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ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMISSION
PART 1: INFORMATION OF FISHERIES, RESEARCH AND STATISTICS

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Submitted by Canada

2026 Annual Report to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

Canada

PART I. INFORMATION ON FISHERIES, RESEARCH, AND STATISTICS (For 2025)

Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Ecosystems and Science Branch, Pacific Biological Station

Scientific data was provided to the Commission in accordance with the decision relating to the provision of scientific data to the Commission by 30 April 2026	**YES**
If no, please indicate the reason(s) and intended actions:	

1.0 SUMMARY

Canada has one main commercial fishery for highly migratory species in the Pacific Ocean, a troll fishery targeting juvenile north Pacific albacore tuna (NPALB; *Thunnus alalunga*). This report focuses on Canadian fishery performance in 2025, supported by historical context from 1995–2024. Since 2007, the Canadian troll fleet has largely operated in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO), east of 150°W and north of 30°N. In 2025, the Canadian fleet comprised 99 vessels which predominantly operated within the Canadian exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and only a small amount of fishing activity occurred on the high seas in the northern EPO (i.e., beyond the EEZs of Canada and the United States). Preliminary estimates indicate that total catch in 2025 in the EPO was 1,726 t with approximately 3,520 vessel-days of effort.

In the north Pacific Ocean within the WCPFC convention area, the historical annual Canadian catch and effort between 1995 and 2005, ranged from 11 to 1,007 metric tons (t) of NPALB and 17 to 1,017 vessel-days, respectively. Between 2006 and 2016, there was either no effort or negligible amount of catch and effort (< 1 t of catch and < 5 vessel-days effort annually). Five Canadian vessels caught a total of 55 t of albacore in the north Pacific Ocean WCPFC convention area in 2017. In 2021, one Canadian vessel fished for three days in the north Pacific WCPFC convention area with no reported catch. One vessel briefly operated in the north Pacific WCPFC convention area in 2025 and reported no catch.

In the south Pacific Ocean within the WCPFC convention area, the historical annual Canadian effort and catch of south Pacific albacore tuna (SPALB) between 1996 and 2007 ranged from 0 to 313 t and 4 to 348 vessel-days, respectively. There was activity by the Canadian fleet in the south Pacific between 2008 and 2019. In 2020, one Canadian vessel fished for five days in the

south Pacific WCPFC convention area with no reported catch. In 2021, one Canadian vessel participated in the SPALB fishery for 54 vessel-days and recorded a total catch of 31 t of SPALB. No Canadian vessel fished in the south Pacific WCPFC convention area between 2022 to 2025.

2.0 TABULAR ANNUAL FISHERIES INFORMATION

This section summarizes annual catch, effort, and fleet participation for the Canadian highly migratory species (HMS) troll fishery operating across the Pacific Ocean from 1995 to 2025, based on data presented in Tables 1 and 2. The fishery data provided in this report were taken from the Canadian Albacore Database version 26.04.09. The data up to 2024 are definitive while the 2025 data are provisional.

The preliminary catch and effort estimates for 2025 are 1,726 t of NPALB and 3,520 vessel-days of effort (Table 1), undertaken by 99 individual troll vessels (Table 2). Relative to 2024, this represents a large decline in catch (~40%) and a modest decrease in effort (~3%), while fleet size declined slightly. No catch or effort were reported from the south Pacific Ocean in 2025 (Table 1; Figures 1-3).

3.0 BACKGROUND

Canadians have been fishing for albacore in the Pacific Ocean since 1939, but catches were well below 1,000 t annually until the mid-1990s. The Canadian fishery has operated in the north Pacific Ocean between 20 and 55°N and from the North American coast as far west as 170°E and in the south Pacific Ocean between 30-45°S and 130-160°W. Although the Canadian troll fleet will follow albacore into the high seas, the majority of catch and effort has occurred in the EEZs of Canada and the United States since the 2000s. Few Canadian vessels (< 3) operated in the northern WCPFC convention area in 2005-2016, but five Canadian vessels fished for albacore in the area in 2017 (Figure 2). Canadian vessels last participated in the south Pacific albacore fishery in 2007, with the exception of late 2020 and early 2021, when one Canadian vessel fished briefly in the south Pacific Ocean (Table 2; Figure 2). No Canadian vessels participated in a south Pacific albacore fishery from 2022 to 2025. Management regulations for Canadian vessels are documented in the Albacore Tuna Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP; Pacific region tuna IFMP (publications.gc.ca)), which covers a one year period from 01 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

