



Marine Resources

Albacore Tuna Fishery Newsletter

2020

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Read the Annual Report

To read this year's annual report please visit: <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/publications/>

An Interesting Year

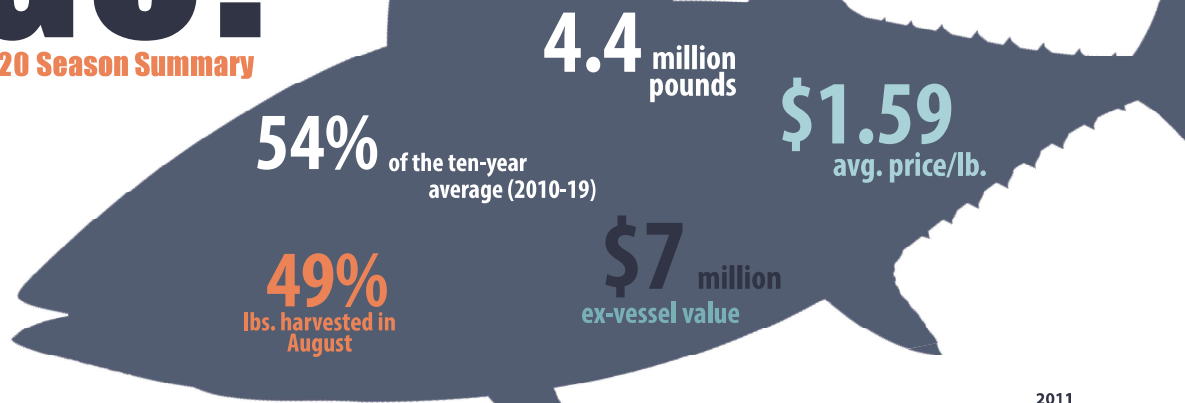
Over the course of the season, the main body of tuna stayed well offshore. The distance to the fish and market disturbances caused by Covid-19 were major factors in many small boats deciding not to fish tuna this year.

Commercial landings began again in early July and 541,268 pounds were landed during the month. August was a moderately productive month, producing just over 2 million pounds. After a lull in early September, fishing effort peaked again late in the month, when 650,000 pounds were brought to port in a single week. The last half of October brought the close of the season as landings wound sharply down.

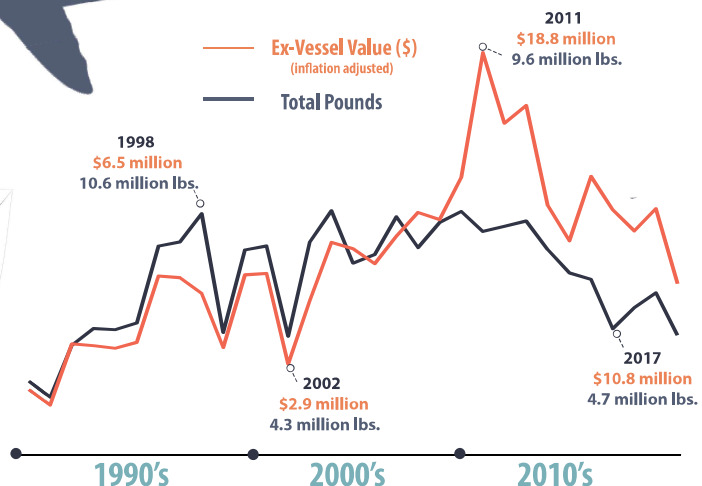
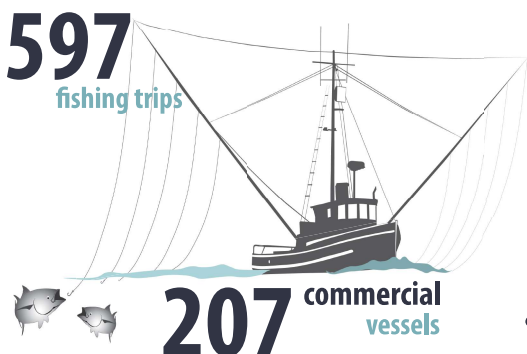
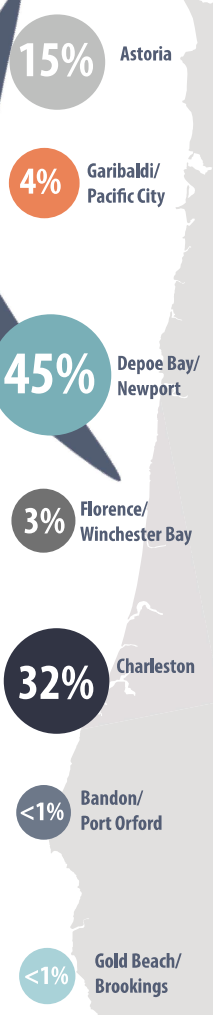
Newport had the highest albacore landings of any Oregon port in 2020, with 45% of the total weight. Charleston landed 32% of the total weight, followed by Astoria.

