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MAY 1986

LA JOLLA, CA 92038

SUMMARY OF THE **1985 NORTH PACIFIC ALBACORE FISHERY DATA**

by

Anthony P. Majors and Forrest R. Miller

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SOUTHWEST FISHERES CENTER

P.D. BOX 211

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT LJ-86-10

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SUMMARY OF THE 1985 NORTH

PACIFIC ALBACORE FISHERY DATA

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SUMMARY OF THE 1985 U. S. NORTH PACIFIC ALBACORE FISHERY DATA

INTRODUCTION

The 1985 fishing season marks the 12th successive year that state and federal agencies have worked together to collect information on the U.S. North Pacific albacore fishery. Throughout the season, California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Washington Department of Fisheries (WDF), Pacific Marine Fisheries Commission (PMFC), Western Fishboat Owners Association (WFOA) and the Honolulu Laboratory of the Southwest Fisheries Center (SWFC) distributed logbooks to fishermen and sampled the catch from fishing vessels as they returned to ports.

Early in April, before the start of the 1985 fishing season, more than 400 albacore logbooks were sent by mail to members of WFOA. An additional 500 logbooks were distributed at dock sites in California, Oregon, Washington and Hawaii by samplers to interested fishermen from June to September. Those fishermen, who participated voluntarily in this sampling project, recorded daily fishing effort, numbers of fish caught, types of gears used, and real-time environmental data in these logbooks during fishing activities. The completed logsheets were submitted by fishermen to samplers assigned to the dock sites during the fishing season. If the fishermen did not have access to logbooks, samplers conducted interviews for the necessary information when returning vessels unloaded their catches. These field biologists also measured and collected length-frequency samples of the unloaded catches from the sampled vessels.

In this report, we present data collected from the 1985 U.S. North Pacific albacore fishery. Areas covered include the traditional fishing grounds off the U.S. west coast from central Baja California to British Columbia, areas north of Hawaii, and areas in the western Pacific. Data are summarized and compared with those collected during the 1984 fishing season. Landings from foreign fisheries including Canada, Japan, and Taiwan from 1952 to 1985 are also included for comparison purposes.

SAMPLING COVERAGE

Sampling coverage for the U.S. North Pacific albacore fishery in 1984 and 1985 was measured as the ratio of sampled landings in weight to total landings in weight (Tables la-lb). During the 1985 U.S. North Pacific albacore fishing season, an estimated 17,484,820 lbs (7,931 mt) of albacore were landed in ports throughout California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington. Of this total, approximately 61% (10,608,068 lbs; 4,812 mt) was sampled for catch and effort (information collected from voluntary logbooks and interviews), and 3% (458,534 lbs; 208 mt) was sampled for length-frequency. During the 1985 albacore fishing season, catch and effort coverage rates, as estimated from sampled landings in weight, increased from 53% in 1984 to 61% in 1985. Coverage rates for length-frequency samples increased from 1% in 1984 to 3% in 1985. Approximately 82% of the U.S. North Pacific albacore catch for 1985 was landed in California, 7% in Hawaii, 9% in Oregon, and 2% in Washington. Compared to 1984 landings, albacore landings in 1985 for Washington and Hawaii increased 130% and 47% respectively, and those for California and Oregon decreased 49% and 8%, respectively.

Table 1a. Sampling coverage for the U.S. North Pacific albacore fishery by state in 1985.

State	Total Landings (1bs)	Landings Sampled (1bs)	Percent Coverage	Number Vessels Sampled	Avg. Landings in Pounds Per Vessel
	С	atch and Ef	fort		
California Hawaii Oregon Washington Total	14,370,000 1,236,000 1,522,183 356,637 17,484,820	8,642,295 817,196 869,365 279,212	5 60% 5 66% 5 57% 2 78% 8 61%	500 9 54 28 591	17,285 90,799 16,099 9,971 17,949
		ength Frequ	lency		
California Hawaii Oregon Washington	14,370,000 1,236,000 1,522,183 356,637	330,584 4,524 114,228 9,198	4 2% 4 <1% 3 8% 3 3%	331 6 38 6	-
Total	17,484,820	458,53	1 3%	381	-

Table 1b. Sampling coverage for the U.S. North Pacific albacore fishery by state in 1984.