4.0 FLAG STATE REPORTING OF NATIONAL FISHERIES

4.1 Canadian Albacore Troll Fishery

The Canadian troll fishery operating in the WCPFC convention area experienced a significant decline in participation in the 2000s (Table 2), declining from 15 fishing vessels in 2003 to 1 vessel in 2005 (Figure 2). Few Canadian vessels participated in albacore fishing in the WCPFC convention area between 2006 and 2016. In 2017, five Canadian vessels did fish in the WCPFC convention area and one vessel in late 2020 and early 2021. In 2025, participation in the WCPFC convention area remained negligible, with only one Canadian vessel briefly operating in the region and no catch was reported (Figure 1). Participation of Canadian vessels in the south Pacific albacore fishery has never exceeded five vessels, with one vessel returning to fish in the south Pacific ocean in 2021 for the first time since 2007 (Table 2; Figure 2) and no Canadian vessels have participated in a south Pacific fishery since then.

Canada implemented a catch sampling program in 2009 to obtain size composition data from the Canadian troll fishery. These data are collected by harvesters who record the lengths of the first 10 fish landed on a daily basis. The target sampling rate is 1% of the total reported catch and has been achieved every year (Table 3). Forty (40) vessels participated in the sampling program in 2025 and recorded 11,221 fork length (FL) measurements of juvenile North Pacific albacore, for a sampling rate of 4.1% (Table 3). Fork lengths ranged from 42 to 93 cm, having a mode around 67-68 cm, corresponding to 2-year old fish and very few larger 3/4-year old fish. The overall mean length of albacore caught in 2025 was 68.4 cm, which is only slightly larger than the mean in 2024 at 67.2 cm.

4.2 Interactions with other Species in the WCPFC Convention Area

There were no reported interactions or bycatch of pelagic sharks, seabirds, sea turtles or other vulnerable marine species by the Canadian fishery in the WCPFC convention area in 2025.

4.3 Swordfish

Canadian-flagged vessels did not fish for or catch swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) south of 15°S during the 2000-2025 period. Canada did not charter, lease or authorize similar arrangements as part of the domestic Canadian fishery,

4.4 Striped Marlin

Canadian-flagged vessels did not fish for or catch Striped marlin (*Kajikia audax*) south of 20°S during the 2000-2025 period. Canada did not charter, lease or authorize similar arrangements as part of the domestic Canadian fishery.

5.0 COASTAL STATE REPORTING

Canada is not a coastal state to the WCPFC Convention Area.

6.0 SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

Vessels participating in the Canadian fishery are troll vessels and most are between 11 and 18 m in length. Fishing effort by these vessels occurs mainly within the Canadian EEZ but has extended from southern Oregon to southern Alaska, when fishing in the United States EEZ is permitted. Several vessels greater than 18 m in length are able to access offshore waters and remain at-sea for several months.

Fishing activity is dependent on market, ocean and weather conditions, availability of albacore, strength of other fisheries (particularly the domestic salmon and groundfish fisheries) and fuel costs. Effort in the coastal fishery normally peaks in August and September, after the Canadian salmon troll fishing season has wound down. High fuel prices coupled with an apparent increase in the availability of albacore closer to North America, and uncertain weather conditions in the mid-Pacific were likely factors contributing to the contraction of the operational area of the Canadian albacore fishery that began in the 2000s.

The current Canadian albacore troll fishery can also be affected by the terms of the fishing regime set out in the Canada-United States Bilateral Albacore Tuna Treaty. In 2025, the Canadian fleet did not have access to fish in the United States EEZ due to the absence of agreement on a fishing regime under the bilateral tuna treaty between the countries.

