

**THE OREGON 2001 COMMERCIAL FISHERY
FOR ALBACORE (*THUNNUS ALALUNGA*)**

Prepared by

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ALBACORE PORT SAMPLING PROGRAM
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INTRODUCTION

Albacore is a highly migratory species found in all the world's oceans. Albacore caught off Oregon belong to the North Pacific stock and are generally juvenile fish that have not spawned. They make trans-oceanic migrations, being targeted by fisheries off several nations including the U.S., Canada, and Japan at different times of the year. The U.S. West Coast fishery harvests this stock during summer and fall months.

Oregon has had a directed commercial fishery on albacore since the mid-1930s when albacore fishing expanded from the traditional grounds off southern California to Oregon and Washington. For many years, both baitboats and jigboats fished for albacore off Oregon, but in recent years landings have been predominantly jig (troll)-caught fish. The fleet today consists of small "combination" boats which may fish crab, salmon, or bottomfish at other times of the year, and large freezer boats that travel the north and south Pacific, fishing principally albacore.

Oregon albacore landings have been highly variable through the years, ranging from a low of 27,600 pounds in 1936 to a high of almost 38 million pounds in 1968. In the last decade, landings in Oregon have averaged almost 7 million pounds.

Sampling of Oregon's albacore fishery is a cooperative effort between the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC). This report documents the progress of the 2001 fishery off Oregon and the associated sampling activities.

2001 FISHERY DEVELOPMENT

Landings of albacore into Oregon ports began in June and continued through early November with the peak occurring in August (Table 1, Figure 1). The preliminary total for 2001 commercial landings is 8,942,711 lb; this is a 2% increase from 2000 (Table 2, Figure 2). Newport received the majority of the deliveries (51%), followed by Charleston at 22% and Astoria at about 21%. Nine other ports also received deliveries (Table 3, Figure 3).

Albacore markets remained fairly stable during the 2001 season with fish going to European, Asian and other alternate markets as well as the traditional cannery markets. The ex-vessel price paid for cannery grade fish at Oregon buying stations was about \$.77/lb. Frozen fish going to blast/bled or other alternate markets received from \$.80 to \$1.30/lb and fresh fish ranged from about \$.65 to \$.75/lb. Fishermen selling from their vessels to the public asked for \$1.50 to \$1.75/lb.

The 2001 season started with a flurry of activity and good catches nearshore, especially during the months of July and August. Most of the albacore landed into Oregon was caught within 200 miles of the coast with much of the effort occurring off Oregon and Washington.

Approximately 471 vessels landed albacore into Oregon in 2001, which is a 27% increase from 2000. The estimated number of trips landed into Oregon ports increased from 882 in 2000 to 1261 in 2001. Much of this can be attributed to increased landing activity in southern coast ports, especially Charleston. Canadian vessels accounted for 9% of the total number of vessels and 12% of the total pounds landed in Oregon. The average landing was about 6500 lb and the average size of albacore delivered to Oregon buyers was again variable, ranging from 10 to 20+ lb. Most of the fish landed were three and four year old fish.

During 2001, the recreational albacore fishery off Oregon contributed approximately 130,000 lb (less than 2%) to total albacore landings. Charter boats and private boats each made up about 50% of the total recreational landings with effort from Garibaldi down to Brookings.

In the fall of 2001, the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC), adopted the draft of the Highly Migratory Species Fisheries Management Plan (HMSFMP). After a few minor revisions, the plan will go out for public review during the winter and PFMC will consider final adoption sometime in the spring of 2002. Issues such as limited entry will not be considered until after final adoption.

Progress on resolving conflicts within the U.S./Canada Albacore Treaty came to a virtual halt during 2001. Negotiations on limiting the number of albacore vessels within each country's EEZ were unsuccessful, and talk now turns to possible termination of the treaty.

Oregon expanded its albacore sampling program back to three ports in 2001 to try and obtain a better sampling distribution. Because funding did not increase, some sampling effort was cut in Newport in order to provide funding for part-time sampling in Astoria and Charleston. In the three sampled ports, logbooks were distributed, completed logbooks were collected or interviews conducted, and length frequencies were obtained as often as possible throughout the season. The Oregon Albacore Summary form (attached as Appendix A) presents the data requested in Oregon's contractual agreement for albacore sampling funding. These are:

- a. number of logbooks issued by port.
- b. number of logbook collections attempted by port.
- c. number of interviews/transcriptions collected by port.
- d. number of logbooks collected by port.
- e. estimated total landings of albacore by port.
- f. estimated number of trips by port.
- g. estimated number of vessels by port.
- h. estimated landings (lb) by gear type.
- i. total landings for sampled trips.