State	Total Landings (lbs)	Landings Sampled (lbs)	Percent Coverage	Number Vessels Sampled	Avg. Landings in Pounds Per Vessel
		Catch and Ei	fort		
California Hawaii Oregon Washington Puerto Rico (Other)	28,250,000 840,000 1,650,466 154,859 154,000 116,000	14,695,187 753,263 970,448 139,934	7 52% 3 90% 3 59% 4 90% 	587 13 131 31 -	24,989 57,943 7,408 5,354
Total	31,165,325	16,558,832	2 53%	762	21,730
	1	Length Frequ	lency		

California	28,250,000	266,323	18	332	-
Hawaii	840,000	10,257	18	15	-
Oregon	1,650,466	142,632	98	79	-
Washington	154,859	4,624	38	9	-
Puerto Rico	154,000	-	-	-	-
(Other)	116,000	-	-	-	-
Total	31,165,325	423,846	1%	435	-

CATCH

Total reported commercial landings for the 1985 U.S. North Pacific albacore fishery was 17,484,820 lbs (7,931 mt). This total catch represents a 44% decrease from the 31,165,325 lbs (14,136 mt) recorded for 1984 (Table 3, Figure 1). The fishery for 1984 and 1985 was arbitrarily divided into two areas: (1) the inshore area, from the U.S. coastline to 140° west longitude, and (2) the offshore area, west of 140° west longitude.

The U.S. North Pacific albacore surface fleet in 1985 fished extensively in areas west of 140° west longitude from early May to early August (Figures 2b-2e). During the 1984 season, the offshore fishing was weak throughout May and June, but was fairly strong midway through the season until early September. As in 1984, early catches of albacore in April 1985 were reported by vessels in transit to the central and western North Pacific (Figure 2a). Throughout May and June 1985, these larger jigboats (>55-foot length; 16.8 meter) also reported excellent fishing in a 10° quadrangular area, 30° north latitude and 165° west longitude (300-400 nautical miles northeast of Midway Island).

Albacore fishing inshore started early in June 1985, and significant catches were recorded in the second half of the month in areas between 75 and 300 nautical miles off southern California (Figure 5e). The 1985 albacore fishing season, like the 1984 season, came to a close in inshore areas off central California late in October.

Although the distribution of catches inshore and offshore for both years was geographically similar, there were significant differences in the numbers of fish caught by areas for 1985 and There was a 42% decrease in catches in the inshore area 1984. and a 53% decrease in catches offshore for 1985, compared with catches in those same areas for 1984. In 1985, the inshore catch was 82% of the total landings, and offshore catch was 18%. In 1984, inshore catch was 83% of the total landings, and offshore catch was 17%. The area offshore and north of 40° north latitude, which was very productive in 1984, was less productive in 1985. The most productive fishing offshore in 1985 was reported from areas south of 40° north latitude early in the season throughout May and June (Figures 5b-5e). Excellent fishing midway through the season was found inshore in areas north of 40° north latitude (Figures 5h-5i).

EFFORT

effort (days fished) for the 1985 U.S. North Fishing Pacific albacore fishery was significantly lower than fishing effort in 1984. There was a decrease of 25% from the reported 10,321 days fished in 1984 to the 7,725 days fished in 1985. In 1985, 82% of the sampled effort (6,341 days fished) spent in the inshore area yielded 80% of the sampled catch (8,490,146 lbs); in 1984, 77% of the effort (7,956 days fished) spent in this same area yielded 76% (12,848,990 lbs). In 1985, 18% of the sampled effort (1,384 days fished) spent in the offshore area yielded 20% of the sampled catch (3,309,918 lbs); in 1984, 23% of the effort (2,365 days fished) spent in this same area yielded 24% (3,903,773 lbs). The 55-foot jigboats expended the most effort (days fished) in the fishery in 1985, and the 45-foot jigboats expended the most effort in 1984 (Figure 3).