7.0 DISPOSAL OF CATCH

Canadian troll vessels are equipped with freezers to blast freeze albacore for both foreign and domestic sashimi and loin markets. The majority of catch is offloaded at domestic ports, with Port Hardy, Victoria, Ucluelet and Steveston handling most of the total annual landings. Ports in the United States designated by the bilateral treaty, are also sometimes utilized by Canadian vessels. Small amounts of frozen fish (<1 t) are occasionally sold directly to the public through dock-side sales or are kept for personal use. These sales are recorded in logbooks and included in catch estimates for this fishery.

8.0 ONSHORE DEVELOPMENTS

There were no notable developments in 2025.

9.0 FUTURE PROSPECTS OF THE FISHERY

The Canadian albacore fishery catch and catch rate were at a historic low in 2017. Catch increased in 2018 and remained relatively stable until increasing in 2022. In 2023, however, catch declined to the lowest level observed in the timeseries, likely due to the decrease in effort rather than the availability of fish. In 2024, catch increased back up to a level similar to the annual average over the last decade. However in 2025, catch declined to 1,726 t, representing a 40% decrease relative to 2024.

Fishing effort declined steadily from 2017 to 2020, reaching a low potentially due to impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic safety measures. Effort increased slightly in 2021 and 2022, before declining again in 2023 to a historical low for this fishery, largely due to poor market conditions, high fuel prices, and other complexities in the fleet dynamics. In 2024, effort rebounded back up to levels slightly below the annual average over the last decade and remained relatively stable in 2025 despite the decline in catch.

The reduced catch and catch rates observed in 2025 may reflect changes in the availability or accessibility of albacore to the Canadian fleet, potentially influenced by environmental conditions and spatial constraints. The strong association between catch and environmental conditions observed in recent years suggests that interannual variability in oceanographic conditions may continue to play a key role in shaping future fishery performance.

The dominant demographic in the Canadian troll fishery consists of participants who operate in other Canadian fisheries and are generally near retirement age. The next generation of Canadian albacore fishery participants does not appear to be well developed at present, which may have implications for future participation and capacity in the fishery.

The future performance of the Canadian HMS troll fishery will likely depend on a combination of environmental conditions, access arrangements, and the renewal and adaptation of the fleet.

10.0 STATUS OF FISHERY DATA COLLECTION SYSTEM

10.1 Logbook Data Collection and Verification

Canadian albacore catch and effort data are compiled from hail records, logbooks, and sales slips from buyers and processing plants, and then stored in a relational database (Stocker et al. 2007). This database contains all fishery-related data from 1995 to the present and provides the best estimate of total annual catch and effort by temporal and geographic strata.

All vessels are required to hail (call) a third party service provider when they start and stop fishing and provide information on where fishing occurred (e.g., Canadian EEZ, United States EEZ, and/or the adjacent high-seas). Hail data are used to estimate the number of vessels participating in the fishery and the approximate area of fishing activity in-season (Stocker et al. 2007).

Canadian vessels must carry logbooks and record daily catch (number of fish and estimated weight of both retained and released albacore), albacore length measurements, fishing location (latitude and longitude), and effort (number of jigs, hours fished). Catches and the disposition (retained or released; dead or alive) of non-target species are also recorded in logbooks. Completed copies of the logbooks must be returned for data entry after fishing is terminated or by mid-November, whichever is first (see Stocker et al. 2007).

The annual catch and effort data shown in Table 1 represent expanded (or raised) rather than reported values (see Stocker 2007) and were obtained from Version 26.04.09 of the Canadian database. The amount of expansion needed to arrive at these figures can be determined from the annual logbook coverage shown in Table 1. Canada had 100% logbook coverage from 2014 to 2023 and no expansion has been required. In 2024, one logbook is still outstanding and an expansion has been applied based on the vessels historical catch. In 2025, the logbook coverage was 100%. The vessel participation data (Table 2) represent the number of unique vessels as determined from the hail and logbook data streams.

10.2 Observer Programme

Canada does not have an observer program for its albacore troll fleet.

10.3 Port Sampling

Canada does not have a port sampling program to measure albacore fork lengths or other biological information during domestic offloads. Prior to 2009, some vessels unloading in United States ports had portions of their catch sampled by United States port samplers and these data were made available to Canada. The record of port sampled length frequency data is available from 1984 to 2008.

