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

1st Surveillance Report

Prepared for
American Albacore Fishing Association and the Western Fishboat Owners Association
Certificate No: MSC -F-31371 (MRAG-F-0052)

MRAG Americas, Inc.
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Conformity Assessment Body (CAB)	MRAG Americas, Inc.
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Fishery client	AAFA & WFOA
Assessment Type	1st Surveillance

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1 Executive summary

This report contains the findings of the first surveillance cycle in relation to the AAFA & WFOA North Pacific Albacore Tuna Pole & Line and Troll/Jig Fishery. A surveillance audit site visit was carried out on August 29th and 30th in La Jolla, California, along with additional meetings and interviews at the 15th Regular Session of the WCPFC Northern Committee meeting on September 4th, 2019 in Portland, Oregon.

No issues were identified, and no changes in the fishery occurred that would result in a change in certification from the reassessment. The fisheries had no new conditions. No performance indicators were rescored. MRAG Americas, Inc. confirms that this fishery continues to meet the MSC Fisheries Standard and shall remain certified.

2 Report details

2.1 Surveillance information

Table 1. Surveillance information

1	Fishery name	
	AAFA & WFOA North Pacific Albacore Tuna Pole & Line and Troll/Jig Fishery	
2	Surveillance level and type	
	Level 5, onsite surveillance audit	
3	Surveillance number	
	1st Surveillance	X
	2nd Surveillance	
	3rd Surveillance	
	4th Surveillance	
	Other (expedited etc.)	
4	Team leader	
	<p>Ms. Amanda Stern-Piriot was team leader for the assessment. Amanda is an M.Sc graduate of the University of Bremen, Center for Marine Tropical Ecology (ZMT) in marine ecology and fisheries biology. Ms. Stern-Piriot joined MRAG Americas in mid-June 2014 as MSC Certification Manager (now Director of the Fishery Certification Division) and is currently serving on several different assessment teams as team leader and team member. She has worked together with other scientists, conservationists, fisheries managers and producer groups on international fisheries sustainability issues for over 15 years. With the Institute for Marine Research (IFM-GEOMAR) in Kiel, Germany, she led a work package on simple indicators for sustainable within the EU-funded international cooperation project INCOFISH, followed by five years within the Standards Department at the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) in London, developing standards, policies and assessment methods informed by best practices in fisheries management</p>	

	<p>around the globe. Most recently she has worked with the Alaska pollock industry as a resources analyst, within the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council process, focusing on bycatch and ecosystem-based management issues, and managing the day-to-day operations of the offshore pollock cooperative. She has co-authored a dozen publications on fisheries sustainability in the developing world and the functioning of the MSC as an instrument for transforming fisheries to a sustainable basis.</p>
5	<p>Team member</p> <p>Ms. Erin Wilson joined MRAG Americas Inc. in 2015, where she currently works as a Senior Fisheries Consultant. She has worked as a team member for several MSC assessments and conducts routine audits for the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF). Prior to joining MRAG Americas, she spent 2 years working at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) as a Natural Resource Specialist and Biological Technician for the Oregon Marine Reserves. She has collaborated on a multitude of projects that focus on marine science and conservation in both a biological and social science aspect. She received a M.Sc. in Marine Resource Management from Oregon State University and a B.S. in Zoology (with a marine emphasis) from Colorado State University, along with a Spanish minor.</p> <p>Dr. Max Stocker has 28 years of extensive experience in fisheries science. He is currently a part time marine fisheries consultant under contract with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to provide scientific advice on highly migratory species in the Pacific Ocean. He is the lead Canadian scientist for highly migratory species for the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC). He serves as co-chair of the Stock Assessment Working Group of the Scientific Committee of the WCPFC and chairs the ISC Albacore Working Group. From 1978-2006, Dr. Stocker held the position of research scientist with DFO at the Pacific Biological Station conducting population dynamic studies, conducting peer reviewed stock assessments of many marine species, and communicating results to fisheries managers and stakeholders. He authored and co-authored over 90 scientific papers and reports and made over 50 presentations in national and international scientific meetings. Dr. Stocker chaired the Pacific Scientific Advice Review Committee (PSARC) for many years and edited and published over 30 advisory documents on the stock status of marine species and the implications of harvest management on these stocks. Additionally, Dr. Stocker served as in-house stock assessment consultant to the New Zealand Fishing Industry Board in the early 1990s conducting peer reviewed stock assessments, participating in the peer review process, and advising the Board on inshore and deepwater fisheries.</p>
6	<p>Audit/review time and location</p> <p>The surveillance took place August 29-30, 2019 in La Jolla, CA commensurately with the re-assessment site visit for the CHMSF North Pacific Albacore fishery (certifier SAI Global).</p> <p>Follow up meetings occurred September 4th, 2019 in Portland, OR during the WPFC 15th Regular Session of the Northern Committee meeting.</p>
7	<p>Assessment and review activities</p> <p>The surveillance reviewed changes in science and management and progress in closing out any applicable conditions.</p>

2.2 Background

2.2.1 Update on the fishery since the reassessment

The U.S.A. albacore troll and pole-and-line fishery in the North Pacific Ocean started in the early 1900s. The fishery currently operates in waters between the U.S.A. West Coast and 160°W longitude (Fig. 1). Fishing usually starts in May or June and ends in October or November. In 2018, only 452 U.S.A. albacore troll vessels in the north Pacific Ocean were reported fishing (ISC, 2019b).

