



Marine
Resources

Albacore Tuna Fishery Newsletter

2019

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Visit Our Website:

<https://myodfw.com/fishing/species/albacore-tuna>

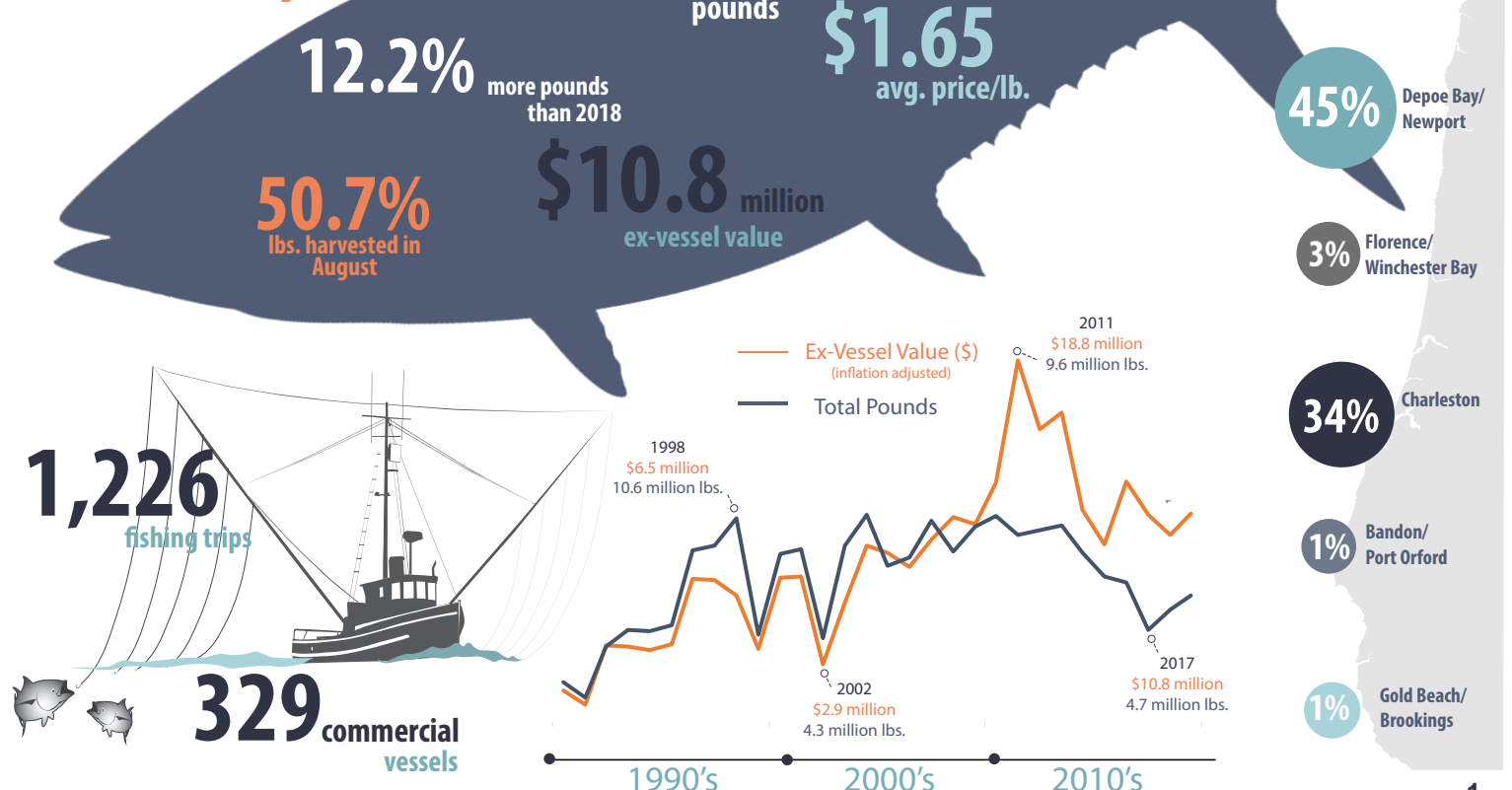
Another Productive Year

The 2019 season was marked by the late arrival of the main school of albacore off Oregon. Nearly a month later than is considered normal, fishing came on strong in August with 3,331,377 pounds landed, or 50.7% of the total for the year. This was the first time in Oregon since 2015 that three million pounds of tuna were landed in a single month.

