
**COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF
HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS IN THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL
PACIFIC OCEAN**

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NATIONAL REPORT

CANADA

Introduction

1. The Pacific Canadian fishery is focused on highly migratory albacore tuna (*Thunnus alalunga*) using troll gear. This is a jig-fishery, net gear is not permitted. Canadian fishers have been fishing albacore since the mid-1930s in the north Pacific and since the 1980s in the south Pacific (Ware and Yamanaka 1991, Shaw and Argue 2000).

2. The north Pacific fishery lasts primarily from May through October each year when albacore are abundant offshore and in coastal waters. The south Pacific fishery lasts from December through March (Argue et al. 1999). The Canadian fleet operates all over the Pacific. Two to five vessels in the south Pacific, 50 to 70 vessels in waters outside the Canadian EEZ and the USA EEZ to as far west as 170°E in the north Pacific, and up to 230 vessels in the coastal waters. In total, there are about 350 unique Canadian vessels that have participated in the albacore fishery in at least one year since 1995.

3. Catches by the Canadian fleet in the north Pacific albacore troll fishery have ranged from 1,720 tonnes in 1995 to 7,796 tonnes preliminary catch estimate in 2004, with an average catch of 4,358 tonnes (Stocker and Shaw 2005a). In recent years higher catch concentration is occurring along the North American coast and the offshore fleet has increased effort in the Northwest Pacific. Between 100 and 400 tonnes of catch are taken in the south Pacific (Stocker and Shaw 2005b). Canadian caught albacore is worth up to Can\$28 million per year in landed value. There currently is no recreational or First Nations fisheries taking place.

Fleet Structure

4. The Canadian fishery started in the coastal waters off British Columbia (B.C.). It has now developed into a fishery with two fleet types, smaller vessels fishing B.C. coastal and USA coastal waters, and larger vessels fishing on the high seas of the north and south Pacific Ocean. The 2004 fleet size is estimated at 219 vessels.

North Pacific Jig Fishery

5. The Canadian jig fishery is comprised of two fleets. The coastal fleet operates within and near the Canadian and United States fishing zones in accordance with zone and port access privileges under the Canada/U.S. Albacore Tuna Treaty. Vessels in this fleet, mostly 35 to 60 feet in length, concentrate their fishing effort primarily from the southern California coast to the northern tip of Vancouver Island and, in some years, as far north as off the west coast of the Queen Charlotte Islands. Ocean conditions, the availability of albacore, and abundance and distribution of Pacific salmon all influence the size and distribution of the Canadian tuna fleet in any particular year. Effort in the coastal fishery normally starts in June and peaks in September, after the salmon season for trollers has wound down. The catch is primarily bled and blast frozen with some vessels holding fresh caught fish in ice or frozen brine. The catch from the coastal fleet is sold either into U.S. or Canadian plants where the fish are sold in the canned tuna market or the fresh-frozen sashimi market.

6. The Canadian high seas fleet is comprised of larger jig vessels (most greater than 60 feet) with crews typically of two to four fishermen that remain at sea for trips of several months. These vessels, most of which are equipped with large freezers, operate primarily from west of the dateline to the Canadian zone in the north Pacific. Offshore fishing in the north Pacific on the Midway and Wake Islands grounds usually starts in late May or June and, weather and tuna abundance permitting, lasts through late fall as the vessels follow albacore towards the North American coast. Offshore vessel catches are also sold into the canned market, although the majority is bled and blast frozen then sold into the fresh-frozen sashimi market. There are a number of small processors that have established special niche markets for albacore. The product is either smoked (hot or cold) or loined and sold directly to consumers.

South Pacific Jig Fishery

7. Since the mid 1980s a smaller fleet has fished south Pacific albacore between the New Zealand zone and 140°W and 30°S to 45°S. After the end of the north Pacific albacore season (sometime in October), a small number of Canadian vessels fish in the southern albacore fishery during the austral summer months (December to April). These vessels range between 70 and 90 feet and have a crew of four. The majority of the fish are bled and blast frozen with a few vessels using brine. Some of the vessels will tranship their catch to carrier vessels at sea in order to continue fishing operations on migrating schools of tuna. However, in most cases the catch is sold to American Samoa, Fiji, French Polynesia (Papeete) and Canada. The Canadian markets are the same as for the north Pacific fishery.

South Pacific Annual Catches by Canada in the WCPO Convention Area, 2000-2004

8. Based on analyses of transshipment records and discussions with skippers, Canadian landings in this fishery from its inception in 1987/88 to 1994/95 are estimated to have ranged from 134 to 335 mt per season. Based on log book, sales slips, transshipment data, and fisherman interviews, the 1995/96 to 2003/2004 catch of southern albacore by Canadian registered vessels was:

FISHING SEASON	ESTIMATED TOTAL CATCH (mt)
1995/96	136
1996/97	149
1997/98	167
1998/99	253
1999/00	351
2000/01	206
2001/02	144
2002/03	0
2003/04	63

No catch was reported for the 2002/03 fishing season. The estimated catch for the 2003/2004 fishing season was 63 mt (Stocker and Shaw 2005b).

North Pacific annual catches by Canada, 2003-2004

9. Below, for FAO Statistical Areas, are the estimates of the 2003 and the preliminary estimates of the 2004 northern albacore catch by Canadian jig boats (Stocker and Shaw 2005b).

FAO STATISTICAL AREA	ESTIMATED TOTAL 2003 CATCH (mt)	ESTIMATED TOTAL 2004 CATCH (mt)
Northeast Pacific, Area 67	6,314	7,620
Northwest Pacific, Area 61	330	44
Eastern Central Pacific, Area 77 ²	91	132
TOTALS	6,735	7,796

10. The distribution of total north Pacific Canadian catch between FAO Statistical Areas was based on the distribution of reported catch from logbooks. Logbooks coverage

was 98% of an estimated fleet of 193 vessels that were fishing in 2003, and 90% of an estimated fleet of 218 vessels that were fishing in 2004.