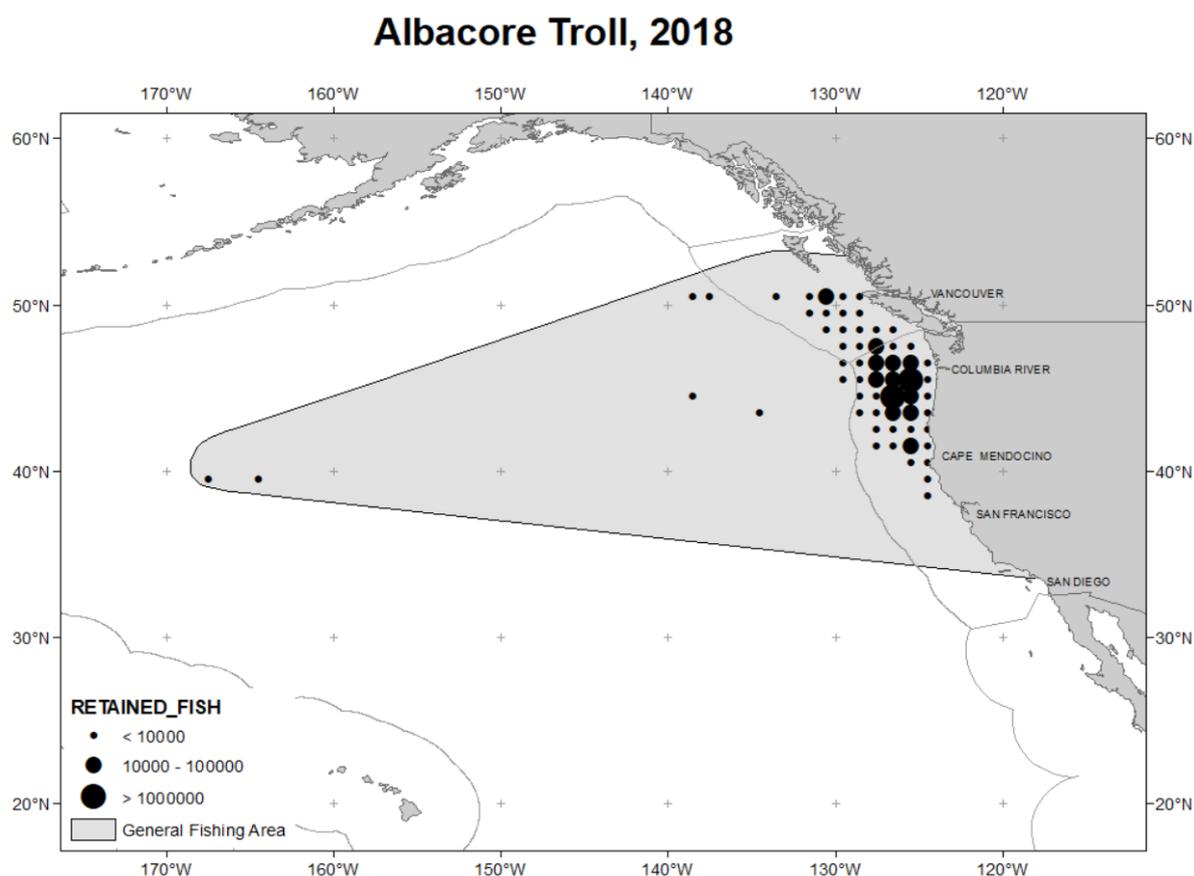


Figure 1. Spatial distribution of reported logbook fishing catch by the 2018 U.S. albacore troll and pole-and-line fishery in number of fish. The size of circles is proportional to the amount of catch. Catch in some areas is not shown in order to preserve data confidentiality (ISC, 2019b).

The U.S.A. north Pacific Albacore troll and pole-and-line fishery catches almost exclusively albacore. There are minor bycatches of Pacific bluefin tuna (*Thunnus orientalis*), eastern Pacific bonito (*Sarda chiliensis lineolata*), yellowtail (*Seriola lalandi*), and mahi mahi (*Coryphaena hippurus*). Since 1985, the albacore catch has ranged from a low of 1,845 t in 1991 to a high of 16,962 t in 1996 (ISC, 2019b). In 2017 and 2018 the troll fleet caught 7,430 t and 7,738 t of albacore, respectively (ISC, 2019b). In 2018 the estimated albacore catch by sport vessels was 170 t (ISC, 2019a).

Generally, sizes of albacore caught in the albacore troll and pole and line fishery range between 55 cm fork length (8.5 pounds) and 90 cm (32 pounds). Weight distribution of the catch for 2018 is shown in Figure 2. State fishery personnel collect the size data according to sampling instructions provided by NOAA Fisheries, who maintain the database. Cooperative fishermen also collect size data on selected fishing trips to augment data collected through the port sampling program (ISC, 2019b).

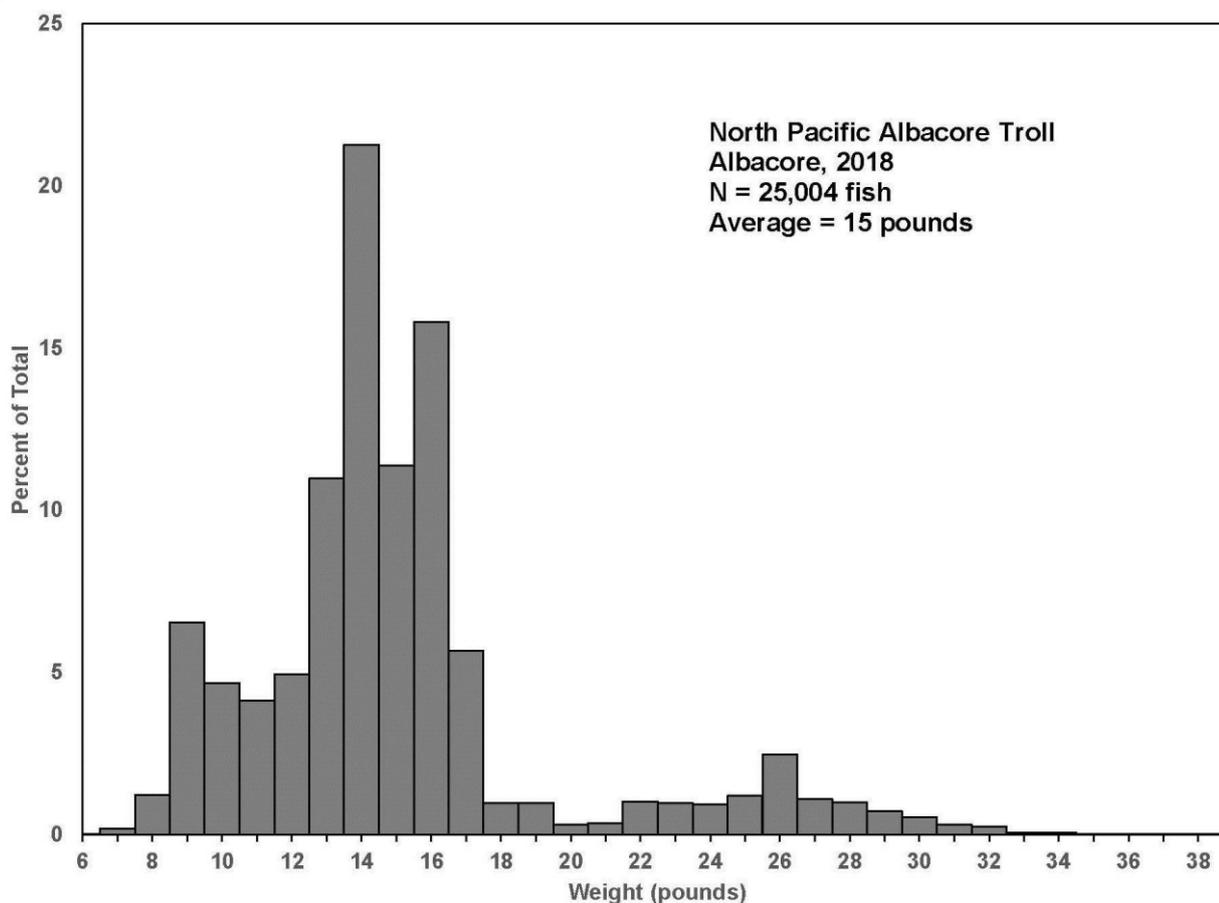


Figure 2. Size distribution of albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*) caught by the 2018 U.S. albacore troll and pole-and-line fishery (ISC, 2019b).

In total 49,300 t of North Pacific albacore were caught in 2018. Of the 49,300 t caught 28,155 t of albacore were caught by the troll and pole-and line fleet (UoA catch), and 7,738 t were caught by 452 vessels that are members of the client group (UoC catch). In 2017 a total of 30,259 t of albacore were caught by the troll and pole and line fleet (UoA catch), and 7,430 t were caught by members of the client group (UoC catch) (Table 2).