Newport had the highest albacore landings of any Oregon port in 2019, with 45.4% of the total weight. Charleston landed 33.6% of the total weight, followed by Astoria. Other ports with landings of over 100,000 pounds were Garibaldi and Winchester Bay. Also in 2019, five Canadian vessels made 9 landings, totaling 224,729 total pounds of blast-frozen albacore in Oregon during their three-month eligibility, with an ex-vessel value of \$371,589.

How'd Commercial Fishing GO?

2019 Season Summary

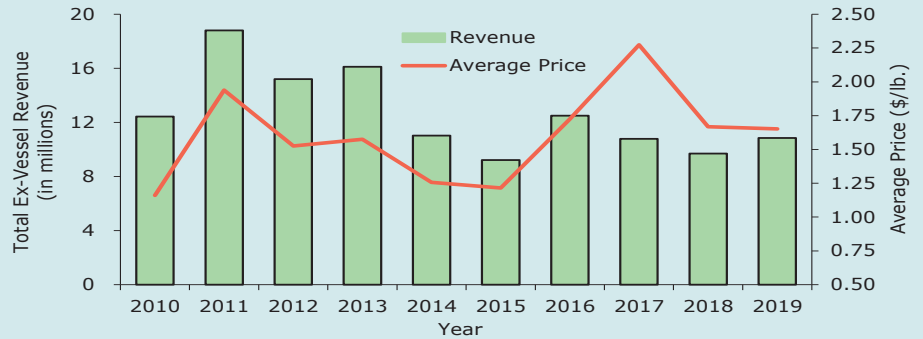
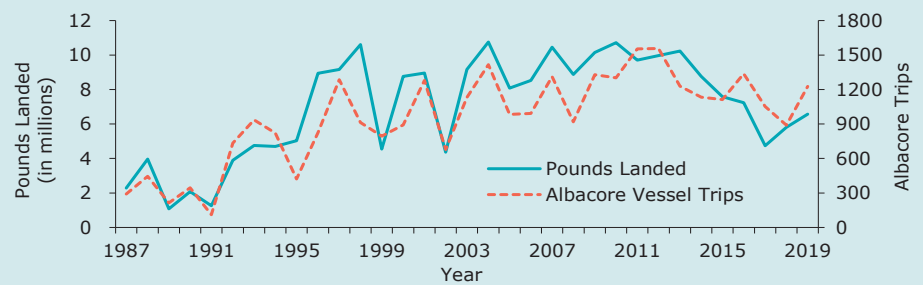


Season Summary (cont'd)

Total 2019 landings showed a second year of steady gain, with a total of 6.6 million pounds being landed in Oregon. This is an increase from 2018 of 12.2%, yet still only 80.7% of the ten-year average (2010-19) of 8.1 million pounds.