10.4 Unloading/Transhipment

At-sea transshipment or in-port transshipment activities were not reported by the Canadian albacore troll fleet in 2025. All transshipment activity by Canada's tuna vessels is prohibited.

11.0 RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Canada continues to advance the development and implementation of a fleet-wide vessel monitoring system (VMS) for the albacore fishery, with full deployment anticipated in the coming years. VMS is expected to improve monitoring, compliance, and enforcement, while providing high-resolution spatial data to support stock assessments and analyses of environmental influences on fishing activity. Currently, spatial data are derived primarily from logbooks, which lack independent verification and sufficient resolution for fine-scale analyses.

Canada is also continuing to monitor a small but developing recreational albacore fishery in Canadian waters, which operated seasonally between June and September. Data are collected through regional recreational catch reporting surveys, with ongoing work improve estimation

methods. Preliminary estimates suggest that total removals from the recreational sector remain low, though continued research is required to better understand this sector.

Recent research has also focused on characterizing the size composition of albacore caught in Canadian waters (Figure 4). Annual length-frequency distributions indicate that the fishery is consistently dominated by individuals in the ~60-75 cm fork length range, corresponding largely to younger age classes (approximately age-2 and age-3 fish). While the overall distribution is generally unimodal, interannual variability in both the central tendency and spread suggests potential changes in cohort strength, recruitment, or availability within Canadian waters. Ongoing work aims to further investigate temporal trends in size structure and their relationship with oceanographic conditions, migration patterns, and fishery dynamics.

12.0 LITERATURE CITED

Stocker, M., H. Stiff, W. Shaw, and A.W. Argue. 2007. The Canadian albacore tuna catch and effort relational database. Canadian Technical Report of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences 2701: vi+76 p.

Table 1. Catch and effort statistics for the Canadian troll fishery targeting albacore in the WCPFC convention area, 1995 to 2025. A 0 means no reported data.

Year	Logbook Coverage (%)[D]	North Pacific[A]		WCPFC CA[B]		South Pacific	
		Catch (t)	Effort (v-d)	Catch (t)	Effort (v-d)	Catch (t)	Effort (v-d)
1995	18	1,761	5,923	23	17	0	0
1996	24	3,321	8,164	811	523	82	168
1997	30	2,166	4,320	1,007	1,017	149	171
1998	50	4,177	6,018	752	455	167	111
1999	71	2,734	6,970	151	327	254	197
2000	68	4,531	8,769	586	608	313	348
2001	81	5,248	10,021	569	383	208	168
2002	74	5,379	8,323	259	250	144	158
2003	96	6,861	8,429	453	389	0	4
2004	92	7,857	9,942	123	159	63	67
2005	94	4,829	8,564	11	57	72	111
2006	95	5,833	6,243	0	0	135	105
2007	92	6,040	6,902	0	0	30	59
2008	93	5,464	5,774	0	0	0	0
2009	97	5,693	6,540	0	0	0	0
2010	96	6,527	7,294	0	0	0	0
2011	98	5,415	8,605	1	0	0	0
2012	100	2,498	6,005	<1	2	0	0
2013	99	5,090	6,469	<1	4	0	0
2014	100	4,780	4,745	0	0	0	0
2015	100	4,391	5,244	0	0	0	0
2016	100	2,842	5,359	0	0	0	0
2017	100	1,830	4,978	55	100	0	0
2018	100	2,717	4,196	0	0	0	0
2019	100	2,402	3,882	0	0	0	0
2020	100	2,375	3,301	0	0	0	5
2021	100	2,419	3,687	0	3	31	54
2022	100	3,639	4,073	0	0	0	0
2023	100	1,151	2,117	0	0	0	0
2024	99	2,894	3,633	0	0	0	0
2025[C]	100	1,726	3,520	0.06	1	0	0

A – Total catch and effort in the north Pacific, including catch and effort within the WCPFC CA

B – North Pacific albacore catch and effort west of 150 °W longitude (inside the WCPFC CA).

C – Provisional estimates from Canadian database version 26.04.09.