How'd Commercial Fishing GO?

2020 Season Summary



Pounds Landed

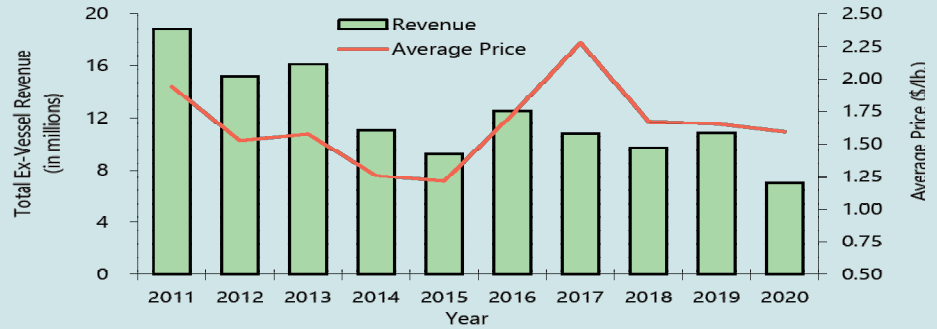
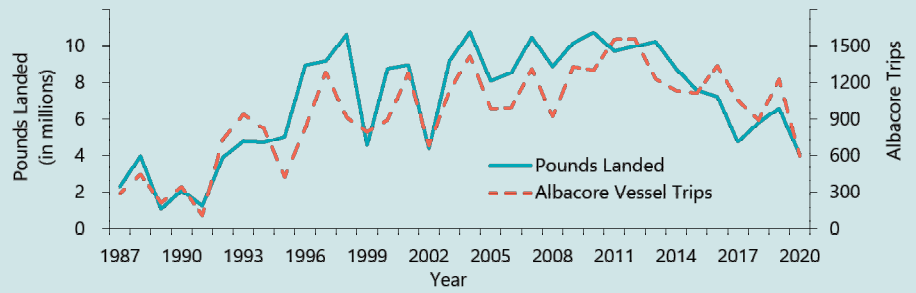


Season Summary (cont'd)