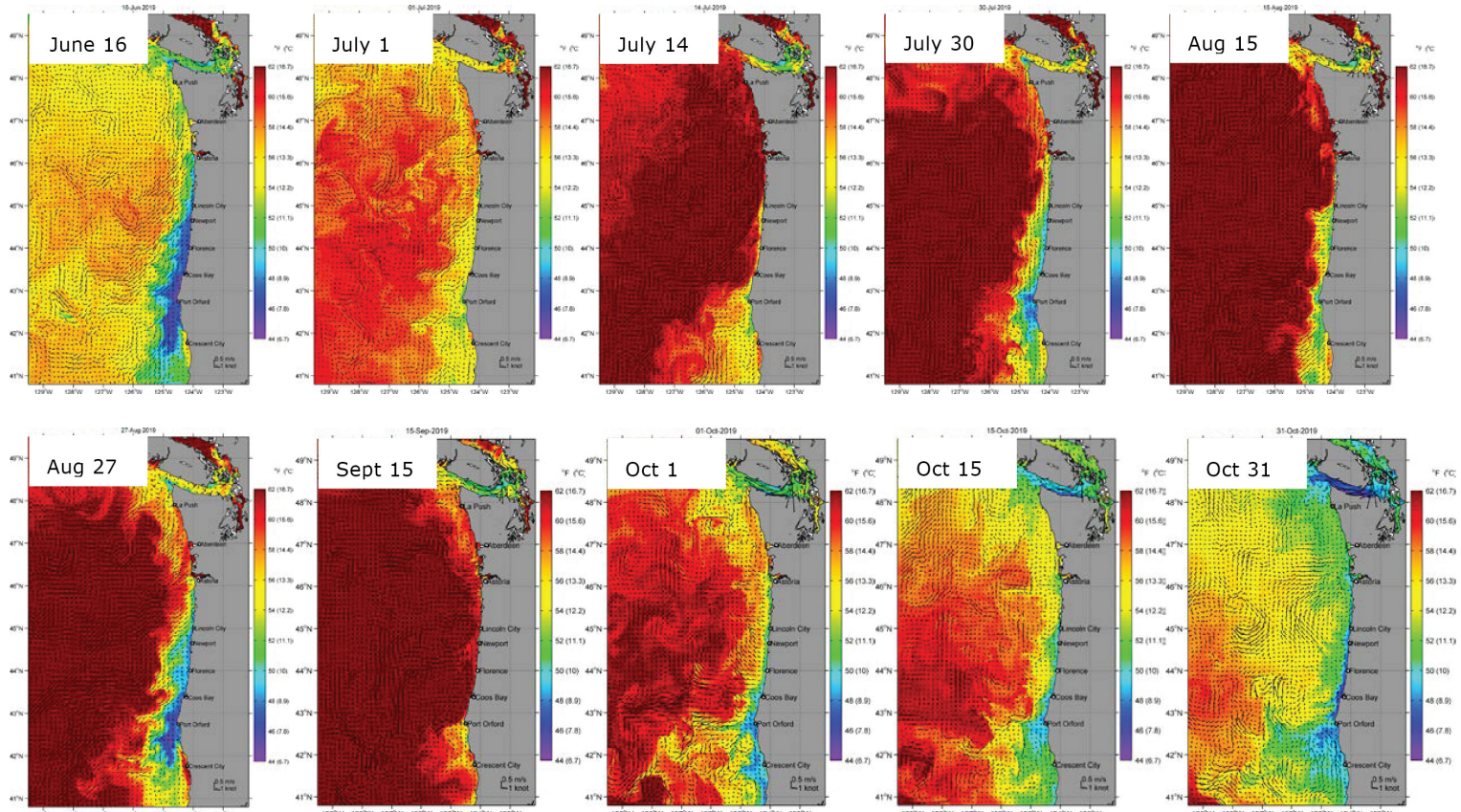
Tuna fishers collectively made 1,226 trips on 329 different commercial vessels.

Ex-vessel revenue generated from albacore in 2019 totaled \$10,844,776. The average price for 2019 was \$1.65 per pound, almost unchanged from the 2018 average of \$1.67.



Ocean Conditions

Sea surface temperatures in 2019 were notably higher than 2018, with a large and dense body of warm water approaching the coast in June and July, and "coming ashore" in mid-July. This allowed fishing quite close to shore, reportedly as close as 10 miles by sport boats, although most commercial boats were still travelling 35-50 miles out to obtain their fish. Monthly highs for sea surface temperature (SST) data from the Tillamook weather buoy (46089) were: June, 62.6°F; July 69.3°F; August 69.6°F; Sept. 68.7°F; and Oct. 63.1°F.



Graph above: Nowcast sea surface temperature plots off Oregon and Washington out to 129°W from June 16 through October 31, 2019. Dark red areas indicate the warmest surface waters at or above 62° F, and lighter green and blue areas the colder waters. Images courtesy Craig Risien, Oregon State University, Northwest Association of Networked Ocean Observing Systems (NANOOS).



How'd Recreational Fishing GO?