D - Logbook coverage is calculated as the number of vessels returning logbooks divided by the total number of vessels known to be fishing based on hail, sales slip and logbook records.

Table 2. Number of Canadian troll vessels active in the WCPFC Convention Area for 1995-2025.

Year	North Pacific[A]	North Pacific – WCPFC Convention Area[B]	South Pacific
1995	287	3	3
1996	295	25	3
1997	200	32	3
1998	214	27	3
1999	238	14	5
2000	243	12	5
2001	248	7	4
2002	232	7	4
2003	193	15	1
2004	221	5	1
2005	213	1	2
2006	174	0	2
2007	207	0	1
2008	134	0	0
2009	138	0	0
2010	159	0	0
2011	177	2	0
2012	175	2	0
2013	183	1	0
2014	160	0	0
2015	164	0	0
2016	152	0	0
2017	121	5	0
2018	121	0	0
2019	122	0	0
2020	104	0	1
2021	113	1	1
2022	118	0	0
2023	80	0	0
2024	101	0	0
2025[C]	99	1	0

A - Total number of Canadian vessels in the north Pacific Ocean, including vessels accessing the WCPFC Convention Area.

B – Canadian vessels that reported entering the WCPFC Convention Area.

C – Provisional estimates from Canadian database version 26.04.09.

Table 3. Summary of size (fork length, FL) sampling program results for the Canadian albacore troll fishery, 2009-2025. All the fish measured were captured outside of the WCPFC Convention Area.

Year	Sample Size, N	Min FL (cm)	Mean FL (cm)	Max FL (cm)	Standard Deviation (cm)	Reported Catch (pieces)	Sampling Rate
2009	14,723	46.0	68.2	98.0	5.7	955,553	1.54%
2010	9,882	51.0	71.5	90.0	6.7	927,051	1.07%
2011	14,263	50.0	69.9	90.0	6.4	830,336	1.72%
2012	11,139	43.0	70.2	100.0	5.6	371,279	3.00%
2013	17,150	45.0	71.2	105.0	5.7	765,929	2.24%
2014	11,208	43.0	72.5	102.0	6.4	699,395	1.60%
2015	13,258	45.0	67.6	107.0	6.4	750,395	1.77%
2016	14,189	47.0	70.6	94.0	5.8	446,091	3.18%
2017	10,517	50.0	68.9	96.0	5.5	296,305	3.55%
2018	9,401	48.0	67.4	94.0	5.8	458,648	2.05%
2019	11,067	40.0	66.1	91.0	4.0	419,536	2.64%
2020	8,982	51.0	69.1	88.0	4.1	370,606	2.42%
2021	10,392	50.0	68.1	95.0	7.7	398,814	2.61%
2022	16,791	52.0	68.4	93.0	3.6	598,557	2.81%
2023	7,179	47.0	69.9	92.0	7.3	167,211	4.29%
2024	12,470	57.0	67.2	96.0	4.0	500,049	2.49%
2025	11,221	42.0	68.4	93.0	4.1	275,612	4.07%