Also included in the season summary are the number of trips sampled for length-frequency and the number of fish measured.

Forty-seven logbooks were distributed to fishermen. Logbook collections attempted (contacts) numbered 300, a 6% increase from 2000. These contacts resulted in the collection of 127

North Pacific Albacore Voluntary Logbooks and 86 logbook transcriptions, for a total of 213 trips from which data were collected; this is a 15% increase from the total number collected in 2000. During 2001, 87 trips were sampled for length frequency, and 6571 fish were measured. The number of measured fish decreased 16% from 2000.

SUMMARY

Oregon's albacore landings in 2001 totaled about 8.9 million lb, a 2% increase from 2000 and above the 10 year average. Most of the fishery was centered off coastal Oregon and Washington. The recreational fishery contributed an estimated 130,000 lb in 2000. Sampling was expanded to include the three major ports of Astoria, Newport and Charleston. The quantity of logbook data collected increased over 2000 levels while length frequency sampling decreased slightly.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to the many albacore fishing vessel operators who cooperated by providing logbook or fishing information during our sampling program. Also thanks to port samplers Jill Smith, Nancy McClean-Cooper, Kaety Jacobson and Doris Kollodge-Smith for their hard work in collecting data and to Carrie White for providing assistance with the recreational data component of the sampling program.

Table 1. Oregon commercial albacore landings by month, 2001.

Month	Pounds
June	3,286
July	2,329,347
August	4,185,737
September	1,789,928
October	603,861
November	30,552
December	
Total	8,942,711 *

Table 2. Oregon commercial albacore landings by year, 1992-2001.

Year	Pounds
1992	3,895,618
1993	4,754,450
1994	4,698,223
1995	5,033,810
1996	8,948,355
1997	9,167,738
1998	10,600,614
1999	4,550,635
2000	8,755,659
2001	8,942,711 *

Table 3. Oregon commercial albacore landings by port, 2001.

Port	Pounds
Astoria	1,841,482
Garibaldi	167,525
Pacific City	3,743
Depoe Bay	3,633
Newport	4,598,024
Florence	91,014
Winchst. Bay	89,923
Charleston	1,983,058
Bandon	18,610
Port Orford	23,359
Gold Beach	3,032
Brookings	119,308
Total	8,942,711 *

