

**SOUTHWEST FISHERIES SCIENCE CENTER**  
**FOURTH QUARTER REPORT-FY 2003**  
For the period July 1, 2003 through September 30, 2003

**SUBMITTED BY:** Norman Bartoo, Acting Division Director, Fisheries Resources Division

**Title of accomplishment or milestone:** Summary of the 2002 U.S. North and South Pacific albacore troll fisheries.

**Current status:** Completed.

**Background information:** Catch data obtained from west coast states, logbook data collected from cooperating fishermen and length-frequency data obtained through port sampling from U.S. troll and baitboat vessels operating in the Pacific Ocean are routinely processed by the SWFSC for use in stock assessments. Logbooks are provided to fishermen who record fishing information and provide the information to the SWFSC. Length-frequency data are collected through a Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission contract to Washington, Oregon and California state fisheries agencies and from NMFS offices in American Samoa and Hawaii.

**Purpose of activity:** Collect, summarize and distribute data essential to assessment of Pacific albacore stocks and for monitoring fishery performance.

**Description of accomplishment and significant results:** Data for the 2001-2002 South Pacific and 2002 North Pacific fishing seasons were processed, made available to scientists to monitor the fishery and to assess the condition of the stocks, and summarized in a report for distribution to the public. The 2002 U.S. catch of North Pacific albacore was 10,686 metric tons (t), a decrease from the 11,210 t caught in 2001. Areas fished by the North Pacific fleet in 2002 were distributed west of the International Dateline early in the season, off California, Washington and Oregon during mid season and again in offshore areas and off California late in the season. The 2001-2002 U.S. catch of South Pacific albacore was 1,038 t, a decrease from 2,128 t in the 2000-2001 season. The areas of high catch in the 2001-2002 season were distributed similarly as in the 2000-2001 season. The catch-per-unit effort, in number of fish per day fished, for the North Pacific increased from 68 fish per day in 2001 to 85 fish per day in 2002. The catch-per-unit effort in the South Pacific decreased from 47 fish per day in the 2000-2001 season to 46 fish per day in the 2001-2002 season. The average size of fish in the North Pacific catch decreased slightly from 68 cm in 2001 to 67 cm in 2002. In the South Pacific, average size increased slightly from 71 cm in the 2000-2001 season to 73 cm in the 2001-2002 season.

**Significance of accomplishment (e.g., to the Center, to Management and to NMFS Strategic Plan Goals):** Logbook data are collected under the High-Seas Fishing Compliance Act of 1995. Data collected are being used to monitor the fisheries and for assessing the condition of the stocks. This is part of the NMFS strategic plan goal of building/maintaining sustainable fisheries.

**Problems:** None.

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