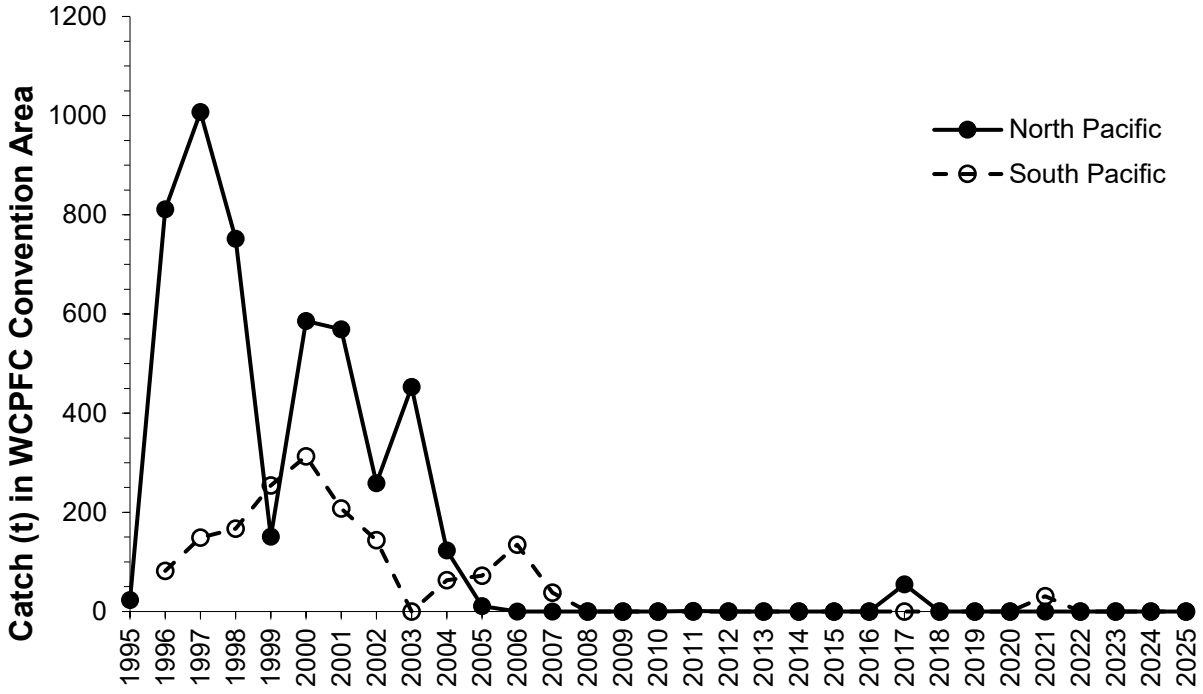

Figure 1. Historical annual catch of albacore by the Canadian troll fleet in the WCPFC Convention Area in the north Pacific Ocean west of 150°W and the south Pacific Ocean for 1995 to 2025.

