

“GREEN SHEET”

Meeting/workshop: December 4-5, Commission Meeting

Agenda Item 13: Recreational Fishery for Albacore Tuna – Briefing

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Background:

Albacore tuna are available throughout the Pacific Ocean and are subject to management by two international entities—the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and the Western-Central Pacific Fishery Commission (WCPFC). For regulations governing the West Coast-based fishery, the Pacific Fishery Management Council manages albacore tuna under its Highly Migratory Species (HMS) fishery management plan, and provides input to the U.S. State Department relative to proposed international management measures.

The International Scientific Committee conducts periodic assessments of the albacore tuna stock—the last assessment was done in 2007, and the next assessment is scheduled for 2011. These assessments are subject to international review and approval. The Pacific Council has developed biological reference points for albacore and considers domestic regulations for West Coast commercial and recreational fisheries targeting albacore, as needed. The Council has a biennial management cycle for all HMS fisheries, including albacore, which takes place during even-numbered years. For example, regulations adopted in 2008 apply to the fishery during the 2009-11 seasons.

Specific to the recreational fishery, through the Pacific Council process, the Department implemented a mandatory logbook program for the charter boat fishery beginning in 2005, and an at-sea observer program on the charter fishery. Beginning in 2006, the Legislature revised the recreational license provisions to require a recreational fishing license for albacore (which had previously been exempted).

During the Council’s biennial management process in 2006, the Council considered recreational bag limits for albacore tuna for California, Oregon, and Washington. Both California and Oregon have bag limits for albacore—the limit is 10 albacore per day in southern California and 25 albacore per day in northern California and throughout Oregon. For Washington, the Council examined alternatives for bag limits and trip limits at the 10, 15, 20, and 25 fish level. These alternatives were analyzed relative to the contribution of the Washington recreational fishery to the overall West Coast-based fishery as well as the total U.S. fishery, the effects on the status of the stock, and the socio-economic effects on the fishery participants, and were discussed with the affected constituents. After much consideration, the Council decided to continue with status quo for all three states.

The Council will again consider changes to HMS regulations in 2010 for the 2011-13 seasons. While state regulations must be consistent with federal regulations, they can be more restrictive. Therefore, the Commission could consider a recreational limit for albacore during one of its meetings next spring; if a recreational limit is adopted, Department staff can bring those regulations through the Council process and request that the federal regulations be revised to conform to the state’s action.

At the December Commission meeting, staff will brief the Commission on the management of albacore tuna and the current recreational fishery regulations, and request guidance on next steps.

Policy issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:

Does the Commission want to pursue consideration of a recreational limit for albacore tuna?

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

Department staff held meetings in 2006 to review the alternatives developed through the Pacific Council process. If the Commission decides to pursue consideration of a recreational limit for albacore, then Department staff will meet with the affected constituents over the winter months and brief the Commission on the results of those discussions next spring.

Actions requested (identify the specific Commission decisions you are seeking):

Provide guidance on next steps and proposed timing.

Draft motion language:

N/A

Justification for Commission adoption:

N/A

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION POLICY DECISION

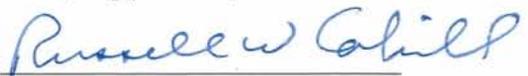
POLICY TITLE: Policy Guidelines For Pacific Fishery Management Council Representation **POLICY NUMBER:** C-3603

Cancels: N/A

Effective Date: August 11, 2000

Termination Date (if applicable):

See Also:

Approved by: 

- Preservation, protection, and perpetuation of the living marine resources through coordinated management of fisheries within the Exclusive Economic Zone shall be the primary principle which will guide the Department's position.
- The Department will support harvest strategies that promote optimum long-term sustainable harvest levels.
- The Department will seek the views of the public, including those who represent the consumptive and non-consumptive interest groups when formulating the Department's position on specific issues before the councils.
- The Department will support balanced representation of Washington interest on the councils' advisory groups and committees, including recreational, commercial and non-consumptive.
- The Department will support initiatives and existing programs which more closely align the harvest capacity with the long-term sustained harvest quantities of marine resources. Specifically, the Department supports individual quota programs and license and effort limitations programs which promote economic efficiency and result in maximizing the social and economic benefits derived from the fishery.
- The Department will support tribal fisheries which are consistent with the applicable federal court orders while recognizing the need for management flexibility to optimize fishing opportunity.
- Resource allocation positions will consider, but not be limited to, social implications, impacts on fishing dependent communities and net economic benefits to the state.

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- The Department will support monitoring programs which gather biological, discard, and bycatch data from each of the fisheries.
- The Department will take a precautionary approach in the management of species where the supporting biological information is incomplete and/or the total fishery-related mortalities are unknown.
- The Department will support consideration of the use of risk-averse management tools to protect the resources in the face of management uncertainty.
- The Department will support management measures which conserve, restore, and enhance the quantity and quality of essential fish habitats upon which Council-managed fisheries resources depend.