2.2.2 Changes to the scientific base of information, including stock assessments

Stock assessment

The Albacore Working Group (ALBWG) of the International Scientific Committee for Tuna-and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) conducted [assessment of North Pacific albacore](#) stock in 2017 (ISC, 2017). A summary of the stock assessment and the stock status was presented in the 2nd Re-assessment report and is not repeated here (Stern-Pirlot *et al*, 2018). A new stock assessment is expected in 2020. To this end ALBWG will be holding a data preparatory meeting on 12-18 November 2019 in Shimizu, Japan. The ALBWG stock assessment workshop is scheduled for March 16-23, 2020 in La Jolla, CA, USA (ISC, 2019a)

The Albacore Working Group (ALBWG) held an intersessional workshop at the National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries (NRIFSF/FRA), Shimizu, Shizuoka JAPAN, 26 February – 4 March 2019. The objectives of the workshop were to: (1) Review progress of MSE development; (2) Review preliminary MSE results; (3) Prepare draft executive summary of the MSE progress for the 4th MSE WS in Yokohama and ISC19 plenary, (4) Review progress on model improvements for 2020 assessment

and (5) Review timeline and work plan for MSE and 2020 assessment (ISC, 2019d).

At the 19th meeting of the ISC, H. Kiyofuji, ALBWG Chair, reported that the ALBWG found a minor error in the catch data used in the 2017 stock assessment for one of the fleets (ISC, 2019a). The ALBWG used the 2017 base case model with the corrected catch data and compared the model results with the results from 2017. The impact of the error was relatively minor and did not affect the conclusions of the 2017 north Pacific albacore stock assessment (see Table 7-1 and Figure 7-1 in ISC, 2019a page 18). As a consequence, the ALBWG did not recommend changes to the stock status and conservation information provided by ISC17.

Stock status

The stock status and conservation information adopted by the ISC17 Plenary was again endorsed by ISC19 (ISC, 2019a):

“The following information on the status of the north Pacific albacore stock is provided:

- 1. The stock is likely not overfished relative to the limit reference point adopted by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (20%SSB current $F=0$), and*
- 2. No F -based reference points have been adopted to evaluate overfishing. Stock status was evaluated against seven potential reference points. Current fishing intensity ($F_{2012-2014}$) is below six of the seven potential reference points, except $F_{50\%}$.*

Conservation Information

- 1. If a constant fishing intensity ($F_{2012-2014}$) is applied to the stock, then median female spawning biomass is expected to undergo a moderate decline, with a $<0.01\%$ probability of falling below the limit reference point established by the WCPFC by 2015. However, expected catches in this scenario will be below the recent average catch level for this stock.*
- 2. If a constant average catch ($C_{20110-2014} = 82,432$ t) is removed from the stock in the future, then the decline in median female spawning biomass will be greater than in the constant F intensity scenario and the probability that SSB falls below the LRP will be greater by 2025 (30%). Additionally, the estimated fishing intensity will double relative to the current level ($F_{2012-2014}$) by 2025 as spawning biomass declines.”*

The same stock status and conservation information text was also summarised by the Northern Committee of the WCPFC (WCPFC, 2017). NC 14 also reiterated that north Pacific albacore are not overfished nor experiencing overfishing, although it was noted that catch has been decreasing since 2012 (WCPFC, 2018b).

More recently, SC15 noted that no stock assessments were conducted for North Pacific albacore in 2019, and thus, the stock status descriptions from SC13 are still current for North Pacific albacore. SC15 also noted that no management advice has been provided since SC13 for North Pacific albacore, and therefore, the advice from SC13 should be maintained (WCPFC, 2019b).

Harvest strategy and harvest control rules

In response to the scientific advice resulting from North Pacific albacore stock assessments conducted by the ALBWG in 2005, both the IATTC and the WCPFC adopted management measures for this stock. In 2005, the IATTC adopted C-05-02 (with supplemental Resolution C-13-03 in 2013) which resolved that: “The total level of fishing effort for North Pacific albacore tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean not to be increased beyond current levels.” 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 catches every six months. The IATTC Resolution on North Pacific albacore was revised to change the data reporting frequency from every 6 months to 1 year.

The WCPFC adopted CMM-05-03, in 2005, that: “The total level of fishing effort for North Pacific albacore in the Convention Area north of the equator shall not be increased beyond current levels.”

It is noted that these major regional management measures (Resolution C-05-02 and CMM-05-03

harmonized between IATTC and WCPFC) are still in place in 2019.

At the 15th meeting of the WCPFC, the NC Chair stated that a harvest strategy had been adopted for Pacific bluefin tuna and North Pacific albacore, and these have been adopted by the Commission. The NC is now working on Management Strategy Evaluations for these stocks. Workshops have been held for Pacific bluefin tuna and North Pacific albacore (WCPFC, 2019a). The interim harvest strategy for north Pacific albacore replaces the “precautionary management framework for north Pacific albacore” adopted by the 11th regular session of the Commission, which was based on the recommendation of the 10th regular session of the Northern Committee (WCPFC, 2018a, Attachment I).

Management strategy evaluation (MSE) is a process that, given management objectives conveyed by stakeholders and managers, uses computer simulations to assess the performance of candidate harvest strategies under uncertainty. The Fourth ISC MSE workshop was held from 4 – 7 March 2019 in Yokohama, Japan. Objectives of this workshop were to: 1) examine the preliminary results of the initial round of the MSE for north Pacific albacore with managers and stakeholders, 2) collate feedback from managers and stakeholders on future MSE improvements, and 3) develop recommendations for the WCPFC NC and IATTC (ISC, 2019c),

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) established a limit reference point (LRP) of $20\%SSB_{CURRENT, F=0}$ (SSB: Female Spawning Stock Biomass) for North Pacific albacore (NPALB). So far, no formal Target Reference Point (TRP) and no Harvest Control Rule (HCR) have been adopted. The goal of the first round of MSE for north Pacific albacore was to examine the performance of alternative harvest strategies and associated reference points (ISC, 2019c).

The results of the first round of MSE analysis were summarized in five main points (ISC, 2019c):

1. *A lower fishing intensity TRP (i.e. F50), maintains the population at a higher level than F40 and F30, requiring less management intervention and resulting in lower catch variability between years. However, lower fishing intensity results in lower overall catch.*
2. *HCRs with a TRP of F40 have less closures and higher catch stability as compared to a TRP of F30, resulting in comparable or higher catch despite lower fishing intensity.*
3. *An LRP and threshold reference point closer to the TRP results in a higher frequency of management interventions, fishery closures and lower catch stability.*
4. *HS3 showed lower catch stability than HS1 but had less fishery closures.*
5. *Harvest strategies with Total Allowable Effort (TAE) had a lower frequency of fisheries closures and higher catch stability than ones with Total Allowable Catch (TAC) control.*

The first round of MSE analysis will be presented to NC15 in Portland, Oregon in September 2019 (NC, 2019; NC 2018).

The ALBWG is planning to hold a 5th ISC MSE workshop in late 2020 to review results from a 2nd round of MSE.

The audit team concluded that progress is being made by IATTC and WCPFC toward establishing a Target Reference Point and Harvest Control Rules for north Pacific albacore. However, there is no need to rescore PI 1.2.2 (Harvest Control Rules). Condition 1 therefore remains open.

Research Update

In preparation for the 2020 north Pacific albacore tuna stock assessment the ALBWG re-examined the 2017 base case model and identified potential model improvements (Teo *et al.*, 2019).

A plan for updating future projections program for north Pacific albacore at the ISC Albacore Working Group Intercessional Workshop in Shimizu, Japan was presented by Iijima (Iijima, 2019).

