



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southwest Fisheries Center
Honolulu and La Jolla Laboratories
P. O. Box 3830
Honolulu, Hawaii 96812

WORKSHOP ON THE POPULATION DYNAMICS

OF NORTH PACIFIC ALBACORE

Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A.
10-12 December 1975

EXECUTIVE'S SUMMARY REPORT

May 1976

The status of the North Pacific albacore stock was assessed at a workshop held at the NMFS Honolulu Laboratory in December 1975. The workshop was part of an informal agreement between the Southwest Fisheries Center and the Far Seas Fisheries Research Laboratory, Shimizu, Japan, to promote and accelerate joint research on the North Pacific albacore stock. Participants included biologists from NMFS, FSFRL, California Department of Fish and Game, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington Department of Fisheries, and the Pacific Marine Fisheries Commission.

In recent years the total annual harvest of North Pacific albacore has risen to about 100,000 metric tons (MT), primarily due to expansion of the Japanese pole-and-line fishery, which took about 64% of the catch in 1974. The other major fisheries are the Japanese longline fishery (15%) and the United States troll and live-bait fisheries (21%).

The preliminary stock assessments discussed at the workshop were based on standard analyses of catch, effort, and size composition statistics.

The maximum sustainable annual yield for the North Pacific albacore stock was judged tentatively to be in the neighborhood of 115,000-125,000 MT. Thus the present annual catch is less than, but is approaching, the biological limits of the stock. The average yield per recruit could be increased if age at capture were increased, but this is infeasible under the present structure of the fisheries.

Recruitment to the North Pacific albacore stock shows a fourfold or fivefold annual variation. No relationship between recruitment and spawning stock can be demonstrated.

The joint investigations by the Honolulu Laboratory and the Far Seas Fisheries Research Laboratory will continue, **focusing** on critical research areas identified during the workshop. The fisheries will be monitored and stock assessments will be updated at regular intervals.

It was agreed that the continued cooperation among the fishery agencies of California, Oregon, and Washington in collecting and processing albacore fishery statistics is fundamental to the NMFS stock assessment capabilities and that every possible means (state and federal) should be taken to strengthen and support inter-state and state-federal albacore programs.

The significant scientific contributions of the west coast albacore industry, through the American Fishermen's Research Foundation, were acknowledged and applauded at the workshop, and the need for continued government-industry cooperation was emphasized.