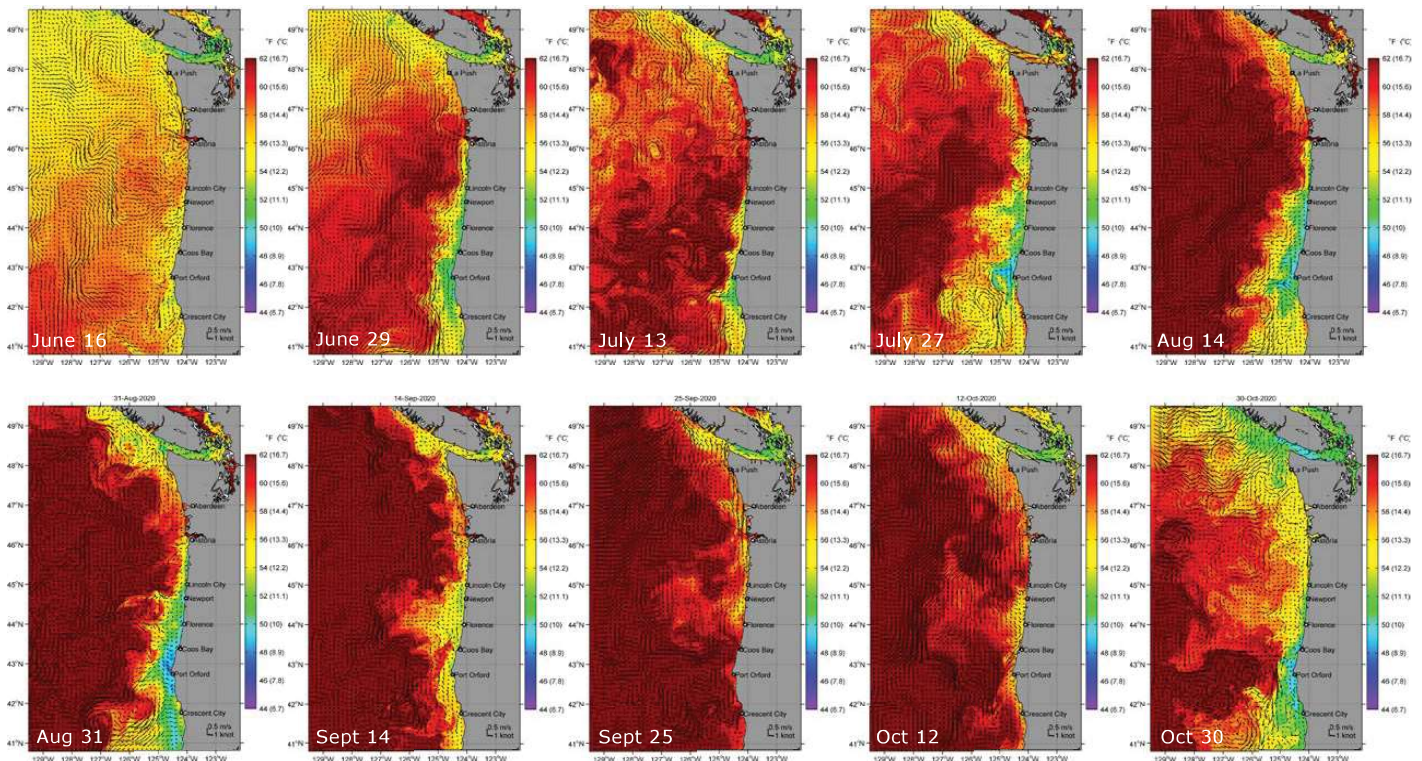
Total landings were down for 2020, with 4.4 million pounds landed in Oregon, only 54% of the ten-year average (2010-19) of 8.1 million pounds. Tuna fishers collectively made 597 trips on 207 different commercial vessels.

No Canadian vessels made albacore landings in Oregon.

The 2020 Oregon albacore season generated \$7,022,691 in total value paid to vessels. The average price was \$1.59 per pound, down 6 cents from 2019, and very close to the ten-year average of \$1.56 per pound.



Weather patterns were generally moderate throughout the season, with periodic northwest winds. Warm water began approaching the coast from the southwest in mid-June. Sea surface temperature (SST) data from the weather buoy off Tillamook Bay, which has been used in previous reports, were unavailable this year. Buoy 46005, 300 nautical miles off Aberdeen, WA, showed a fairly smooth rise in SST over June and July, peaking in mid-August at around 20° C (68°F) and gradually tapering off to about 16° C (60.8°F) at the end of October. During July and August, a wide band of chlorophyll extended up to 100 miles offshore over most of the Oregon Coast, especially north of Stonewall Banks, and affected landings this season. This chlorophyll band held albacore far enough offshore that smaller boats did not make as many trips as they normally would have.



Nowcast sea surface temperature plots off Oregon and Washington out to 129°W from June 16 through October 30, 2020. Dark red areas indicate the warmest surface waters at or above 17° C (62° F), and lighter yellow, green, and blue areas the cooler waters. Images courtesy Craig Risien, Oregon State University, Northwest Association of Networked Ocean Observing Systems (NANOOS).