NMFS analysed catch logbook data and trawl survey records to investigate how juvenile albacore in the California Current System use their oceanographic environment, and how their distributions overlap with

the habitats of four key forage species (Muhling *et al.*, In press). This has relevance for the development of ecosystem models for the CCS, and for the eventual implementation of ecosystem-based fishery management (ISC, 2019b).

A global meta-analysis of marine predator nitrogen stable isotopes was conducted by Pethybridge *et al.* (2018). The authors examined potential environmental drivers of broad-scale spatial patterns in the trophic structure of marine ecosystems as represented by nitrogen stable isotopes in globally distributed marine predators including *Thunnus alalunga*.

Predator-prey interactions for three commercially valuable tuna species: yellowfin (*Thunnus albacares*), bigeye (*T. obesus*), and albacore (*T. alalunga*), collected over a 40-year period from the Pacific, Indian, and Atlantic Oceans, were used to quantitatively assess broad, macro-scale trophic patterns in pelagic ecosystems. Analysis of over 14,000 tuna stomachs, using a modified classification tree approach, revealed for the first time the global expanse of pelagic predatory fish diet and global patterns of micronekton diversity (Duffy *et al.*, 2017).

The WFOA and American Fisherman Research Foundation (AFRF) provided the following research activities:

- WFOA vessels are working with SWFSC collecting albacore for bio-sampling to do stomach content and otolith research. This is ongoing in 2019 on 4 vessels and will continue in 2020.
- Dr Stephanie Snyder completed a detailed tag data compilation and report in 2018. She also presented her results at the 2018 Tuna conference in Lake Arrowhead, CA
- WFOA/AFRF may be able to deploy another 60 archival tags in 2019 to add to the 1,000 plus that have been deployed since 2001.
- AFRF is planning of working with SWFSC in the near future of a proposed comprehensive tuna research program in the North Pacific Ocean. Details have not been worked out with the change of directors at the SWFSC.

2.2.3 Ecosystem update

There is no new information that has a bearing on the Principle 2 assessment for this fishery. As noted in the research update above (section 2.2.2) there are some research projects underway addressing ecosystem interactions such as predator-prey relationships, and habitat models for bycatch species under development to inform Ecological Risk Assessments and ecosystem models. However, these projects are less relevant for the AAFA and WFOA fleets because the gear used does not interact significantly with non-target species (whereas the longline fleet does). The assessment team will nonetheless provide updates on research results as they become available.

2.2.4 Potential or actual changes to the management system

A three-year regime was negotiated under the U.S. - Canada Albacore Treaty. The regime will last through the 2019 season after which it will expire.

At the June 2019 meeting, the Council adopted as final Council Operating Procedure 27, which modified the section under "Procedure" in order to better portray the relationship between public comment and determination of the need for and Council capacity to engage in a review (PFMC 2019).

At the Fifteenth Regular Session of the WCPFC Scientific Committee (SC15) Meeting, it was noted that no management advice has been provided since SC13 for North Pacific albacore, and therefore, the advice from SC13 should be maintained, pending a new assessment or other new information (WCPFC 2019).

Changes or additions/deletions to regulations

At the Fifteenth Regular Session of the WCPFC Scientific Committee (SC15) Meeting, it was noted that

no management advice has been provided since SC13 for North Pacific albacore, and therefore, the advice from SC13 should be maintained, pending a new assessment or other new information (WCPFC 2019).

CMM 2018-03 was adopted to mitigate the impact of fishing on highly migratory species (HMS) on seabirds. This bycatch mitigation measure replaces CMM 2017-06 and is applicable to longline vessels (WCPFC 2018g).

CMM 2018-04 was passed to ensure the safe handling of all captured sea turtles and improve survival rates. CMM 2018-04 will take effect on 1 January 2020 and shall replace CMM 2008-03 (WCPFC 2018f).

WCPFC Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) 2018-05 was adopted, to update and revise CMM 2007-01, and was agreed by the Commission at WCPFC15 (2018). CMM 2018-05, in accordance with Article 10 of the WCPFC Convention, establishes the WCPFC Regional Observer Programme (Commission ROP). The objectives of the Commission ROP shall be to collect verified catch data, other scientific data and additional information related to the fishery from the Convention Area and to monitor the implementation of the CMMs adopted by the Commission (WCPFC 2018c).

The WCPFC Convention establishes a governing body known as the Commission, which is comprised of representatives from members, cooperating non-members and participating territories, or collectively CCMs.

CMM 2018-06 was adopted to revise CMM 2017-05 regarding the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels and Authorization to fish. CMM 2018-06 expands footnote 4, which states flag CCMs shall ensure that all their motorized inboard fishing vessels of less than 100 GRT down to a size of 12 meters in length overall (LOA), authorized to be used for fishing in the Convention Area beyond the flag CCM's area of national jurisdiction have an International Maritime Organization (IMO) or Lloyd's Register number issued (WCPFC 2018d).

CMM 2018-07, in accordance with Article 10 of the Convention, establishes the WCPFC Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMS) to ensure that CCMs implement and comply with obligations arising under the Convention and CMMS adopted by the Commission. The purpose of the CMS is also to assess flag CCM action in relation to alleged violations by its vessels, not to assess compliance by individual vessels (WCPFC 2018e).

The IATTC Scientific staff has added C-18-03 as an Amendment to C-13-03, which required submission of North Pacific albacore catch data only through 2012. C-18-03 continues the requirement of catch data submission (IATTC 2018).

2.2.5 Personnel changes in science, management or industry

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC, or the Council) suspended the provision of Council Operating Procedure 1 that states the Chair may not server more than two consecutive one-year terms, and re-elected Mr. Phil Anderson as Council Chair and Mr. Marc Gorelnik as Council Vice-Chair for the 2019-2020 term. The Council appointed Ms. Jessica Watson to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife positions on the Highly Migratory Species Management Team and the ad hoc Ecosystem Workgroup (PFMC 2019).

Gerard DiNardo is no longer the Director of the Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC). The SWFSC reported they are currently in the hiring phase for a new Division Director.

2.2.6 Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Update

The West Coast Division of the Office of Law Enforcement provided a summary of incidents from

January 1, 2018 to present for vessels fishing for albacore. A total of ten incidents were found for 'Highly Migratory Species', however they were all minor incidents (i.e. incorrect logbook submissions, no HMS logbook onboard the vessel, or no HMS permit) and none were directly related to the vessels that participate in the AAFA & WFOA North Pacific albacore tuna pole & line and troll/jig fishery (Michael Killary, personal communication, September 17, 2019).

According to the USCG 2018 Report to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC), only 11 significant fisheries violations were found out of 877 fisheries' boardings, both commercial and recreational. One incident was noted for a commercial tuna troller for failing to facilitate a boarding by refusing to heave to and not answering radio hails after the master stated he did not have a safe boarding ladder. The failure to facilitate enforcement was deemed to be a significant Living Marine Resource (LMR) violation and referred to NOAA (USCG 2019). Again, this vessel was not directly linked to the AAFA & WFOA North Pacific albacore tuna pole & line and troll/jig fishery.

2.2.7 Traceability Update

There have been no changes affecting traceability for this fishery.

