



**COMMISSION  
TWELFTH REGULAR SESSION**  
Bali, Indonesia  
3 - 8 December 2015

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**AMERICAN FISHERMEN'S RESEARCH FOUNDATION STATEMENT TO  
WCPFC12**

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**WCPFC12-2015-OP13  
1 December 2015**

**Paper by American Fishermen's Research Foundation**

# American Fishermen's Research Foundation

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November 27, 2015

Mr. Feleti P. Teo OBE  
Executive Director  
WCPFC  
P.O.Box 2356  
Kolonias, Pohnpei State 96941  
Federated States of Micronesia

Dear Mr. Feleti Teo:

This letter is submitted on behalf of the American Fishermen's Research Foundation, (AFRF), which is, and has been, an accredited Observer Delegation since the beginning of the Commission. This letter is addressed to all the Delegates to the Twelfth Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission. By way of background, AFRF is funded by the Western Fishboat Owners' Association, (WFOA), which represents over 300 vessel owners, crew, and their supporters, who fish for albacore tuna in the North and South Pacific using the troll and baitboat methods of fishing. WFOA and AFRF, working with the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service, (NMFS) originated and developed the troll fishery for South Pacific albacore.

In the initial years of the WCPFC, AFRF focused on promoting increased cooperation between this organization and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, (IATTC). AFRF also brought tagging information in poster form to this Commission from ongoing cooperative programs with NMFS. Then in 2005, AFRF drafted and sponsored the first management and conservation resolution for albacore in the IATTC. Shortly thereafter, AFRF sponsored a similar conservation and management resolution here in the WCPFC.

More recently, AFRF has worked to develop scientifically based limit reference points for North and South Pacific albacore with a focus on collaboration between the Northern Committee and the IATTC to develop compatible reference points and harvest control rules for North Pacific albacore. AFRF continues to support the development of scientifically based target reference points and harvest control rules for South Pacific albacore throughout the range of the species.

## AFRF DIRECTORS '2015'

Kevin McClain  
Bumble Bee Seafoods

Kevin Bixler  
Chicken of the Sea

John Zuanich (Alt)  
Tri Marine  
International

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Tri-Marine  
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WFOA

This brings us to the current meeting of this Commission which will consider, *inter alia*, the development of target reference points, harvest control rules for North and South Pacific albacore, and limiting the fishery for South Pacific albacore. Specifically, with regard to target reference points and harvest control rules they must be based on good science. They must also consider the health of the species throughout its range, whether within or outside of the WCPFC's management area. However, we question how good the science can be with the extreme lack of timely and complete data from several of the Asian fleets. Some way must be found to correct this situation which has gone on much too long. Secondly, AFRF suggests that the science provider for the Commission develop and utilize a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) along the lines of what the Northern Committee has tasked the International Science Committee (ISC) to perform for North Pacific albacore. It appears that this is the course the WCPFC is on from the preliminary meetings which are being held. After this evaluation occurs it will be possible to set rational target reference points and harvest control rules.

Finally, while AFRF recognizes that something must be done immediately to curtail the greatly increased and subsidized Asian upswing in targeting South Pacific albacore, in violation of current conservation and management measures, closing the high seas to the U.S. troll fishery is completely inappropriate. The scientific consultants for the WCPFC have repeatedly stated that the troll fishery for South Pacific albacore has no impact on the stock (*see e.g.* WCPFC9-2012-IP11). This healthy and environmentally sustainable fishery was originated, developed, and pursued by the U.S. albacore troll fleet. There is no justification for eliminating it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John LaGrange". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being the most prominent part.

John LaGrange,

President, American Fishermen's Research Foundation