* Preliminary

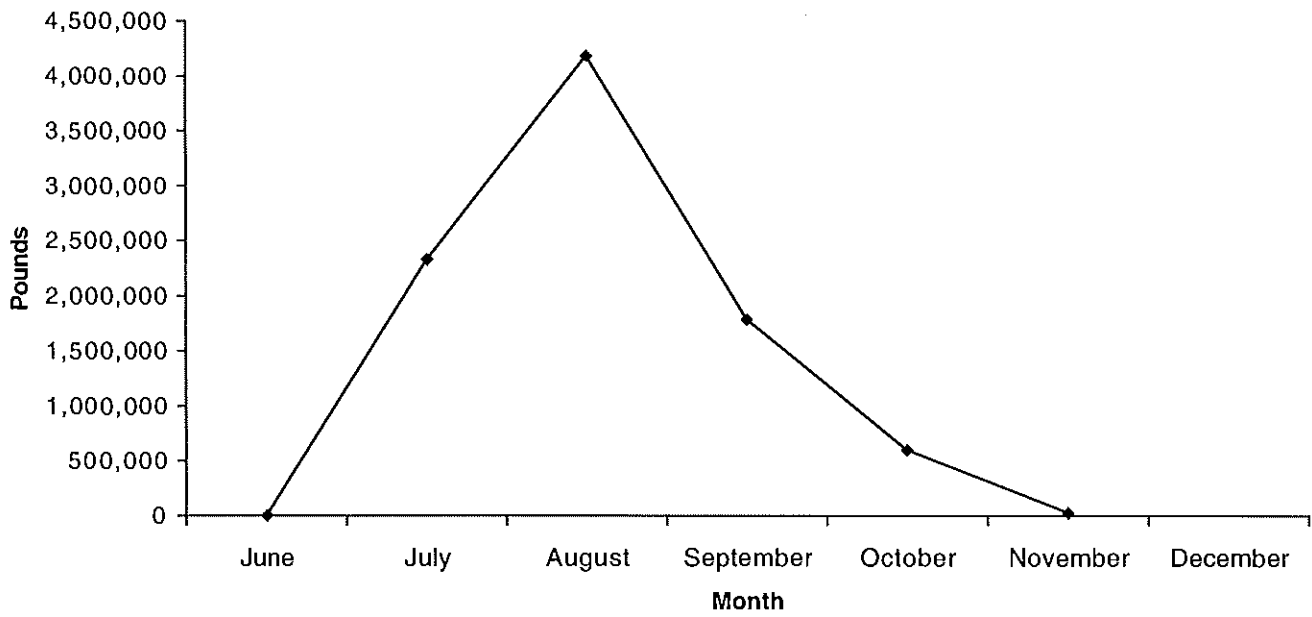


Figure 1. Oregon commercial albacore landings by month, 2001.

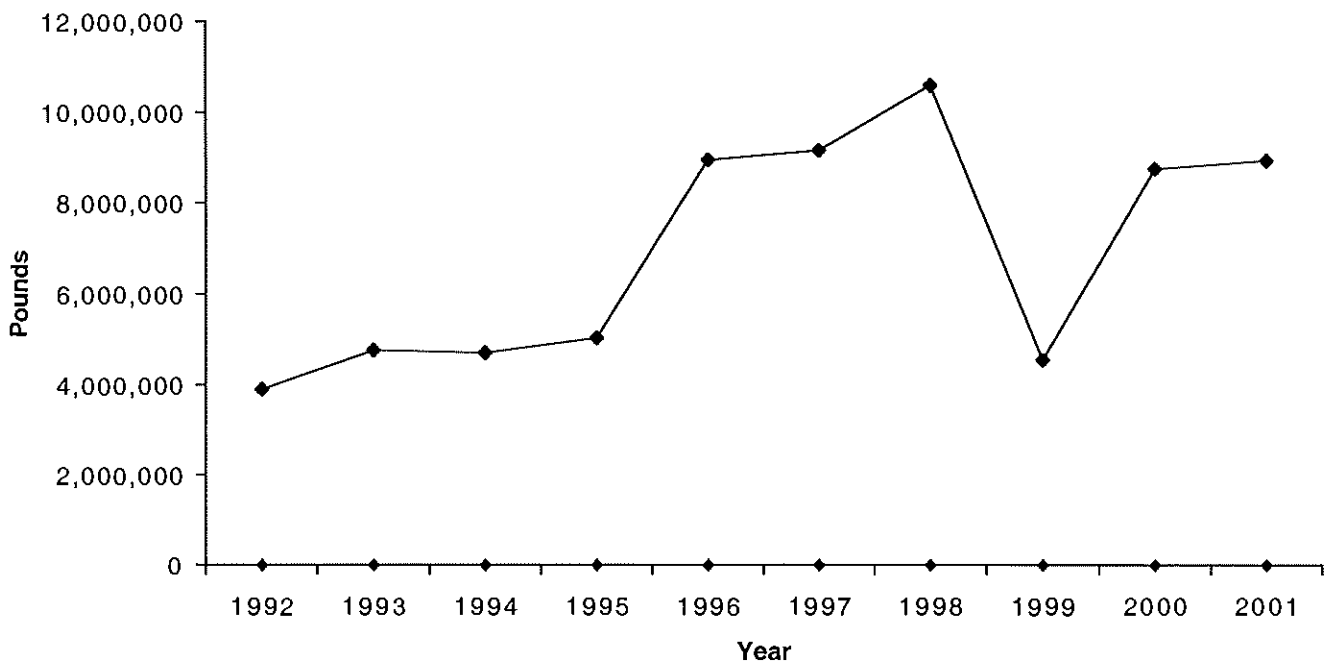


Figure 2. Oregon commercial albacore landings by year, 1992-2001.

