IDENTIFICATION

SCIENTIFIC NAME
Thunnus alalunga

SPECIES NAME(S)
Albacore

STOCK IDENTIFICATION
The North Pacific albacore population is considered to be biologically separate from the South Pacific population. This is based on fishery, tagging, ecological and genetic data (ISC 2014).

RELATED LINKS:
- Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)
- Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)

ASSESSMENT

Strengths
Based on the most recent stock assessment (2014), albacore in the North Pacific are likely not overfished and not undergoing overfishing. It has been recommended by the ISC Albacore Working Group (http://isc.ac.affrc.go.jp/working_groups/albacore/index.html) that fishing mortality rates should be maintained at current levels and that current management measures should be maintained (AWG 2014).

Weaknesses
Target and limit reference points have not been formally adopted and there is no harvest control rule in place. Data reporting from some countries (China and South Korea highlighted during 2011 assessment), specifically with regard to effort data, need to be improved. The last assessment noted that additional information on sex-specific size data, updated estimates on maturity and natural mortality rates and spatial analysis, could potentially improve assessment results. Albacore’s range spans multiple regional fishery management organizations (RFMOs): Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC). The Convention texts from these two RFMO’s calls for cooperation in the management of albacore throughout its migratory range. The 2005 management measures in place for albacore through the WCPFC and IATTC call for members not to increase fishing effort beyond “current effort” but neither defined explicitly what “current” means. In 2013 IATTC adopted a supplemental resolution to define “current effort” but the WCPFC has yet to follow suit. Information on bycatch in longline fisheries is limited due to low observer coverage (5%).

SCORES

Management Quality:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Strategy</th>
<th>Managers Compliance</th>
<th>Fishers Compliance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≥ 6</td>
<td>≥ 8</td>
<td>≥ 6</td>
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Stock Health:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Health</th>
<th>Future Health</th>
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<tr>
<td>≥ 8</td>
<td>9.3</td>
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FIPS

No related FIPs

MSC

- AAFA and WPTA North Pacific albacore tuna: MSC Recertified

RECOMMENDATIONS

RETAILERS & SUPPLY CHAIN

Monitor the progress in closing out conditions placed upon the MSC certification of the fishery and if agreed timelines are met, offer assistance in closing conditions where possible.

- Work with Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Members, Cooperating Non-Members, and Participating Territories to:
  - Develop and implement comprehensive, precautionary harvest strategies with specific timelines for all tuna stocks, including the adoption and implementation of limit and target reference points, harvest control rules, monitoring strategies, operational objectives, performance indicators, and management strategy evaluation.
  - Strengthen compliance processes and make information on non-compliance public and continue to provide evidence of compliance with all WCPFC and IATTC Conservation and Management Measures in a timely manner.
  - Implement a 100% observer coverage requirement for all transshipment activities, as well as other measures that ensure transshipment activity is transparent and well-managed, and that all required data are collected and transmitted to the appropriate bodies in a timely manner.
  - Increase compliance with the mandatory minimum 5% longline observer coverage rates by identifying and correcting non-compliance.
  - Implement a 100% observer coverage requirement – human and/or electronic – within five years for longline fisheries. Adopt a 100% observer coverage requirement for purse seine vessels where it is not
already required and require the use of the best-available observer safety equipment, communications and procedures.

- Adopt effective measures for the use of non-entangling FAO-designs as a precautionary measure to minimize the entanglement of sharks and other non-target species, and support research on biodegradable materials and transition to their use to mitigate marine debris.

- More effectively implement, and ensure compliance with, existing RFMO bycatch requirements and take additional mitigation action, such as improving monitoring at sea, collecting and sharing operational-level, species specific data, and adopting stronger compliance measures, including consequences for non-compliance for all gear types.

- Ensure all products are traceable back to legal sources. Verify source information and full chain traceability through traceability desk audits or third party traceability certification. For fisheries without robust traceability systems in place, invest in meaningful improvements to bring the fisheries and supply chain in compliance with best practices.