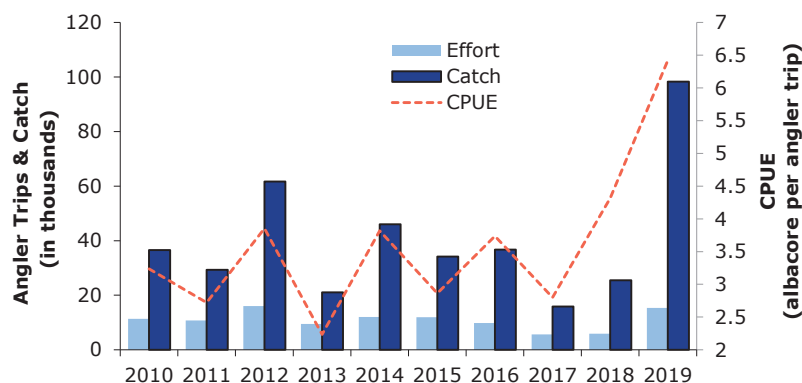
2019 Season Summary

102,510 Fish Landed

15,311 Angler Trips

6.4 Albacore Landed per Angler trip

41% Increase in Effort Over 10 Year Average



Total Catch

3% Astoria

17% Garibaldi/ Pacific City

24% Depoe Bay/ Newport

13% Florence/ Winchester Bay

34% Charleston

3% Bandon/ Port Orford

6% Gold Beach/ Brookings

Record Recreational Catch

Access to albacore for recreational vessels off Oregon can be highly variable, depending on weather conditions and distance offshore to the fish. The 2019 weather was generally good throughout August and September, and the fish stayed close to shore the entire season, usually no more than 30-40 miles out and often much closer, allowing for unusually high 2019 recreational harvest in Oregon.

The total estimated recreational fishing effort for albacore was 15,311 angler trips in 2019, a 41% increase over the recent ten-year average. The number of albacore tuna landed from tuna-specific trips was 98,336 fish. Anglers caught an additional 4,174 albacore on either a bottomfish trip, halibut trip, or "combo" trip (salmon & other fish) for an estimated total of 102,510 albacore tuna during five months of fishing in 2019, representing a 153% increase over the recent 10-year average, and the highest total catch recorded for Oregon.

Anglers landing into Charleston 33.7% of the total recreational catch, followed by Winchester Bay, Newport, and Garibaldi, which together accounted for another 38.6% of the statewide recreational landings.

Overall catch and catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) was higher than in any of the past ten years, and effort was only topped by that of 2012. CPUE for albacore is defined as the number of albacore landed per angler trip. The combined CPUE for Oregon's recreational albacore season for was 6.4 albacore per angler trip, nearly 3 full fish above the ten-year average.

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.

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 is collected and reviewed by 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.

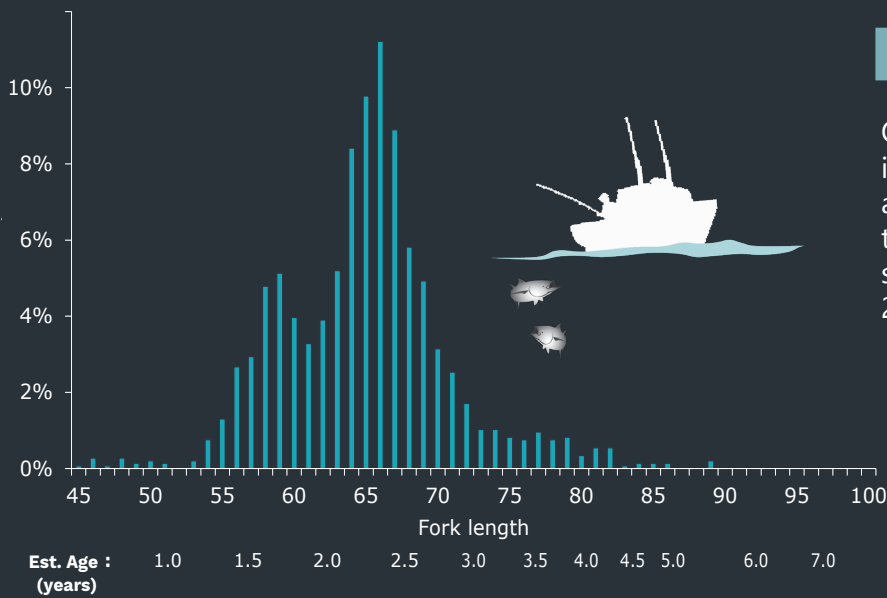
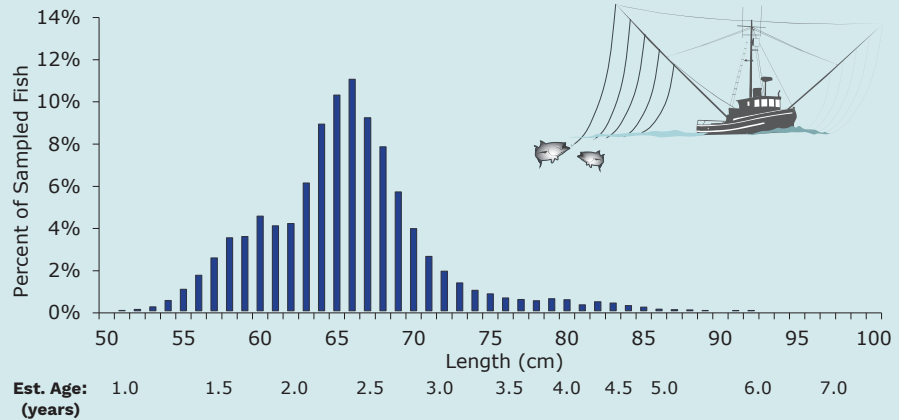
For more information on the ORBS survey and the Oregon recreational albacore fishery please visit our website at:

