**West Coast Fisheries Consultants, LLC**

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Please share the following with the AAFA Board and Membership as it recounts items of interest that arose during the month of June and looks forward to certain events occurring in upcoming months.

We break with our typical format to highlight an issue of paramount importance to AAFA and all fishermen (commercial and recreational alike). In the middle of June, we were made aware of a proposal being shopped around Washington DC by a number of environmental groups and the Marine Conservation Institute. This proposal will ask the President to declare a number of seamounts, ridges and banks off the California coast as National Monuments under the Antiquities Act. The current proposal will ban commercial fishing on or around Gorda Ridges and Mendocino Ridge off of northern California; Gumdrop and Pioneer seamounts, Guide Seamount and Taney Seamounts off of central California; and Rodriguez Seamount, San Juan Seamount, Northeast Bank and Tanner and Cortes Banks off of southern California. AAFA is part of a coalition of 40 groups/businesses which sent a letter to President Obama opposing this proposal (see <http://www.savingseafood.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/West-Coast-Monument-Letter.pdf>). AAFA sent a letter to various members of Congress and Senators which highlighted concerns specific to the west coast albacore fishery. Our letter, which WFOA joined, can be found here - <http://www.urnerbarry.com/huffmanmonument.pdf>. Since we sent that letter, we have been working with staffers of various members of Congress in an effort to let the President know that not all California’s Democratic Congress members are supportive of this action. We have been told a web based portal will be available soon where you can sign on to the growing opposition. Because this is likely going to be something we are dealing with until the President’s term ends in January, expect updates on this. Update – we are hearing more rumors to the effect that the albacore fishery will be exempted from any restrictions to commercial fishing on any closed areas. While this would be great news for the AAFA fleet, it does not impact our opposition to the use of the Antiquities Act to create Marine Protected Areas in Federal waters off the US Coast.

Follow-up on May’s upcoming events:

1. June 16 – Public meeting of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Permanent Advisory Committee. This was intended to discuss outcomes of the 2015 regular annual session of the WCPFC (WCPFC12) and to begin soliciting recommendations leading up to the 2016 regular annual session of the WCPFC. Given recent developments with Pacific bluefin tuna and that the Northern Committee of the WCPFC has been tasked with the Management Strategy Evaluation for north Pacific albacore, I would venture to guess that albacore was not a top priority
2. June 23 – 28, 2016 – Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting. Items related to albacore were included within the Statements submitted by the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Management Team (MT) and HMS Advisory Subpanel (AS). The HMSMT statement contained a table which may be helpful in describing the management objectives resulting from May’s ISC Workshop on albacore - that table is replicated at the end of this document. The HMSAS statement was supportive of the current process being undertaken at the international level and to continue to allow efforts to progress there.
3. June 27 – July 1 – General Meeting of the IATTC. Nicole Ricci attended on behalf of AAFA and I will defer to any overview she produces on that.

Federal Register Items of Interest:

1. June 6 – NMFS issued a final rule which will allow US vessels with South Pacific Tuna Treaty licenses to fish in the Eastern Pacific under the single-trip exception to the requirement that a vessel fishing in the EPO must be registered with the IATTC. I don’t envision this being problematic now that US vessels will be allowed to fish in the South Pacific and seine is not the preferred gear type for albacore; but there is always a chance that seiners normally operating in the South Pacific will make a trip in the EPO. If such a vessel were to stumble upon a spot of albacore, that could be problematic in terms of the MSE process. See – <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=NOAA-NMFS-2016-0036-0001>.
2. June 21 – USCG issued proposed regulations to align its commercial fishing industry vessel regulations with the mandatory provisions of 2010 and 2012 legislation passed by Congress that took effect upon enactment. See - <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=USCG-2012-0025-0001>. Given the length and importance of this document, we will provide a more detailed overview separately in the near future.

Other items of interest:

1. On June 15, the State of Oregon released its draft Forage Fish Management Plan. It deals, primarily, with smelt, sand lance and squids and closely follows the federal forage fish policy which was recently adopted. Unless, and until, AAFA vessels start seeing a lot of smelt, sand lance or squid in their bait hauls, I don’t envision his being a problem at all.
2. On May 31, Resolute Forest Produces filed suit against Greenpeace alleging the environmental group and its allies have engaged in a pattern of defamatory and fraudulent behaviors when targeting the company over its forestry practices. This has the potential to define legal solutions when environmental groups overstep in their claims against harvesters of natural resources.
3. On June 23rd, Seantors Sullivan (AK), Murkowski (AK) and Cantwell (WA) introduced S. 3088 which would, in effect, delay the deadline for Alternate Safety Compliance Programs. This was favorably reported by the Senate Commerce Committee; and could be further acted upon when the Senate reconvenes. This follows a letter to the USCG noting the time constraints. See - <http://www.savingseafood.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Cantwell-letter.pdf>

Upcoming items of interest

1. July 13 – The Port of San Diego will hold a public hearing which will include a Presentation and update on the responses to the world-class waterfront development opportunity (Central Embarcadero) request for proposals and direction to staff regarding further analysis and processing of the proposal. This is concerning to all commercial fishermen who berth in the planned development area. We are trying to get copies of dockage agreements to see if the AAFA vessels which tie up in that area have anything to be worry about. Ie – if the dockage agreement is worded in such a way that fees, etc are not amendable, this may be of less concern.
2. August 29 – Sept 2 – 12th Regular meeting of the Northern Committee of the WCPFC in Fukuoka, Japan. A proposed Agenda has been made recently available on the WCPFC website – see <https://www.wcpfc.int/system/files/WCPFC-2016-NC12-03%20%5BProvisional%20Annotated%20Agenda%5D-31May2016%20%28rev-clean%29.pdf>