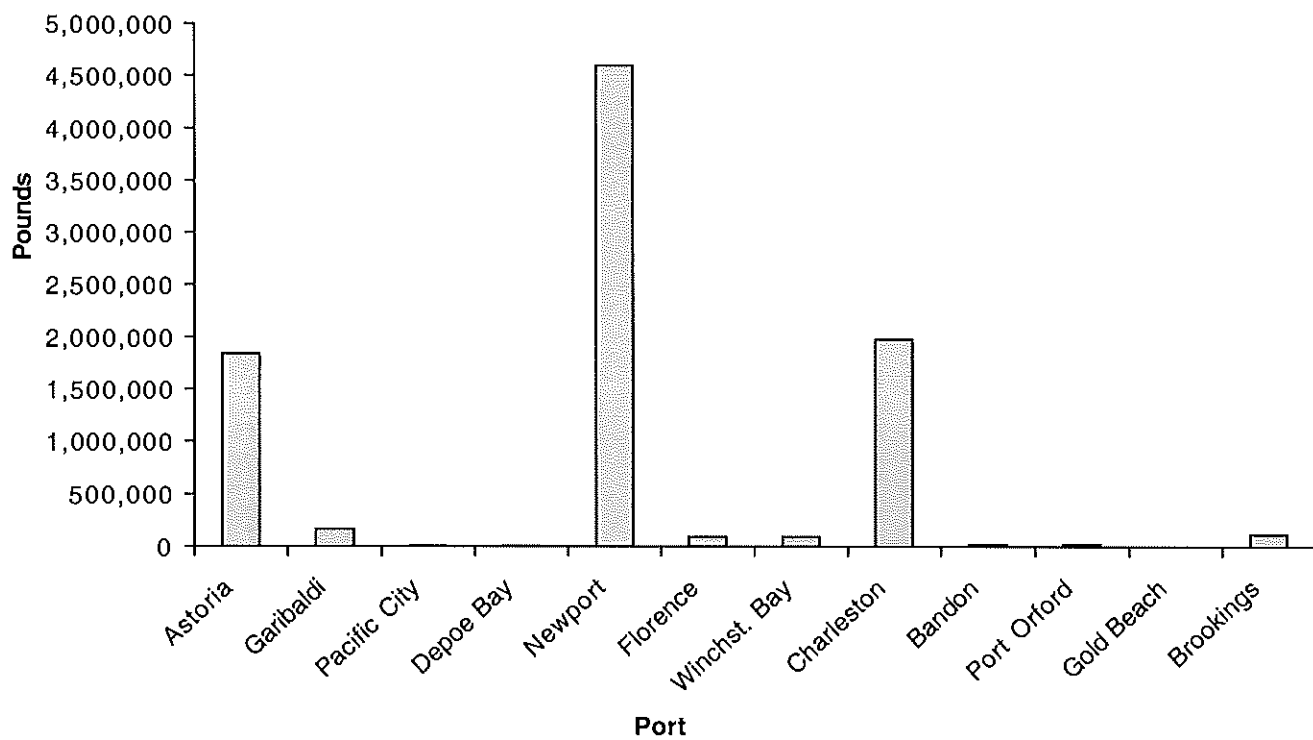


Figure 3. Oregon commercial albacore landings by port, 2001.

Appendix A. Oregon Albacore Summary for 2001

PORT CODE OR NAME	ASTORIA	NEWPORT	CHARLESTON	TOTAL COAST
No. of Logbooks Issued	8	29	10	47
No. of Data Collections Attempted (sampled)	59	214	27	300
No. of Logs Transcribed by Samplers	32	47	7	86
No. of Voluntarily-Completed Logs Collected	18	98	11	127
Total Landings from Sampled Vessels (Lbs)*	981,281	2,402,666	321,335	3,705,282
No. of Trips Sampled for Length-Frequency	12	70	5	87
No. of Fish Measured	861	5,243	467	6,571
Estimated Total No. of Trips **	162	476	307	1261
Estimated Total No. of Vessels***	78	222	131	471
Estimated Total Jig Landings (Lbs)	1,841,482	4,598,024	1,983,058	8,942,711
Estimated Total Bait Landings (Lbs)				
Estimated Total Jig & Bait Landings (Lbs)				
Estimated Total Gillnet Landings (Lbs)				
Estimated Sport Total Landings (Lbs)				130,000
Estimated Total Landings for Other Gear Types (Lbs)				
Estimated Total Landings (Lbs)				9,072,711

* Includes landings from all collection attempts, whether successful or not, except for trips where landing weight was unavailable. Landings from logbook-sampled trips may exceed total landings because some logbooks/interviews were collected from vessels which delivered to other states.

** May be an overestimate as often a trip had multiple fish tickets associated with it, though an effort was made to combine such tickets into one trip.

*** Some vessels landed in more than one port during the season.