CATCH-PER-UNIT OF EFFORT BY JIGBOATS

Estimated annual catch-per-unit effort (CPUE), in numbers of fish caught for one day of fishing for a standard 45-foot (14 meter) jigboat increased slightly from 81.01 fish per day in 1984 to 82.0 fish per day in 1985 (Figure 4). The highest CPUEs of 185-225 fish per day (calculated in half-month periods) for a standard size jigboat were reported from offshore areas in 1985 from May to mid-June (Table 2). These high CPUEs were reported a 10° quadrangular area 30° north latitude and 165° west from longitude (Figures 5b-5d). Fairly high CPUEs of 107-115 fish per day for a standard size jigboat were also reported from inshore areas in 1985 during the month of August (Table 2). These high CPUEs were reported from inshore areas 400-1000 nautical miles due west of Newport, and 50-300 nautical miles off Cape Mendocino and San Francisco. Catch rates of 55-66 fish per day for July although normal for that time of the season, were 1985, considerably smaller than the 105-126 fish per day recorded for the same period in 1984.

Year			1985		1984	1984					
Month	Time Period	Samı Effort	Catch	CPUE	Sa Effor 	mpled t Catch	CPUE				
April	1-15	1	0	0	0	0	0				
	16-30	17	45	3	11	0	0				
May	1-15	53	11,721	221	100	733	7				
	16-31	86	19,380	225	163	14,520	89				
					· Tala dina dina dina dina dina dina dina din	ine dass dies dass dies dass dass	the the tes this fast the				
June	1-15	147	27,269	185	253	38,086	150				
	16-30	522	47,067	90	404	50,270	124				

Table 2. Standardized fishing effort in days fished, catch in numbers of fish caught, and CPUEs (average number of fish per day) by half-month for 1984 and 1985.

Annual CPUE value for 1984 was recalculated to 81.0 when more data were added.

July	1-15	497	27,497	55	917	115,520	126
	16-31	735	48,275	66	891	93,635	105
August	1-15	930	100,156	107	1,492	147,796	99
	16-31	899	103,043	115	1,606	117,806	73
	Bank dath Gan gan gan gan			ng Gane Gros Gane Gane Care Gr			
September	1-15	1,076	75,409	70	1,395	66,224	47
	16-30	578	21,550	37	918	52,612	57
October	1-15	394	14,948	38	481	16,019	33
	16-31	261	10,031	38	415	15,174	37

In 1985, the number of 1° squares with CPUEs greater than 200 fish per day was three more than in 1984. Unlike 1984 where most of the 1° squares with CPUEs greater than 200 were located north of 40° north latitude, most of the 1° squares with CPUEs greater than 200 in 1985 were located south of 40° north latitude. In both years, the majority of 1° squares with CPUEs over 200 were located offshore (Figures 5).

LENGTH FREQUENCY

During the 1985 albacore fishing season, 30,508 length measurements were taken of fish caught by the U.S. North Pacific Of these samples, approximately 91% were taken albacore fleet. 3% offshore, and 6% unclassified. from the inshore area, Approximately 11% of the measured fish were taken from baitboats, 81% from jiqboats, 5% from vessels using a combination of jig and bait, 2% from gillnet vessels, and less than 1% each from longline and purse seine vessels (Figure 7). The average length of albacore measured in 1985 was 69.0 centimeters (cm) in fork length (tip of of the mandible to the fork of the tail). This was higher than the 66.1 cm average fork length recorded for 1984. Fish caught inshore in both years were mostly in the range of 60-66 and 74-82 cm in fork length (Figure 6). There were more fish in the 74-82 cm size range caught inshore and south of 40° north latitude in 1985 than in 1984. In both years, these larger fish were more vulnerable to baitboats and vessels using a combination of bait and jig in the inshore areas. Most of the albacore caught by the larger jigboats offshore in 1985 were in

the 60-66 cm range; the same size fish were also caught in these areas in 1984.

SEA-SURFACE TEMPERATURE

Sea-surface temperatures (SSTs) observed from commercial transport vessels, fishing boats and research vessels were compiled into monthly means and plotted on charts with 1° quadrangle resolution (Figure 8). Analyses of these charts provided useful information about the distribution of sea-surface isotherms and the location of surface ocean fronts.

May 1985, active fishing began west of 160° near 35° In The subtropical ocean front was stronger than normal in north. this region from April through June (Figure 8a-8c). In June, the offshore fishery shifted north of 35° north latitude and eastward as SSTs greater than 15° C (59° F) moved northward more rapidly than normal. The inshore fishery started early in June when SSTs were $16.0^{\circ}-17.0^{\circ}$ C (61.0° - 63.0° F), and a sharp ocean front was developing south of Point Conception. In the first half of July the offshore fishery continued to shift northeastward and was centered along 40° north latitude. In this region, the subtropical ocean front merged with the polar ocean front and was usually strong along 40° north, west of 150° west longtitude. The inshore fishery continued along a sharp frontal boundary which extended southeast from Point Conception.