11. The total estimated Canadian catch in the north Pacific for 2004 was 7,796 mt, compared to 6,735 mt in 2003. Most of this catch (98%) was taken in FAO Area 67. Catch in 2004 in Area 61 was substantially less than the catch in 2003, whereas catch in 2004 in Area 77 was 45% greater than the catch in 2003. The Canadian fleet off the North American coast caught fish from southern California to the northern tip of Vancouver Island.

Current Management and Enforcement Measures

12. The current tool being used to manage the Albacore Tuna fishery is through the implementation of an Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP). The IFMP provides a clear and concise summary of the fishery, the management objectives for the fishery, the management and conservation measures used to achieve those objectives and the criteria by which attainment of objectives will be measured.

13. Licences are issued pursuant to Section 68 of the *Fishery (General) Regulations* and Section 19 of the *Pacific Fishery Regulations, 1993* for fishing or trans-shipping tuna on the high seas. The Section 19 licences authorize fishing for five tuna species in Canadian fisheries waters and the high seas. The species are Alabacore (*Thunnus alalunga*); Northern Bluefin (*Thunnus thynnus*); Pacific Bonito (*Sarda chiliensis*); Skipjack (*Euthynnus pelamis*); and Yellowfin (*thunnus albacares*). The Section 68 licences authorize fishing for these five tuna species as well as bycatch species: Bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*), Yellowtail (*Seriola lalandi*), Blackfin tuna (*Thunnus atlanticus*), Little tuna (*Euthynnus sp.*), Frigate mackerel (*Auzis sp.*), Pomfrets (*Family Bramidae*), Marlines (*Tetrapturus sp.: Makaira sp.*), sail-fishes (*Istiophorus sp.*), Swordfishes (*Xiphias gladius*), Sauries (*Scomberesox sp.: Coloabis sp.*), Dolphin fish (mahi mahi) *Coryphaena sp.*. A separate USA Section 68 is required for fishing albacore tuna only in USA fisheries waters pursuant to the Canada/US treaty. Canadian fishermen only fish Albacore tuna and the gear is hook and line which includes trolling. Longlining is permitted but not used.

14. Fisheries and Oceans Canada has the responsibility to enforce the Fisheries Act and associated regulations, to address conservation, health and safety issues and to maintain proper management and control of the various fisheries. Users of the resource have a responsibility to report violations. Any suspected or actual fisheries, wildlife or pollution violations can be quickly and discretely reported to the appropriate Enforcement Officer by using the toll free Observe, Record and Report hotline. This toll free number is available 24 hours a day. Confidentiality is assured. Fishery officers attempt to follow through on the reports as often as time and resources allow.

15. The vessel master must maintain an accurate record of daily harvest operations in the Canadian Pacific Albacore Tuna Log Book when fishing for tuna. This includes harvest information on fishing for all species of tuna in Canadian fisheries waters, on the

High Seas and in the waters of the United States. The log book must be made available for inspection on demand by officials of either country. Conditions of licence require all tuna fishers to record all catch information and fishing location information, and to provide that information to DFO in hard copy and electronic copy. The vessel master must provide records of all fish caught and retained under authority of a licence. A report must be made even if the fish caught are used for bait, personal consumption or disposed of otherwise and shall include all fish landed at both Canadian and United States ports or transhipped at sea.

16. Fish slips are required that record vessel name, vessel registration number, vessel master name and tally man, landed weight (lbs.) of each species, method of dressing the catch, days fished by area, date landed, name of buying station/processor and price per pound on a fish slip for each landing.

17. Hail reports are required to be made by vessel masters to report information on all fishing activity including fishing dates and zones.

Violations of the provisions of the Convention and measures adopted.

18. There have been no violations of the provisions of the Convention.

Port State Measures

19. The Coastal Fisheries Protection Act (CFPA) is the legislative means for controlling foreign fishing vessel access to, and activities in, Canadian waters and ports. As a general rule reflected in the CFPA, Canadian ports are closed to foreign fishing vessels, and access to Canadian waters and ports is a privilege that may be granted by the Canadian government.

20. The Coastal Fisheries Protection Regulations provides the authority for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to grant the privilege of accessing Canadian waters and ports to foreign fishing vessels. In accordance with these Regulations, a foreign fishing vessel may apply for a licence that would grant it access to Canadian ports and waters. The licence application should specify exactly the activities the vessel would like to be licensed to do.

21. The Minister may issue a licence if the Minister determines that the Government of Canada has favourable fisheries relations with the government of the vessel's flag state. However, the Minister will not issue a licence to foreign fishing vessel if there are reasonable grounds to believe that:

- (a) the vessel is not licensed or otherwise authorized by its flag state to engage in fisheries activities;
- (b) the vessel is not in compliance with or has undermined relevant conservation and management measures;

- (c) the vessel has provided supplies to a foreign fishing vessel that is not in compliance with relevant conservation and management measures;
- (d) the proposed activity is not compatible with or will undermine relevant conservation and management measures; or
- (e) the proposed activity is not consistent with the sustainable use of fisheries resources or will contribute to excess harvesting or processing capacity.

22. If the Minister chooses to grant a licence, conditions may be attached to the licence that would restrict the scope of the privileges that are being granted.

References

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Stocker, M. and W. Shaw. 2005b MS. Canadian albacore tuna fisheries in the North and South Pacific Ocean. Canadian National Fisheries Report for the 1st Meeting of the Scientific Committee of the WCPFC, Noumea, New Caledonia, August 8-19, 2005. FR WP-4: 6p.

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