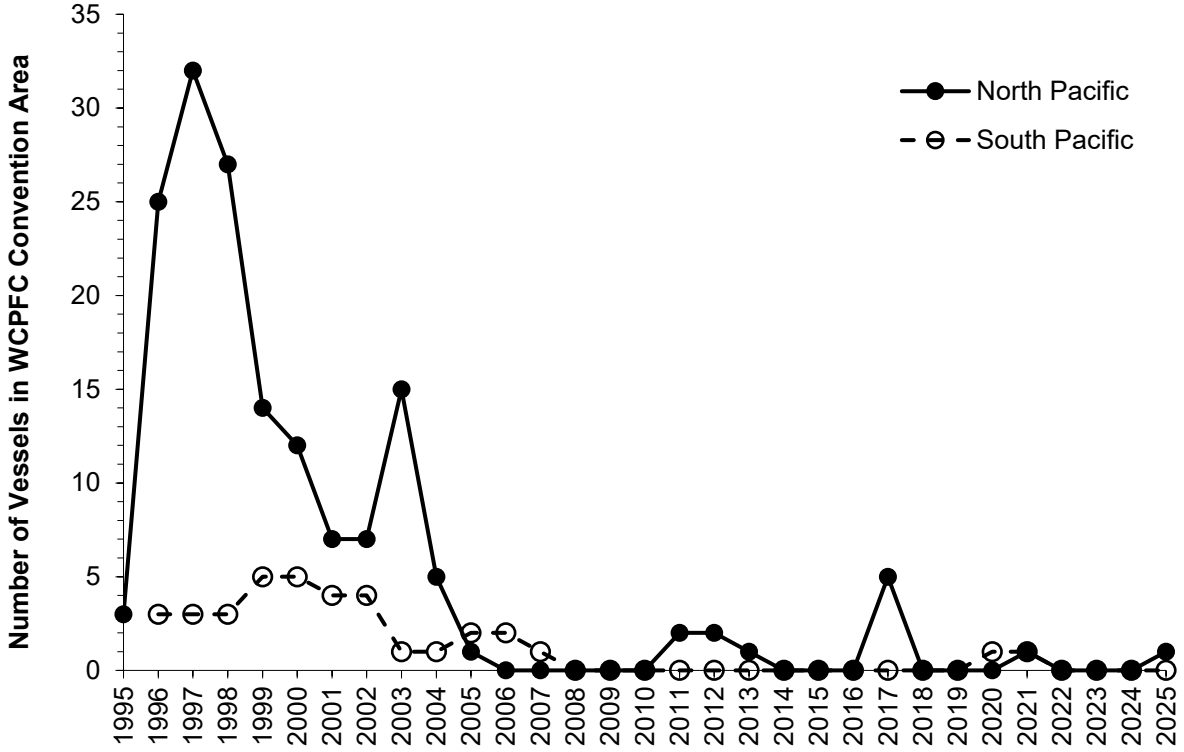

Figure 2. Historical annual vessel numbers for the Canadian troll fleet targeting albacore in the WCPFC Convention Area in the north Pacific Ocean west of 150°W and the south Pacific Ocean for 1995 to 2025.

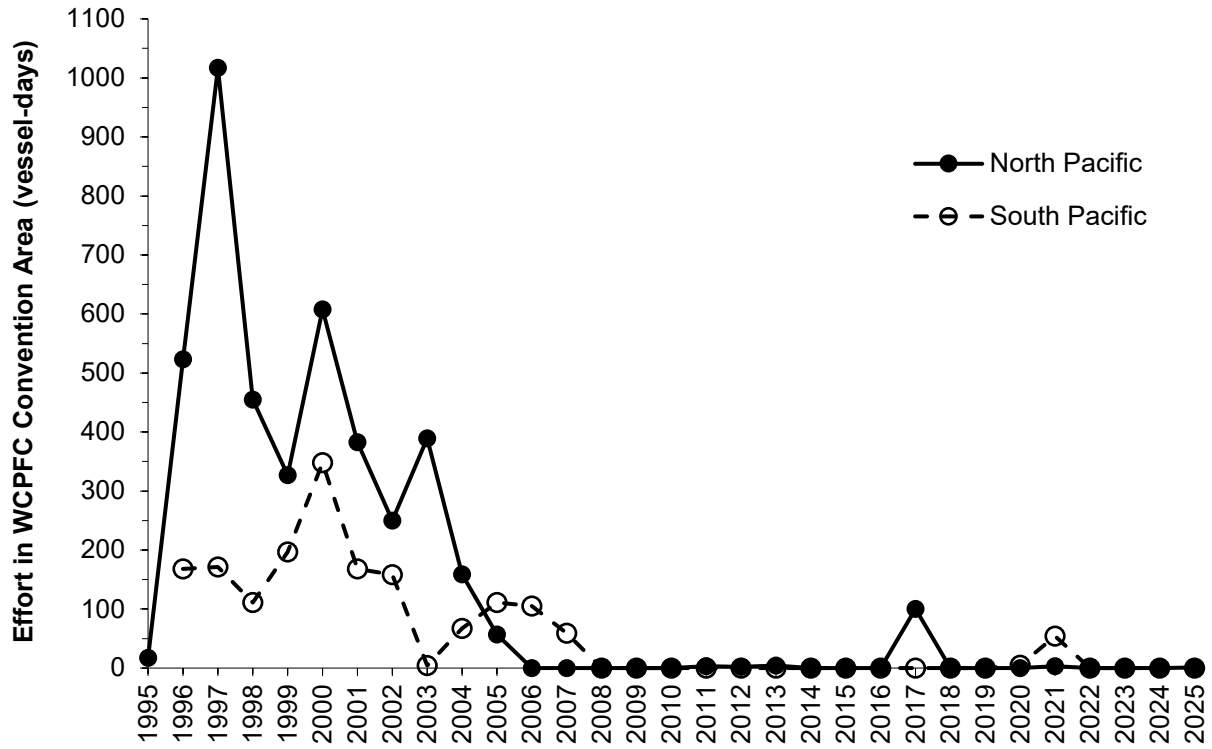

Figure 3. Historical annual fishing effort for the Canadian troll fleet targeting albacore in the WCPFC Convention Area in the north Pacific Ocean west of 150°W and the south Pacific Ocean for 1995 to 2025.