2.3 Version details

Table 2. – Fisheries program documents versions

Document	Version number
MSC Fisheries Certification Process	Version 2.1
MSC Fisheries Standard	Version 2.0
MSC General Certification Requirements	Version 2.3
MSC Surveillance Reporting Template	Version 2.01

3 Results

3.1 Surveillance results overview

3.1.1 Summary of conditions

Table 1 – Summary of conditions

Condition number	Condition	Performance Indicator (PI)	Status	PI original score	PI revised score
1	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	1.2.2	On target	60	Not revised

	<p>place at the IATTC and WCPFC that are consistent with the harvest strategy and ensure that the exploitation rate is reduced as the PRI is 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>				
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3.1.2 Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and catch data

Table 2. Catch data (this fishery does not operate with a TAC)

Total North Pacific albacore tuna catch	Year	2018	Amount	49,300 t (ISC, 2019a)
Total UoA catch of North Pacific albacore tuna	Year	2018	Amount	28,155 t (ISC, 2019a)
Total UoC catch of North Pacific albacore tuna	Year	2018	Amount	7,738 (data from client)
Total green weight catch by UoC	Year (most recent)	2018	Amount	7,738 t (data from client)
	Year (second most recent)	2017	Amount	7,430 t (data from client)

3.1.3 Recommendations

No new recommendations.

3.2 Conditions

Table 3 below show updates for condition 1 as per findings of the first surveillance audit following the 2018 re-certification of the AAFA/WFOA north Pacific albacore fishery.

Table 3 – Condition 1

	Insert relevant PI number(s)	Insert relevant scoring issue/ scoring guidepost text	Score
Performance Indicator(s) & Score(s)	1.2.2	<p>NORTH PACIFIC ALBACORE</p> <p>1.2.2a. 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.</p> <p>1.2.2b. The HCRs are likely to be robust to the main uncertainties.</p> <p>1.2.2c. Available evidence indicates that the tools in use are appropriate and effective in achieving the exploitation levels required under the HCRs.</p>	60
Condition	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 the PRI is 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.		
Milestones	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By the first annual surveillance audit the certifier will be presented with information on those consultations which have occurred with the responsible parties. 2. By the second surveillance audit the certifier will be presented with information on progress which has been made in establishing a scientifically based target reference point and harvest control rules. 3. By the third annual surveillance the certifier will be presented with information on how those harvest control rules, assuming they have been agreed to by the RFMOs, might be implemented. 4. By the end of the certification period, well defined HCRs will be in place that ensure that the exploitation rate is reduced as the PRI is approached, that are expected to keep the stock fluctuating around a target level consistent with (or above) MSY. 		
Client action plan	1. AAFA and WFOA will continue, through their participation in the US delegations to the two relevant tuna RFMOs, the IATTC and WCPFC, to promote the development of a scientifically based target reference point and harvest control rules that apply to all of the fishing mortality of the North Pacific albacore stock. Since this work is being primarily conducted by the Northern Committee of the WCPFC and its science provider, the International Scientific Committee, the clients will continue to actively participate in the US delegations to those meetings. As they have in the past, both organizations will help inform and support positions taken by the US delegations to the IATTC and WCPFC to develop and implement a		

	<p>scientifically based target reference point and harvest control rules.</p> <p>2. AAFA and WFOA will continue to work with, and will report on, ongoing efforts to explore opportunities to cooperate with and support the work of other tuna fisheries organizations to develop a scientifically based target reference point and harvest control rules.</p> <p>3. WFOA's science advisor will also continue to work with the Albacore Working Group of the International Scientific Committee as it proceeds with its Management Strategy Evaluation process to pursue the establishment of a scientifically based target reference point and harvest control rules.</p>
Progress on Condition [Year 1]	<p>AAFA/WFOA in the past two years 2018 and 2019 has sent representatives to all the listed RFMO's and Federal Council meetings to advocate for sustainability in the west coast albacore troll fishery. The client indicated that they participated in the following meetings since the re-certification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCPFC Northern Committee Fourteenth Regular Session, Japan • IATTC annual meeting, Bilbao, Spain • WCPFC Fifteenth Regular Session, Honolulu, Hawaii • Fourth ISC MSE workshop , Yokohama, Japan • Nineteenth Meeting of the ISC, Teipei City, Taiwan • PFMC Council Meeting • WCPFC-SC Meeting in Pohnpei, FSM • WCPFC Northern Committee Fifteenth Regular Session, Portland, Oregon <p>Details of client activities related to the action plan are provided in Appendix 7.4.</p>
Conclusion and Outcome on Condition 1 from 1st surveillance audit	<p>The assessment team concluded that the AAFA/WFOA has acted in good faith to advocate for progress towards the MSC requirements for PI 1.2.2 to establish well defined harvest control rules for north Pacific albacore.</p>
Status of condition	<p>On target.</p>

3.3 Client Action Plan

No updates.

3.4 Re-scoring Performance Indicators

No rescoring took place following this first surveillance audit.

4 References

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5 Appendices

5.1 Evaluation processes and techniques

5.1.1 Site visits

The surveillance audit process as defined in the MSC Fishery Certification Process version 2.1 was followed in this audit.

Information supplied by the clients and management agencies was reviewed by the assessment team ahead of the onsite meeting, and discussions with the clients and management agencies centred on the content within the provided documentation. In cases where relevant documentation was not provided in advance of the meeting, it was requested by the assessment team and subsequently supplied during, or shortly after the meeting.

Thirty days prior to the audit site visit, all stakeholders from the full assessment were informed of the visit and the opportunity to provide information to the auditors in advance of, or during, the site visit. The surveillance took place at the Southwest Fisheries Science Center in La Jolla, CA commensurately with the re-assessment site visit for the CHMSF North Pacific Albacore fishery (certifier SAI Global). Follow up meetings occurred September 4th, 2019 in Portland, OR during the WPFC 15th Regular Session of the Northern Committee meeting. Stakeholders attended either in person or via teleconference.

The following participants were in attendance:

La Jolla, California
August 28th and 29th, 2019

Name	Affiliation
Amanda Stern-Pirlot	MRAG Americas
Erin Wilson	MRAG Americas
Max Stocker	MRAG Americas assessment team member (by phone)
Peter Flournoy	WFOA, client (teleconference)
Mike Conroy	AAFA, client (teleconference)
Natalie Webster	AAFA, client (teleconference)
Wayne Heikkila	WFOA, client
Ivan Mateo	SAI Global assessment team member
Desiree Tommasi	SWFSC
Steve Teo	SWFSC
Mark Maunder	IATTC
Carolina Minte-Vera	IATTC
Alexandre Aires-da-Silva	IATTC

Note: Meetings in La Jolla were conducted jointly with SAI Global (Ivan Mateo and Max Stocker). SAI Global is doing the second re-assessment of the CHMSF British Columbia albacore fishery.

Portland, OR
September 4th, 2019

Name	Affiliation
Amanda Stern-Pirlot	MRAG Americas
Erin Wilson	MRAG Americas
Peter Flournoy	WFOA, client
Mike Conroy	AAFA, client
Kit Dahl	PFMC
Tom Graham	NOAA/NMFS Hawaii

Table 3. Agenda for SWFC meeting, Albacore site visit.

Date	29th August, 2019
Time	1:30 PM
Location	Joseph Room, IATTC, La Jolla, CA
Assessment Team	MRAG: Amanda Stern-Pirlot, Team Leader; Max Stocker, ; Erin Wilson, Assessor SAI Global Trust: Ivan Mateo, Team Leader; Max Stocker, Assessor (teleconference)
Confirmed Meeting Attendees	John Childers, Steve Teo, Desiree Tommasi,

Table 4. Agenda for IATTC meeting, Albacore site visit.