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

Fish Lengths

Commercial Albacore

Albacore samplers collected fork length measurements from unsorted commercially harvested albacore during offloading from July through October of 2019. Samplers measured 17,886 albacore tuna in the ports of Astoria, Newport, Charleston, Garibaldi, Port Orford, and Brookings. The major peak centered around 66cm represents an age-class of 2 to 2.5 year-old tuna, the minor peak around 60cm represents younger 1.5+ year-old tuna. A comparison of the length distributions of the sampled catches in the three primary Oregon ports does not suggest any differences between ports.

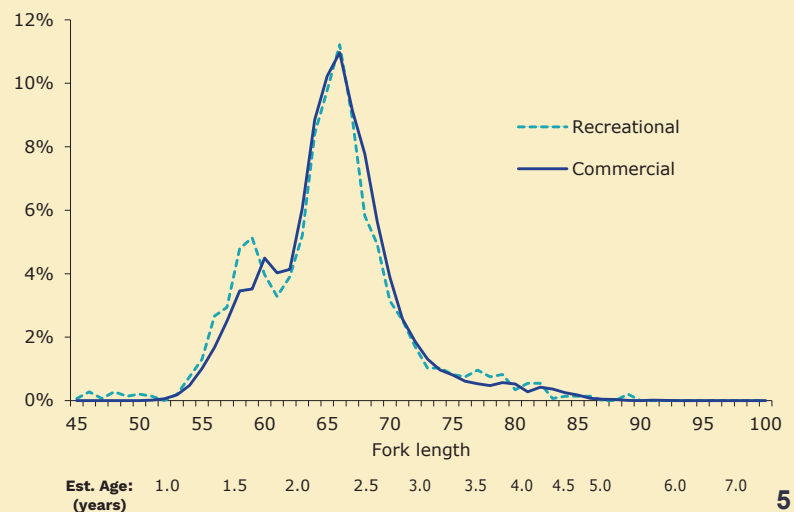


Recreational Albacore

ORBS samplers collected length frequency information on 1,462 recreationally caught albacore in 2019. The graph on the left shows the length frequency distribution of non-sorted, randomly sampled albacore during the 2019 recreational season.

Commercial compared to Recreational

Comparing the length frequency distributions of the recreational and commercial albacore landings for Oregon in 2019 does not suggest any differences between the commercially and recreationally caught albacore.



Other Updates and Reminders

Want More Information?

Here's how you get it



Visit 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>



Read Annual Report

To read this year and past years annual reports please visit:

<https://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/publications/docs/2019%20Oregon%20Albacore%20Report.pdf>



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 or stop by our office in Newport any time!

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ALBACORE GENETIC RESEARCH

While previous studies have improved our understanding regarding the migration and stock structure of Albacore tuna, uncertainty still remains. To address this uncertainty, Drs. Kathleen O'Malley (Oregon State University) and John Hyde (NOAA Fisheries, Southwest Fisheries Science Center) collaborated on a research project to generate genomic data to help resolve some of these uncertainties and provide more definitive results regarding stock boundaries of albacore tuna in the North Pacific. With the written support from the Western Fishboat Owners Association, the Oregon Albacore Commission and the American Albacore Fishermen's Association the project was funded through NOAA's Saltonstall-Kennedy's grant program. Dr. Felix Vaux, a postdoc at Oregon State University, was recruited to conduct the data analyses. Altogether the genomic results from this study support the distinction of separate stocks of albacore in the North and South Pacific, but a relatively small proportion of the genome is responsible for the differentiation between these groups. The majority of genetic differentiation between the North and South Pacific is potentially adaptive, which may be important for future management and conservation efforts. Findings from this study will be made available to the fishing community in a written report as well as a journal publication. To learn more about this research watch Dr. Felix Vaux webinar presentation of this research.

Webinar: <http://oregonstate.adobeconnect.com/ppir0td1jur1/>

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?

