

## **Pacific Fishery Management Council's HMS FMP:**

The Magnuson Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act requires fisheries management councils, or the Secretary of Commerce, to take certain measures when a stock is declared to be "being overfished", and because the U.S. troll fleet is still under the PFMC HMS FMP, WFOA has major concerns here. The NMFS in its June 2004 Annual Report to Congress stated that "over fishing" of big eye tuna was occurring in the Pacific. Given the current assessments by international and U.S. government scientists, there is every likelihood that rightly or wrongly, NMFS will put in its 2006 Annual Report to Congress that North Pacific Albacore is being "overfished". The declaration on big eye has set off an unhelpful competition between the PFMC and the Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council over allocation of big eye to various U.S. fleets. While NMFS made an attempt in May of 2005 to clarify the roles between the two Councils and what role they each should fill with regard to advising and following the internationally agreed resolutions of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations such as the IATTC and the WCPFC, confusion and conflict continue to prevail.

Some of the goals realized in the PFMC have been to successfully keep VMS and observers off the albacore fleet. While some of this success has been due to the lack of funding, it is important to be a participant if any observer or VMS programs are developed, so that these programs will be implemented in a way that keeps the best interests of the albacore troll fleet paramount.

Additionally, there are increasing campaigns to enlarge and link marine protected areas in State and Federal waters, extending out to sea mounts far off shore, and this requires that WFOA continue to educate the State government, and those involved with the Council from the federal government, as well as the Council members themselves, as to the unique characteristics and the status of the west coast albacore stocks.