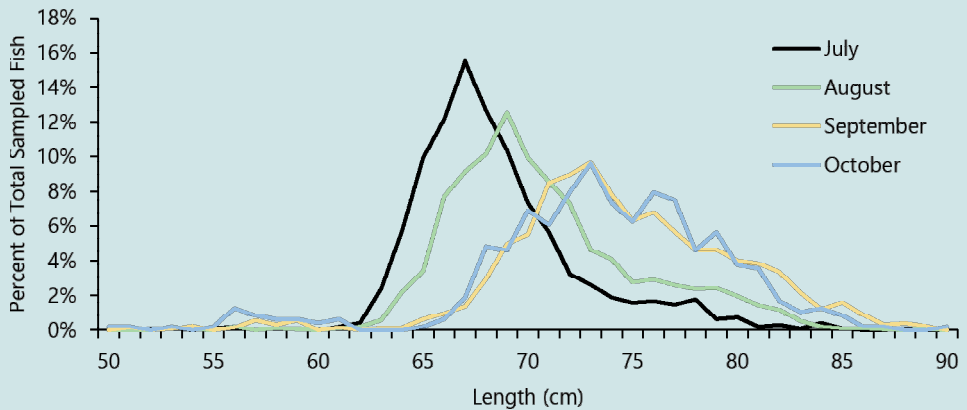
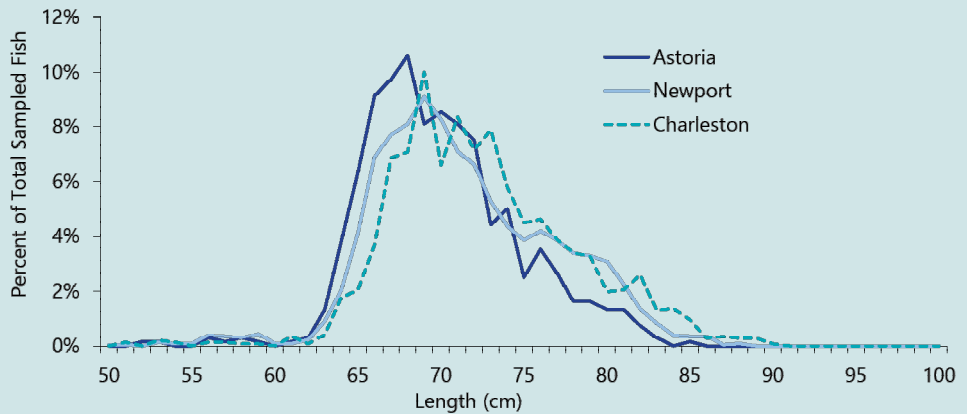
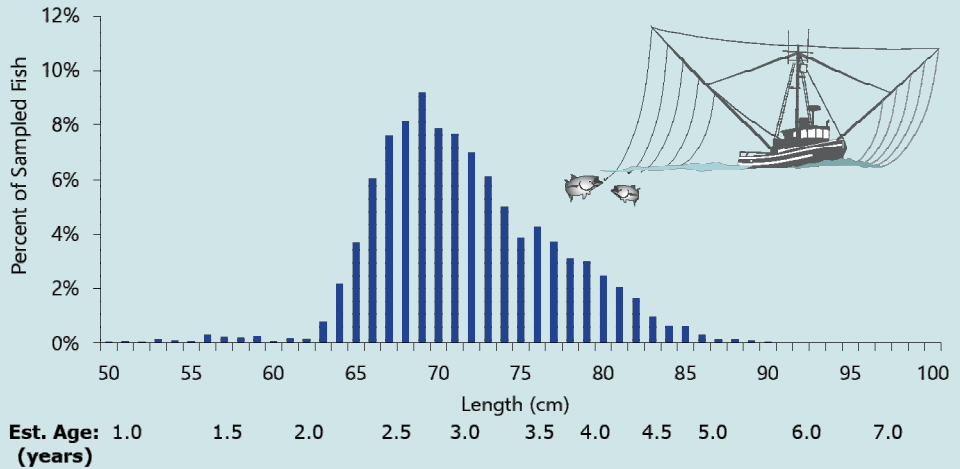
Fish Lengths