Date	30th August, 2019
Time	10:30 PM
Location	Joseph Room, IATTC, La Jolla, CA
Assessment Team	MRAG: Amanda Stern-Pirlot, Team Leader; Max Stocker (teleconference); Erin Wilson, Assessor SAI Global Trust: Ivan Mateo, Team Leader; Max Stocker, Assessor (teleconference)
Confirmed Meeting Attendees	Carolina Minte-Vera, Alexandre Aires-da-Silva

General Agenda outline, all site visit meetings:

Topics to be reviewed:

- Any potential or actual changes in management systems
- Any changes of additions/deletions to regulations
- Any personnel changes in science, management or industry and their impact on the management of the fishery.
- Any potential changes to scientific information, including stock assessments.
- Any changes affecting traceability.
- Any changes affecting harmonization of overlapping fisheries
- Progress on achieving the conditions of certification as specified in the client action plan.

Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) participating in the site visit:

- 1.) MRAG Americas--conducting all MSC surveillance activities for AAFA and WFOA North and South Pacific Albacore pole and line/troll and jig fisheries
- 2.) SAI Global Trust--conducting all re-assessment activities for CHMSF North Pacific albacore pole and line/troll and jig fishery

Assessment team members participating in the site visit:

- 1.) Amanda Stern-Pirlot, MRAG Americas
- 2.) Erin Wilson MRAG Americas
- 3.) Ivan Mateo SAI Global
- 4.) Max Stocker MRAG Americas/SAI Global (teleconference)

5.2 Stakeholder participation

Thirty days prior to the audit site visit, all stakeholders from the full assessment were informed of the visit and the opportunity to provide information to the auditors in advance of, or during, the site visit. We received no requests from outside stakeholders to take part in meetings, nor did we receive any written submissions regarding the North Pacific albacore fishery.

5.3 Stakeholder input

No stakeholders' comments were received during the course of the audit.

5.4 Client Activities Related to Action Plan

AAFA/WFOA have concentrated their efforts on the IATTC where Peter Flournoy is on the GAC. AAFA/WFOA tried to introduce new revision of the 2005 effort cap resolutions to the IATTC which would identify the increased effort of the Chinese in the West Pacific and result in better documentation. This did not go anywhere but AAFA/WFOA will continue efforts and at the same time have ongoing decrease in effort recognized.

AAFA/WFOA and AFRF continue to attend most MSE meetings in the NP and see that process that is expected to be concluded early in 2021 as the best vehicle to give options to set controls and limits if the fishery is at risk. We see much of this tied to the next stock assessment and will follow that through our science advisor David Itano.

On the federal level AAFA/WFOA advocate to have the PFMC support the US fleet by sending their information and requests to the US delegations to the RFMO's.

INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION MEETINGS

A. Inter American Tropical Tuna Commission, Bilbao, Spain: The IATTC met from July 22 through July 26, 2019 and passed resolutions, two of which are of interest to albacore troll and pole and line fisheries. The first was a resolution on sea turtles (C-19-04) which initially would have required the NMFS to send all albacore vessel operators and crew for training on how to resuscitate turtles. This unnecessary potential training was averted by having that requirement rewritten to read:

Ensure that vessel operators and/or at least one crew member on board vessels targeting species covered by the Convention in fisheries that have reported sea turtle interactions, And particularly those without observers, are trained in techniques for handling and release of sea turtles to improve survival after release.

The italicized language was inserted to avoid the measure being applied to U.S. troll and pole and line vessels since NMFS was certain that no such interactions had been reported for the West Coast albacore fleet.

The second resolution related to the observer and notification measures for transshipping on the high seas. The current resolution in force exempts the albacore troll and pole and line fleet from these measures. The EU proposed amending this resolution, but in a manner which would have made no changes to this exemption.

B. Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Northern Committee and IATTC Joint Meeting: For the last three years the Northern Committee, chaired by the Japanese, and the IATTC, represented by former PFMC Chair Dorothy Lohman, have been meeting to resolve conservation and management of North Pacific Bluefin tuna.

Issues of continuing importance for albacore fishermen will be setting a Target Reference Point for albacore, based on the work to date on the Management Strategy Evaluation work which has been going on for two years, but which is still incomplete. In addition, the Canadians have pushed the idea, apparently

accepted by NMFS, there should be a “threshold” reference point, which precedes the TRP, and which will be a point that management action will be taken as the fleet approaches the TRP.

Another subject of importance which was not fully discussed at the IATTC despite the efforts made by the fleet to get a resolution which would limit any further movement of the Chinese longline fleet targeting albacore into the North Pacific, is how to obtain correct and timely data on all countries’ fleets which target or incidentally take albacore in the North Pacific – both in terms of catch and effort. Because both the WCPFC-NC and the IATTC have Treaty Areas which encompass parts of the North Pacific, obtaining reliable data between the two organizations has been extremely difficult.

Finally, with Canada at the WCPFC-NC meeting it is a good opportunity to discuss issues relating to the Treaty fishing regime and its future, and the prospect for cooperative scientific research into the decrease in the albacore catch in the eastern North Pacific and the overall decline in catches throughout the North Pacific over the last several years.

WCPFC-SC Meeting in Pohnpei, FSM, August 12-20, 2019: While AAFA/WFOA did not send their Scientific Adviser there, he was present. He has reported briefly on South Pacific albacore discussions, and there are several papers on the management of that fishery aimed at achieving the TRP over the next 20 years.

C. WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC FISHERIES COMMISSION (WCPFC) ANNUAL MEETING 2018

In the delegation conference call prior to the Commission meeting there was a substantial amount of discussion about the process to determine a Target Reference Point (TRP) for SP albacore and an interim TRP agreement was made. Even though there was supposed to be a virtual internet working group in between annual meetings of the WCPFC lead by New Zealand, one was poorly attended last June and the second was only an abbreviated meeting on the sides of the TCC meeting, which resulted in no “deliverables”.

D. MANAGEMENT STRATEGY EVALUATION - NP (MSE)

This process began on albacore as a species with no stock or overfishing issues, in the NP two years ago and is moving forward. There was a workshop in LaJolla, CA held March 28th, 2018 and a follow-up listening session online April 18th. The overall goal is to set reference points and possible harvest control rules or a path to them with industry input. At the October 2017 N P Albacore MSE workshop in Vancouver, Canada, it was explained that the goal of the October workshop was to get performance indicators for the initial running of the albacore MSE model that would “work” for all the Nations around the North Pacific that harvest NP albacore. Industry would like to start working on evaluating the performance standards from a standpoint of how the US industry would be managed for the different performance standards. Albacore MSE Workshop, LaJolla, CA - March 28, 2018 -Douglas Fricke - WFOA

The schedule for the international NPA MSE is that the ISC, the ISC Albacore Working Group, and the NC will review the initial run of the model this summer. It is anticipated that the PFMC HMSAS will have a briefing at the June PFMC meeting. Then this fall or early next spring there will be another workshop like the workshop last fall in Vancouver, Canada.

