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

Follow-up on March's upcoming events:

1. May 12 – PFMC Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) and Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) will hold a joint meeting by webinar, which is open to the public. “The HMSMT and HMSAS will provide advice to Pacific Council-sponsored attendees to the Second North Pacific Albacore Management Strategy Evaluation Workshop sponsored by the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC). The workshop will be held May 24–25, 2016, in Yokohama, Japan. Information on the meeting time and materials submitted in advance will be available on the Council's website - <http://www.pcouncil.org/2016/03/41398/41398/>.
2. The May 2016 – International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean meeting of the Albacore Working Group. The webinar will be addressing this important meeting.

Federal Register Items of Interest:

1. April 8 – In the 2015 List of Fisheries, you will be happy to know the WA/OR/CA albacore surface hook and line/troll Fishery and its 705 estimated number of vessels/persons had no documented “Marine mammal species and/or stocks incidentally killed or injured.”
2. April 26 – NMFS publishes final rule regarding the area of overlap between the IATTC and WCPFC. Except for regulations regarding the IATTC vessel register, management measures of the IATTC no longer apply. Since 2008, only the troll vessels which target South Pacific albacore and certain purse seine vessels would be impacted.
3. April 29 – NMFS published a notice and request for comments implementing recommendations 14 and 15 from the Presidential Task Force combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and Seafood Fraud. This, in essence, asks for comments on what they are calling the “Commerce Trusted Trader Program”. In an earlier proposed rule, albacore was defined as a species likely to be at risk of IUU fishing or seafood fraud (see <https://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2015-0122-0001>). If albacore retains that classification when the final rule is issued, importation of albacore will fall under the Commerce Trusted Trader Program.

Other items of interest:

1. AAFA held its annual meeting last month. I appreciate the opportunity to present and meet those who attended. Highly recommend those who couldn't attend, plan on doing so next year. A lot of valuable information was shared.
2. Last month we highlighted the proposed Wind Farm to be located off of Piedras Blancas. We attended the April PFMC meeting and spoke on this project during the Habitat portion of the Council meeting. Before offering our comments I did some background research and found that a number of Morro Bay fishermen (commercial and sport) had no knowledge of the project. I also spoke with Chris Kubiak (Central California Joint Cable/Fisheries Liaison Committee) and he supported the comments I delivered. We expected a publication in the Federal Register on this proposed offshore lease during April; but it never materialized.
3. The US requested a WTO compliance program regarding the Dolphin-safe regulations we noted in last month's report. In late April, Mexico rejected the US request on procedural grounds. So while the regulations promulgated by NMFS are still in effect, they may be revisited in the future in the event they are found to be insufficient. See - <http://www.ictsd.org/bridges-news/bridges/news/disputes-roundup-mexico-rejects-us-compliance-panel-request-in-tuna-case>

Upcoming items of interest

1. May 4 – Public workshop/hearing on Alternative Safety Compliance Programs (ASCP) to be held in Half Moon Bay. We previously wrote up an overview of ASCPs highlighting the October 2015 Matrix. We will be attending the workshop and will relay any information AAFA members have supplied.
2. May 12 – PFMC Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) and Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) will hold a joint meeting by webinar, which is open to the public. “The primary purpose of the webinar is to provide advice to Council-sponsored attendees to the Second North Pacific Albacore Management Strategy Evaluation Workshop sponsored by the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC).” The following will provide the basis for the discussion - http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/F4_Att2_NorthernCommMgmtObjectives_MAR2016BB.pdf
3. May 24 – 30, 2016 – International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean
4. June 23 – 28, 2016 – Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting in Tacoma, Washington. The Proposed Agenda has two days of HMS related items. I assume the recently completed meetings in Japan will be discussed. This will also be the only time the full Council can discuss the MSE for North Pacific albacore before the Northern Committee for the WCPFC meets August 29 and September 2.