Commercial Albacore

Albacore samplers collected fork length measurements from unsorted commercially harvested albacore during offloading from July through October of 2020. Samplers measured 4,564 albacore tuna in the ports of Astoria, Newport, Charleston, and Garibaldi. A frequency distribution of the length data displays a strong mode at 69 cm, with the distribution skewed to the right. The 69 cm mode represents an age-class of 2.5 to 3-year-old tuna, while the shoulder extending to the right (75-85 cm) represents older 3.5- to 4.5-year-old fish.

A comparison of the length distributions of the sampled catches in the three primary Oregon ports does not suggest any differences between ports.

Smaller fish usually start to show up in the catch in September and October. This year very few "peanuts" under 60cm (~24") were encountered, a distinct change from the previous two seasons. The average length of this year's fish was notable larger at 68.5 cm in July, increasing to 74.4 cm in September.



Recreational Albacore

ORBS samplers performed no length measurements this year due to Covid-19 safety precautions.

How'd Recreational Fishing GO?

2020 Season Summary

5,357 Fish Landed

2,566 Angler Trips

2.1 Albacore Landed per Angler trip

26% of the five-year average effort

Total Catch

2% Astoria

26% Garibaldi/Pacific City

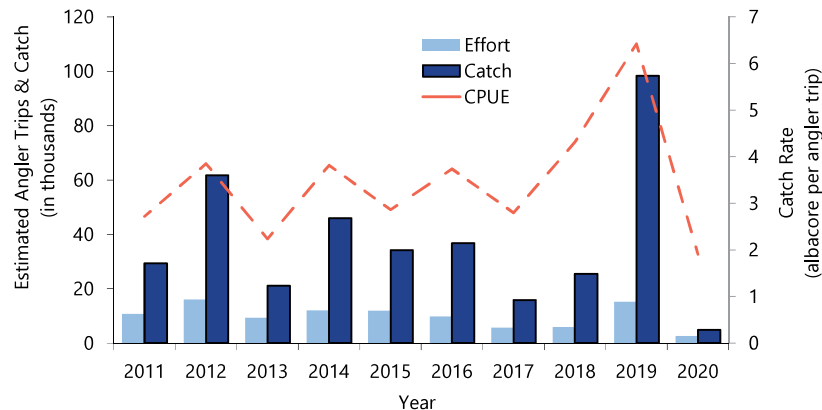
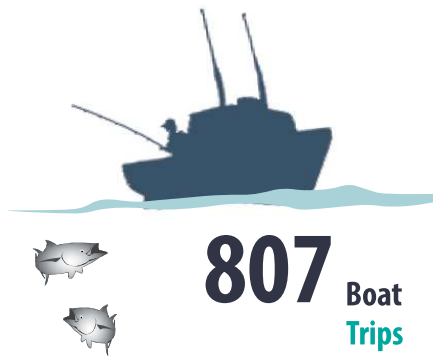
30% Depoe Bay/Newport

1% Florence/Winchester Bay

9% Charleston

Bandon/Port Orford

32% Gold Beach/ Brookings



Recreational Catch

Access to albacore for recreational vessels off Oregon can be highly variable, depending on weather conditions and distance offshore to the fish. During the 2020 season albacore remained well offshore most of the season, particularly north of Florence. The same wide band of chlorophyll that challenged the commercial small-boat fleet also affected recreational anglers attempting to move far enough offshore to encounter the fish. The season was difficult overall, with very little charter activity occurring and only sporadic private boat activity when weather was good. The weather was generally favorable throughout August and September, however the fish were never as close to the coast as in 2019.

The total estimated recreational fishing effort for albacore was 2,566 angler trips in 2020, roughly 26% of the five-year average of 9,730 angler trips. The number of albacore tuna landed from tuna-specific trips was 4,892 fish, or 12% of the five-year average, down dramatically from the nearly 100,000 albacore caught in 2019. Anglers caught an additional 465 albacore on either a bottomfish trip, halibut trip, or "combo" trip (salmon & other fish) for an estimated total of 5,357 albacore tuna during five months of fishing in 2020.

The Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) in Brookings was much higher than any other port this year at 4.2, while all other ports including Garibaldi were held to a CPUE of 1.8 or less. Brookings received more recreational albacore than any other port, with 32% of the catch, followed by Garibaldi at 25%, then Newport, Depoe Bay, and Charleston in that order. ORBS samplers did not sample in Florence, Bandon, Port Orford, or Gold Beach.

Albacore Fishery Monitoring Update

How Does MRP Monitor the Albacore Fishery?

ODFW's Marine Resources Program (MRP) has multiple fishery monitoring programs to collect critical recreational and commercial albacore fishery information to inform management recommendations. Sampling of Oregon's commercial albacore fishery is a cooperative effort between the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), the NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) and the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC). Recreational albacore fishery sampling is conducted by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Ocean Recreational Boat Survey (ORBS). The ORBS survey adjusted its sampling protocol beginning in 2000 to better estimate effort and catch in the growing recreational albacore fishery off Oregon. Sport fishing for albacore off Oregon has grown in popularity since 2000, especially in the past decade. We would like to thank all our samplers and the industry for remaining flexible and maintaining safety when collecting samples this past year.

Commercial Monitoring



MRP port samplers conduct dockside sampling of commercial albacore fishery vessels in the major ports.

Logbook data which includes species caught, incidental catch, trip dates, fishing area, and landing port to estimate effort go directly to the National Marine Fisheries Service.



MRP dockside samplers collect length information from several hundred vessels over the course of the season in order to describe the year-classes of tuna that are being landed.

MRP staff review fish ticket data on catch counts, weights, grade, and value to calculate the ex-vessel revenue for the fishery.



Recreational Monitoring



ORBS port samplers randomly conduct dockside boat interviews and collect information on trip target species, total catch, number of anglers on the boat, general location, and the number of released fish.

ORBS port samplers estimate the total effort by counting the number of ocean sport boat trips by the type of boat (i.e. Charter or private vessels).



ORBS port samplers also collect lengths from a portion of the sampled catch to convert numbers of fish into weight.

For more information on the ORBS survey and the Oregon recreational albacore fishery please visit our website at:

<https://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/sportalbacore/index.asp>

Other Updates and Reminders

Want More Information?

Here's how you get it

Visit Our Website



For more information about Albacore please visit:

<https://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/commercial/>

<https://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/sportalbacore/index.asp>



Marine Resources

We are always interested in hearing from you about your fishery and the issues that are important to you.

Please give us a call any time!

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A Well-Deserved Retirement



It is with great gratitude and appreciation for his years of service that we announce that Keith Matteson is retiring from ODFW. It has been a privilege working with Keith, and now it's an honor to acknowledge and celebrate Keith's accomplishments. Keith has been a staple at the Marine Resources Program (MRP) at ODFW. Keith officially started with MRP in 1998 as the At-sea Research and Developmental Fisheries Assistant Project Leader. Since then, he has worked on a diversity of projects including the shellfish program, marine

reserves, black rockfish PIT tagging, albacore sampling, and the nearshore logbook program. Keith leaves behind some large shoes to fill and takes with him a great depth of institutional knowledge. We would like to thank him for his years of hard work and dedication to our team and congratulate Keith on his well-deserved retirement.

ALBACORE LANDING LICENSE REMINDER

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's "Albacore Tuna Landing License" is a special license that allows a boat to commercially land albacore tuna only. This license acts in lieu of all other Oregon commercial fishing licenses for a boat landing only albacore, therefore a vessel is not required to have an Oregon commercial boat license or crew licenses. The "Albacore Tuna Landing License" does not eliminate other federal permit and logbook requirements. Any vessel fishing under an "Albacore Tuna Landing License" is a commercial fishing vessel and must also meet all commercial vessel requirements as prescribed by the US Coast Guard.

DO YOU NEED AN ALBACORE LANDING LICENSE?