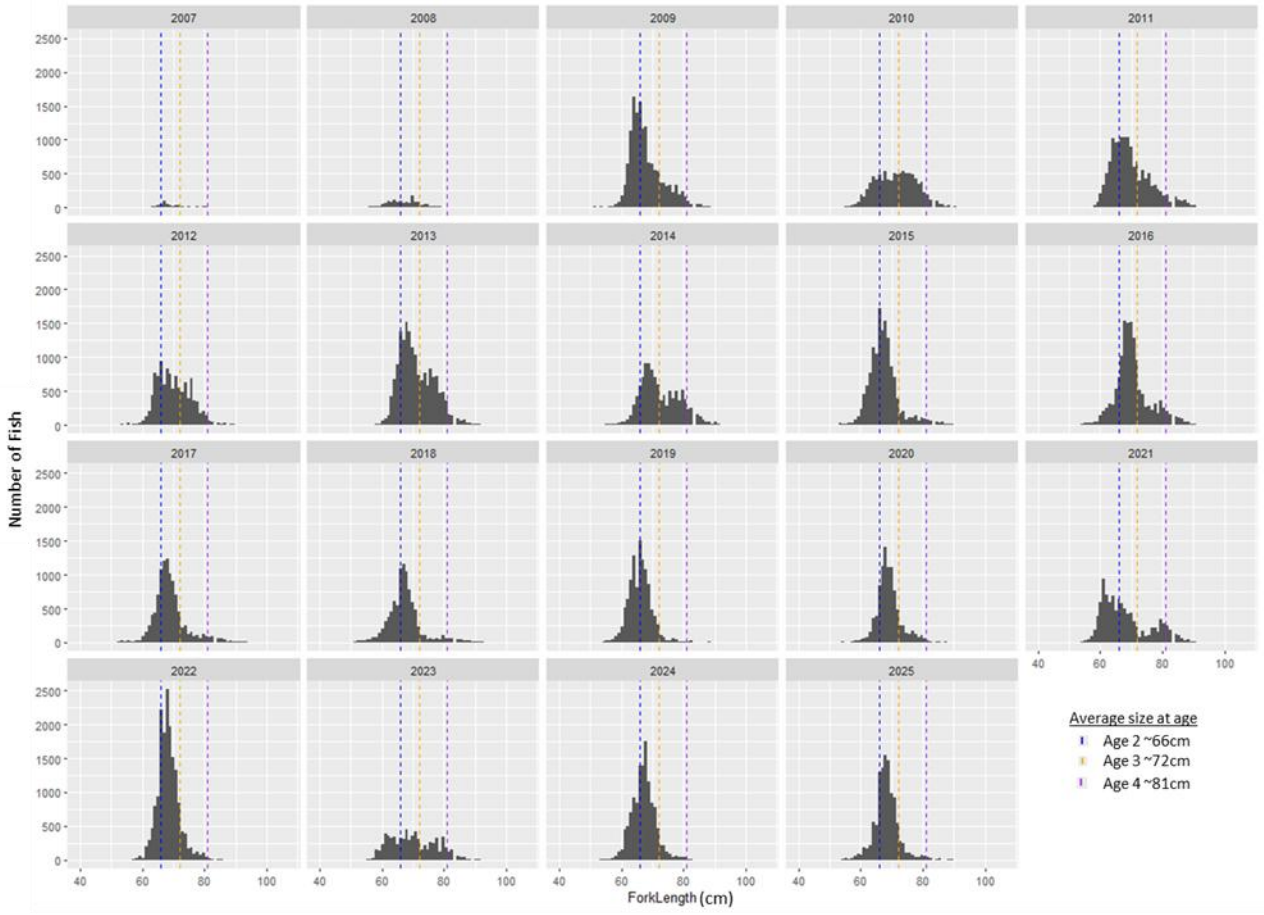

Figure 4. Annual length-frequency distributions (fork length, cm) of albacore tuna sampled in the Canadian fishery from 2007–2025. Dashed vertical lines indicate the approximate average lengths at age of North Pacific Albacore Tuna (blue: age 2 ~66 cm, yellow: age 3 ~72 cm, purple: age 4 ~81 cm).