North Pacific Albacore Example - Management Objectives

1. Maintain spawning biomass above the limit reference point
2. Maintain depletion (fished biomass / unfished biomass) around historic average depletion
3. Maintain fishing impact by fishery at historical average
4. Maintain catches by fishery above average historical catch
5. Change in total allowable catch between years should be relative gradual
6. Maintain fishing mortality (F) at target value

E. WCPFC Northern Committee 2019:

The NC did not have a quorum, and therefore was unable to recommend decisions to the WCPFC. Nonetheless, members present discussed a number of issues and prepared a report that will be considered when the NC convenes on the margins of the WCPFC meeting in December 2020. Japan intends to host the NC in 2020, and Canada offered to host in 2021.

F. PACIFIC FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL – November 2018 (PFMC):

At the November 1-8, 2018 PFMC meeting in San Diego, CA the albacore discussion will focus on whether, and to what years the “current” fishing level will be attributed for purposes of IATTC negotiations. There is discussion in international management meetings at the IATTC and the WCPFC as well as in the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSC) processes to determine above dates to establish current effort. Both the IATTC and the WCPFC passed resolutions back in 2005 establishing not expanding the albacore effort beyond “Current Levels”. Since 2005 this has never been established and some countries have just ignored it despite being signors on the resolution. Most of the discussion now centers on dates to use as a guide and the 2002-2004 seems to be favored date. WFOA believes this date range would be problematic and has opted for a longer period of 10 years or more. Like it or not this discussion is well under way in all the scientific and management bodies and may lead to quotas, catch limits, capacity controls or other. This is why we send representatives to these long expensive meetings. WFOA has to protect the best we can our aging small boat fleet that catches less than 15% of the North Pacific catch.

Also, at the PFMC advisory panel meeting, there was discussion of the increasing number of small high-speed recreational albacore fishing vessels that are converting to a commercial status so they can legally sell their catch. Industry has asked the States of WA, OR, and CA to review the increase in small boat commercial albacore landing licenses. This increase in small vessel licenses may become an issue in how we approach defining effort from the U.S. perspective.

Like it or not this discussion is well under way in all the scientific and management bodies and may lead to quotas, catch limits, capacity controls or other. This is why we send representatives to these long expensive meetings. AAFA/WFOA has to protect the best we can our aging small boat fleet that catches less than 15% of the North Pacific catch.

G. PACIFIC FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL – September 2019 (PFMC): AAFA/WFOA members who serve on the HMSAS added and endorsed the following language for inclusion in the HMSAS report to the PFMC.

Agenda Item I.2.c Supplemental HMSAS Report 1 September 2019

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) is concerned about the lack of a quorum at the September 2019 meeting in Portland, OR. Many participants spend much time and financial resources to attend these events. The HMSAS recommends that the Council recommend to the Permanent Advisory Committee (PAC) and U.S. delegation to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) to support changes at the WCPFC meeting in December 2019 reducing the required member attendance to achieve a quorum in Northern Committee meetings from 75 percent to a lower, more feasible number.

Biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (“BBNJ”)

Last month, the third of four meetings of the Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction was held in New York.

The primary purpose of this meeting was to review the content of the zero draft of a proposed instrument/agreement.

Throughout the zero draft it was repeatedly stated this instrument “would not” undermine existing relevant legal instruments (which is assumed to include Regional Fishery Management Organizations (“RFMOs”)). Prior to the meeting, a number of fishery organizations submitted comment letters addressing various components of the zero draft. Each of these letters shared one commonality, that RFMOs (Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission and WCPFC for example) should be allowed to continue to effectively address management of those fisheries on the high seas without worrying about other processes which may contradict or conflict in their approaches. U.S. fishing industry participants believe it will be imperative that BBNJ efforts do not replace the RFMOs. RFMOs should be responsible for proposing management actions impacting HMS fisheries on the high seas.

The fourth and final Conference meeting is tentatively scheduled for the first half of 2020. As we approach the scheduled completion of the United Nation’s action on this endeavor, the HMSAS requests the Pacific Council, along with the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, take an active role in advising NMFS and the Dept. of Commerce on the importance of our fisheries which operate on the high seas.

5.5 Harmonised fishery assessments

On 12th November 2018, accredited CABs submitted a joint VR for all tuna fisheries currently in the MSC Program. MSC has accepted this VR which allows:

- Not to suspend fisheries that are behind target on P1 conditions raised against CR v.1.3.
- To upgrade all tuna fisheries currently under CR v.1.3 to V.2.0 at the next available opportunity.
- To harmonise P1 conditions and timelines for all tuna fisheries on the same stock.
- To set a shared deadline for achieving conditions in line with RFMO workplans.

Table 4 – Overlapping fisheries

Fishery name	Certification status and date	Performance Indicators to harmonise
CHMSF British Columbia albacore tuna North Pacific	Date re-certified: June 9, 2015; Expiry date: June 8, 2020	All P1 performance indicators
AAFA and WFOA North Pacific albacore tuna	Date re-certified: June 14, 2018; Expiry date: June 13, 2023	All P1 performance indicators
Meiho Gyogyo Japanese pole and line albacore and skipjack fishery	Date certified: October 17, 2016; Expiry date: 16 October, 2021	All P1 performance indicators
Ishihara Marine Products albacore and skipjack pole and line fishery	Date certified: March 12, 2019; Expiry date: 11 March, 2024	All P1 performance indicators

Table 5 – Overlapping fisheries

Supporting information	
Harmonisation meetings have been taking place in connection with the 1 st surveillance audit of the AAFA/WFOA albacore fishery and the 2 nd re-assessment of the CHMSF albacore fishery at the end of August/early September 2019. CABs will engage harmonisation discussions to ensure that P1 scoring is fully harmonised.	
Was either FCP v2.1 Annex PB1.3.3.4 or PB1.3.4.5 applied when harmonising?	No
Date of harmonisation meeting	Ongoing via email
If applicable, describe the meeting outcome	
- e.g. Agreement found among teams or lowest score adopted.	

Table 6 - Scoring differences for PI 1.1.1

	AAFA/WFOA	CHMSF	Ishihara	Meiho Gyogyo
PI 1.1.1a				
SG60	Y	Y	Y	Y
SG80	Y	Y	Y	Y
SC100	Y	Y	N	Y
PI 1.1.1b				

SG 80	Y	Y	Y	Y
SG 100	N	N	N	Y
PI 1.1.1 Score	90	90	80	100

Table 6 – Rationale for scoring differences

If applicable, explain and justify any difference in scoring and rationale for the relevant Performance Indicators (FCP v2.1 Annex PB1.3.6)

Differences in PI 1.1.1a scores

There are differences among CABs on the interpretations on scoring PI 1.1.1a at 80 or 100. The issue is whether: “it is highly likely that the stock is above the PRI” (SG80 met) or “there is a high degree of certainty that the stock is above the PRI” (SG 100 met).

The Ishihara assessor wrote (Seip-Markensteijn *et al.*, 2019):

In this context, ‘highly likely’ is defined by MSC as a 80% probability, and a ‘high degree of certainty’ as a 95% probability.

The PRI for the stock is not known. Attempts have been made to estimate h (steepness) directly, resulting in estimates in the range 0.84-0.95; the stock assessment assumes $h=0.9$ on this basis. This means that at 20%SB0 (or 20%SBF=0 – the LRP), mean recruitment would be reduced to 90% of the level at unfished biomass; a reduction that would most likely not be detectable. The default PRI is taken here to be the LRP agreed by WCPFC, i.e. 20%SBF=0.