During the second half of July, the offshore fishery continued to move northeastward into a region where SSTs were increasing at above normal rates. At the same time, the inshore fishery shifted northward and was located along the western peripheral of the coastal upwelling which stretched from Oregon to Point Conception. Along the coasts of California and Oregon, good upwelling began in June in response to persistent and strong northerly winds. This created many areas of strong temperature edges (fronts) where fishing was active after mid-July. In August, the offshore fishery had merged with the inshore fishery along 45° north latitude. The inshore fishery continued along the western edge of the coastal upwelling which remained strong through September (Figure 8f). During September, the greatest fishing activity occurred along the coast from Point Conception to Cape Blanco. In this region, coastal upwelling maintained good temperature edges, especially south of 40° north latitude. By October, SSTs were $1.0^{\circ}-2.0^{\circ}$ C ($1.8^{\circ}-3.6^{\circ}$ F) below normal in areas north of 35° north latitude, and most of the coastal upwelling had decreased and centered in areas $40^{\circ}-45^{\circ}$ north north latitude.

DISCUSSION

Although albacore fishing was less successful in 1985 than in 1984, excellent offshore catches were reported early in the season throughout May and June 1985 in areas 300-400 nautical miles northeast of Midway Island. Fishing inshore started early in 1985 with significant catches off southern California throughout June. In contrast, the offshore fishing in 1984 was weak in May with significant catches reported in late June. In 1984, the amount of fish caught by the fleet in the inshore area was not significant until the second half of July. As in 1984, fish caught earlier in the season in 1985 were taken west of Erben Bank (33°N, 133°W) by the larger jigboats leaving for areas north of Hawaii and the western Pacific.

Favorable environmental conditions offshore from April to June 1985 may have contributed to the success of the larger jigboats fishing 300-400 nautical miles northeast of Midway Island early in the season (Figures 8a-8b). Strong coastal upwelling inshore in September may have contributed to the success of vessels fishing in areas from Point Conception to Cape Blanco late in the season (Figure 8f). The average size of albacore caught in 1985 was 69.0 cm in length (15.0 lbs), which was larger than the 1984 average size of 66.1 cm (13.1 lbs). Estimated annual CPUE for a standard vessel in 1985 was 82.0 fish per day, which was slightly higher than the 81.0 fish per day in 1984.

Highlights of the 1985 fishing seasons included: 1) the total number of fish caught in 1985 decreased by 44%; 2) the largest number of 1° squares with CPUEs greater than 200 were located offshore and south of 40° north latitude; 3) offshore fishing lasted until early August; 4) significant catches were made throughout June early in the season in inshore areas off southern California; 5) the best catches were made in May and June offshore; 6) the larger size fish of 74-82 cm in fork length were caught in increased numbers inshore and south of 40° north latitude; 7) well-defined frontal areas existed early in the season (April-June) in offshore areas and south of 40° north latitude; and 8) coastal upwelling was strong in inshore areas from Point Conception to Cape Blanco late in the season.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Table 3.

