to take necessary measures to ensure that their vessels' fishing effort is not increased, and that they report all albacore tuna catches every six months. The WCPFC adopted CMM-05-03, requiring that: "<i>The total level of fishing effort for North Pacific albacore tuna in the Convention Area north of the equator shall not be increased beyond current levels.</i>" There is evidence from these actions and actions taken on other species that management measures will be applied if required. The SG60 guidelines are met.</p> <p>The US proposed a resolution at the IATTC meeting in July 2014 to further the process of applying the precautionary approach to North Pacific albacore tuna (IATTC 2014; Proposal IATTC-87 J-1). The proposed resolution was intended to direct the IATTC scientific staff, in coordination with the Albacore Tuna Working Group (ALBWG) to evaluate several candidate target and limit reference points and harvest control rules within the framework of a management strategy evaluation (MSE). No resolution was adopted on the basis of this proposal, however, during the 87th meeting of the IATTC, the Commission agreed that the text of the proposal would be appended to the Minutes as guidelines for the IATTC scientific staff and that priority for conducting the evaluation could be given to tropical tunas, such as bigeye tuna, before North Pacific albacore tuna.</p> <p>Although MSE work is underway for the development of harvest control rules, no well-defined harvest control rule has been formally established and adopted, either by the IATTC or the WCPFC, preventing the fishery from meeting SG80.</p>		

PI 1.2.2		There are well defined and effective harvest control rules in place		
b	Guide post		The HCRs are likely to be robust to the main uncertainties.	The HCRs take account of a wide range of uncertainties including the ecological role of the stock, and there is evidence that the HCRs are robust to the main uncertainties.
	Met?		N	N
	Justification	No well-defined harvest control rules have been formally adopted to adjust management measures when required. Therefore neither SG80 nor SG100 is met.		
c	Guide post	There is some evidence that tools used or available to implement HCRs are appropriate and effective in controlling exploitation.	Available evidence indicates that the tools in use are appropriate and effective in achieving the exploitation levels required under the HCRs.	Evidence clearly shows that the tools in use are effective in achieving the exploitation levels required under the HCRs.
	Met?	Y	N	N
	Justification	<p>The 2014 assessment indicates that the North Pacific albacore tuna stock has been maintained above B_{MSY} and is not predicted to be reduced below this level within the next 5 years. There is a high degree of certainty that the stock is above the point where recruitment would be impaired (ALBWG 2014). In addition, the Kobe plot in the 2014 assessment (ALBWG 2014) provides evidence that exploitation levels have maintained stock status at appropriate levels in terms of both B_{MSY} and F_{MSY}. The IATTC has also adopted management measures to successfully control fishing mortality in Eastern Pacific yellowfin and bigeye tuna fisheries. Overall, there is some evidence that the generally understood harvest control rules meet SG60 requirements.</p> <p>However since neither the IATTC nor the WCPFC has established formal harvest control rules for North Pacific albacore tuna, the fishery does not meet the SG80.</p>		
References		ALBWG 2014, IATTC 2014		
OVERALL PERFORMANCE INDICATOR SCORE:				60
CONDITION NUMBER (if relevant):				2 (same as previous)

Appendix 2. Stakeholder submissions

No stakeholder submissions were received.

Appendix 3. Revised surveillance program

Table 5.1 : Surveillance level rationale

Year	Surveillance activity	Number of auditors	Rationale
2	Off-site audit	2 auditors	There was not expected to have been sufficient progress towards the development and adoption of a target reference point and harvest control rules for North Pacific albacore tuna to require an on-site surveillance audit in Year 2. The fishery in general is also low risk with respect to its continuing performance against the MSC standard, and so an off-site audit with opportunity for stakeholders to participate by e-mail was considered appropriate.

Table 5.2: Timing of surveillance audit

Year	Anniversary date of certificate	Proposed date of surveillance audit	Rationale
2	December 21st	May 2015	The anniversary date of the certificate coincides with the Christmas period, when it is difficult to engage stakeholders. An audit in May was convenient within the busy scientific and management meeting schedule, and follows the annual general meetings of AAFA and WFOA, for which data and information are collated and can be made available to the audit team.

Table 5.3: Fishery Surveillance Program

Surveillance Level	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
5	On-site surveillance audit	Off-site surveillance audit	On-site surveillance audit	On-site surveillance audit & reassessment site visit.