*The most recent stock assessment by the Albacore Working Group of ISC was in 2017. The assessment estimated SB (base case model) to be ~2.5 times above the LRP. Projections at constant fishing intensity from the base case model suggest a high degree of certainty that the SSB will not fall below the LRP in 2020 and 2025 (Figure 12). Estimates of relative SB taking into account a wider range of uncertainties including the most significant one-off sensitivities (see Figure 11) show all point estimates of SB above the LRP, but with 5% CIs overlapping the LRP in all cases. Wide CIs because of significant uncertainties in the assessment mean that that lower 5% CI for SB has marginally overlapped the LRP throughout the time series, as estimated by the stock assessment (see Figure 25 below). On this basis, **SG80 is met** but SG100 is not quite met.*

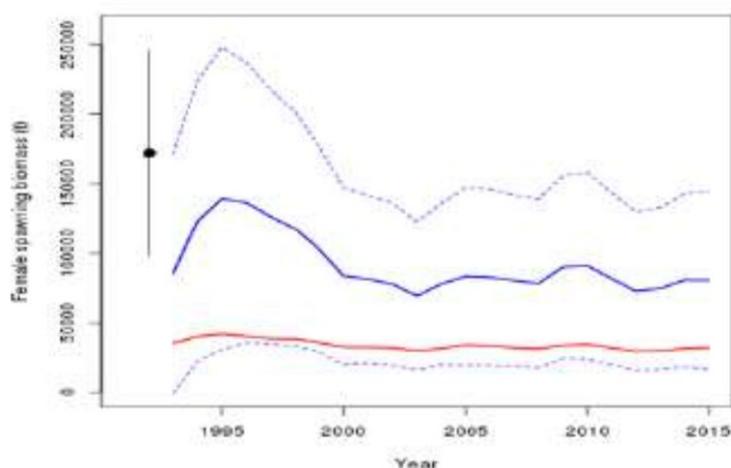


Figure 25. Time series of female spawning biomass, with approximate 5% and 95% CIs (blue dotted lines) and the LRP (red line); the black dot and bars is the estimate of initial conditions

(Figure 5.13B in ISC (2017b))

With regard to the PI 1.1.1a scoring we believe that the Ishihara Marine Products score of 80 is incorrect. It is not a question of whether the lower 95% CI level is lower than the LRP (that is irrelevant). The question is whether there is a high degree of certainty that the stock estimated at 80,618 t is above the PRI. Maunder and Deriso (2014) recommend a LRP (in the MSC definition a PRI) at 50% of R_0 (226 million recruits) or 113 million recruits.

Maunder and Deriso (2014:195) state: "There is no guide to what reduction in recruitment is undesirable, but it is unlikely that a reduction of less than 50% would cause a stock collapse; so, 50% is a conservative value that is as good as any other, and we notate the corresponding LRPs as $F_{0.5R_0}$ and $S_{0.5R_0}$." Thus, the PRI is at a level of SSB which produces 50% of R_0 (or 113 million recruits). SSB at 113 million recruits is at 4,650 t (Fig. 3). The SSB at the lower end of the 95% CI (24,400 t) is highly likely above the PRI of 4,650 t. Even if uncertainty in the stock recruitment relationship is considered by using $h=0.6$ instead of $h=0.9$ (note $h=0.6$ is likely low for albacore), SSB at 50% R_0 is 24,400 t. This is at the lower 95% SSB CI, and thus still highly likely above the PRI.

The requirement for SG 100 of PI 1.1.1a we believe is met and thus the overall score of PI 1.1.1 should be 90 (also as per revised SAIG 2nd re-assessment scoring).

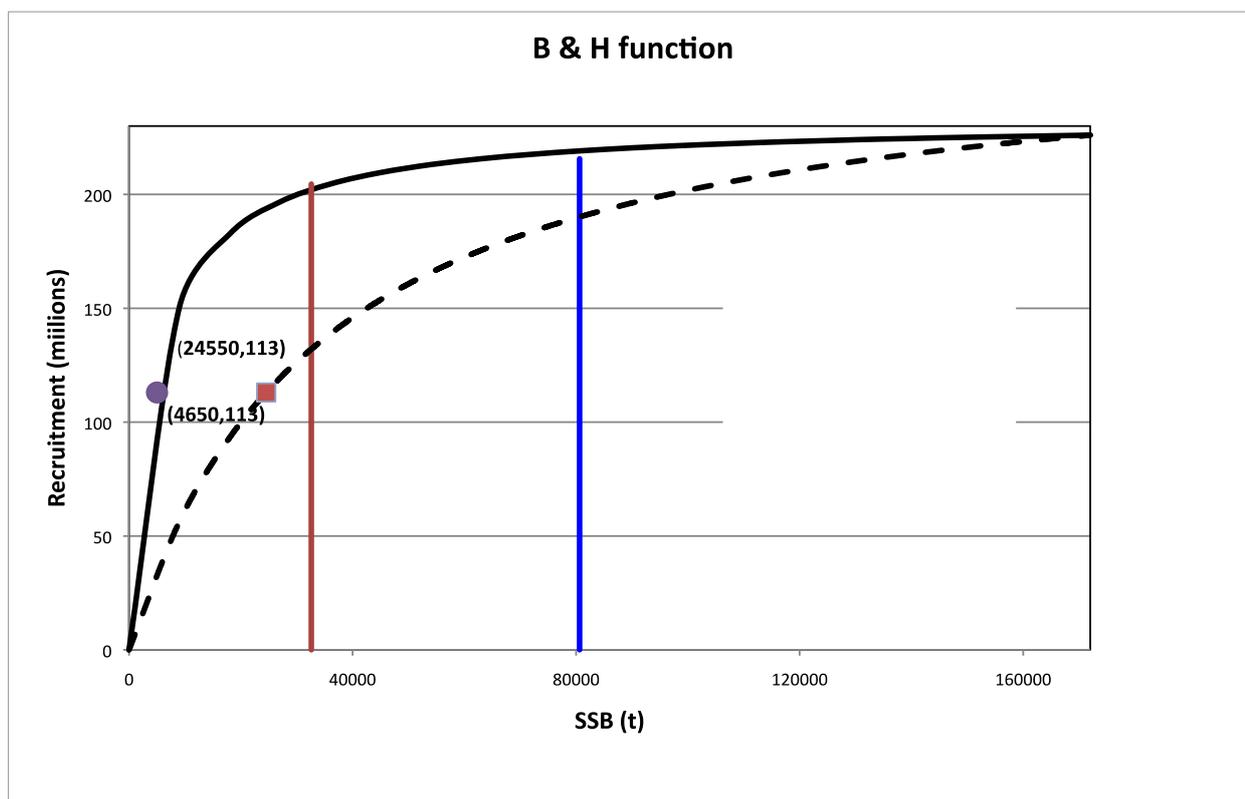


Figure 3. Beverton-Holt function for north Pacific albacore from the results of the 2017 ALBWG stock assessment (ISC, 2017).

Differences in PI 1.1.2-PI 1.2.4 scores

Although some scores have not been identical (e.g., PI 1.2.1), the respective assessment teams have ensured that the Principle 1 scores are harmonized across assessments such that there are no material differences.

If exceptional circumstances apply, outline the situation and whether there is agreement between or among teams on this determination

N/A