	Grand Total	93,597	76,746	61,458	54,490	76,458	92,181	55,728	51,023	61,263	50,925	44,911	70,841	60,535	74,386	69,874	77,786	68,111	75,172	67,353	90,889	105,911	107,084	114,223	84,772	121,330	61,551	98,694	70,595	74,324	77,562	72,722	56,102	I	I
Canada	Jig- boat	11	L L L	1	ı	17	8	74	212	5	4	l	5	c	15	44	161	1,028	1,365	345	1,587	3,558	1,270	1,207	101	252	53	23	289	212	98	Ч	64	18	г
	Total	25,216	15,911	12,393	13,841	19,233	21469	14,903	20,990	20,657	16,253	22,526	28,740	22,627	17,693	17,530	22,646	26,301	22,193	26,279	23,783	27,995	17,987	25,058	22,858	19,345	12,039	18,442	7,178	8,124	13,637	7,343	10,206,	15,563'	9,107
states	Sport	1,373	171	147	577	482	304	48	0	557	1,355	1,681	1,161	824	731	588	707	951	358	822	1,175	637	84	94	640	713	537	810	74	168	195	257	87	1,427	1,176
United S	Jig- boat	23,843	15,740	12,246	13,264	18,751	21,165	14,855	20,990	20,100	12,061	19,760	25,147	18,392	16,545	15,342	17,826	20,444	18,839	21,041	20,537	23,608	15,667	20,187	18,975	15,932	10,005	16,682	6,801	7,574	12,694	6,661	9,512	9,576	7,059
	Bait boat	1	1	I	1	I	I	1	1	1	2,837	1,085	2,432	3,411	417	1,600	4,113	4,906	2,996	4,416	2,071	3,750	2,236	4 ,777	3,243	2,700	1,497	950	3 0 3	382	748	425	607	832	872
Taiwan	Long- line	1	I	ı	I	1	I	1	I	1	1	1	I	26	16	16	17	15	21	23	24	25	35	40	28	37	61	53	81	1	I	1	I	l	ī
	Total	68,310	60,830	49,065	40,649	57,208	70,704	40,751	29,821	40,601	34,668	22,384	42,096	37,879	56,662	52,284	54,962	40,767	51,593	40,706	65,495	74,333	87,792	87,918	61,785	101,696	49,398	80,176	63,047	65,988	63,827	65,378	45,832	ı	ı
	Other gear	237	132	38	136	57	151	124	67	76	268	191	218	319	121	585	520	1,109	1,480	956	1,262	921	1,883	1,065	402	1,394	1,039	3,209	1,280	1,516	956	1,054	47 I	1	1
Japan	Gill net	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	I	I	I	T	I	1	I	I	1	1	1	Г	39	224	166	1,070	688	4,029	2,856	2,986	17,425	17,947	9,160	1	1
	Long- line	26,687	27,777	20,958	16,277	14,341	21,053	18,452	15,502	17,369	15,764	13,464	15,458	13,701	25,050	28,869	23,961	23,061	18,006	15,372	11,035	12,649	16,059	13,053	10,060	15,896	15,737	13,061	14,249	14,743	18,020	16,762	15,103	I	I
	Bait boat	41,386	32,921	28,069	24,236	42,810	49,500	22,175	14,252	23,156	18,636	8,729	26,420	23,858	41,491	22,830	30,481	16,597	32,107	24,378	53,198	60,762	69,811	73,576	51,157	83,336	31,934	59,877	44,662	46,743	27,426	29,615	21,098	26,000	I
	Year	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985

Remarks:

Longline catches

Figures for 1984-85 are preliminary.
Figures for 1984-85 are preliminary.
Japanese longline catches for 1952-60 exclude minor amounts taken by vessels under 20 tons. Longlin weight are estimated by multiplying annual number of fish caught by average weight statistics.
Japanese baitboat catches include catches by research vessels.
U.S. Jigboat catches for years 1952-60 include baitboat catches.
United States sport catch is a minimum estimate based on partial coverage.
United States total for 1985 include Rawaii.
United States total for 1984 include catches (3,728 mt) by purse seines.













fishery catches (in numbers of May 1985. Combined jigboat and baitboat fish) by l-degree square area, Figure 2b.







jigboat and baitboat fishery catches (in numbers of 1-degree square area, July 1985. Combined fish) by] Figure 2d.



Combined jigboat and baitboat fishery catches (in numbers of fish) by 1-degree square area, August 1985. Figure 2e.



Combined jigboat and baitboat fishery catches (in numbers of fish) by 1-degree square area, September 1985. Figure 2f.



fishery catches (in numbers of 1985. October Combined jigboat and baitboat fish) by l-degree square area, Figure 2g.









Figure 4. North Pacific albacore catch-per-unit effort (CPUE) by fishery and gear.



























Jigboat catch-per-standard day fishing by 1-degree square area and half-month, July 16-31, 1985. Figure 5g.



















Jigboat catch-per-standard day fishing by 1-degree square area and half-month, October 1-15, 1985. Figure 51.



Jigboat catch-per-standard day fishing by 1-degree square area and half-month, October 16-31, 1985. Figure 5m.











Length-frequency histograms of the 1985 North Pacific albacore caught by U.S. vessels using both bait and jig. Figure 6c.



fleet for U. S. the caught by albacore tuna composition of by gear Size 1985 7. Figure





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sea-surface temperature (SST) isopleths (^OC) by month eastern Pacific Ocean, October 1985. Average for the



