



Marine Resources

Albacore Tuna Fishery Newsletter

2023

What's Inside

- 2023 Commercial Season 1- 2
- Ocean Conditions 2
- Length Frequency 3
- 2023 Recreational Season 4
- Fishery Monitoring Updates . . . 5
- Other Updates and Reminders . . 6



Read the Annual Report

To read this year's annual report please visit:

dfw.state.or.us/MRP/publications/

LOWEST VOLUME YEAR SINCE 1991

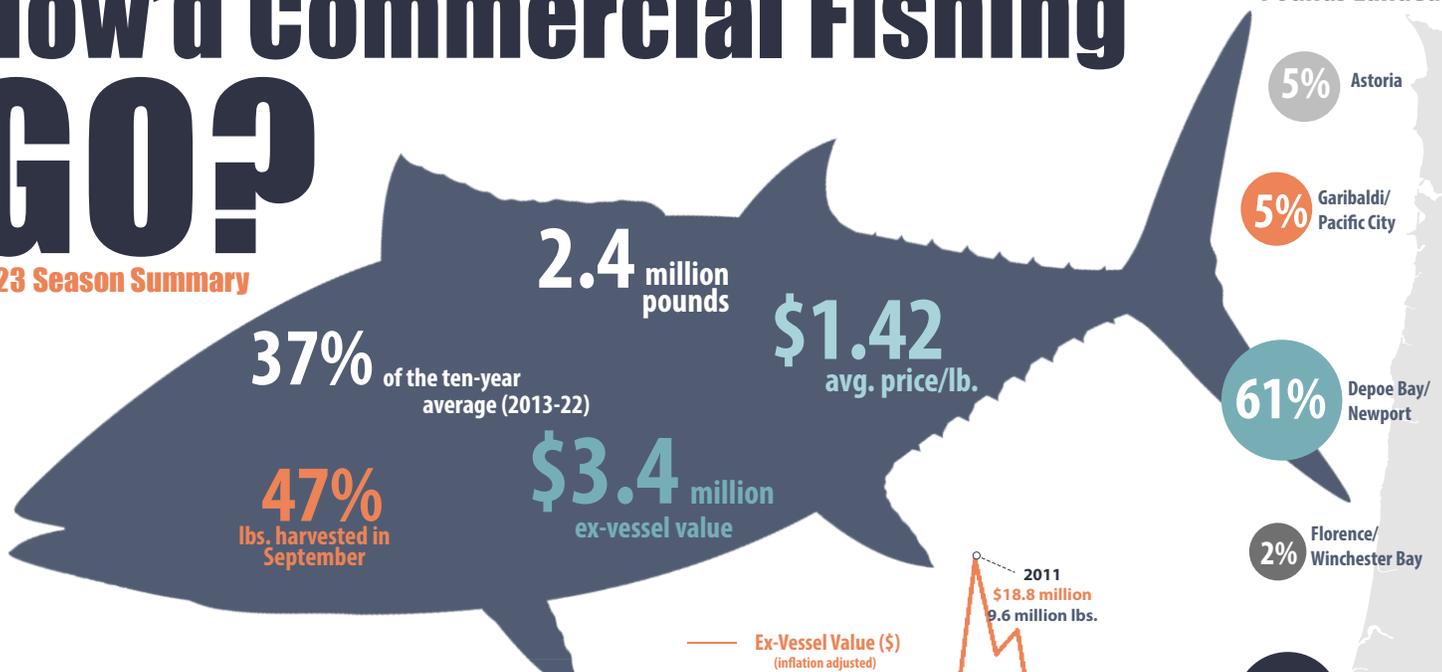
The high price and catch rates of 2022 led to eventual market saturation, impacting the 2023 season. Many fishers had trouble finding buyers for their fish, limiting the number of trips they were able to make, and subsequently, the volume of fish landed. These factors combined caused the 2023 season to be the lowest volume year since 1991.

Newport had the highest albacore landings of any Oregon port in 2023, with 61% of the total weight. Charleston landed 25% of the total weight, followed by Garibaldi and Astoria at 5% each.

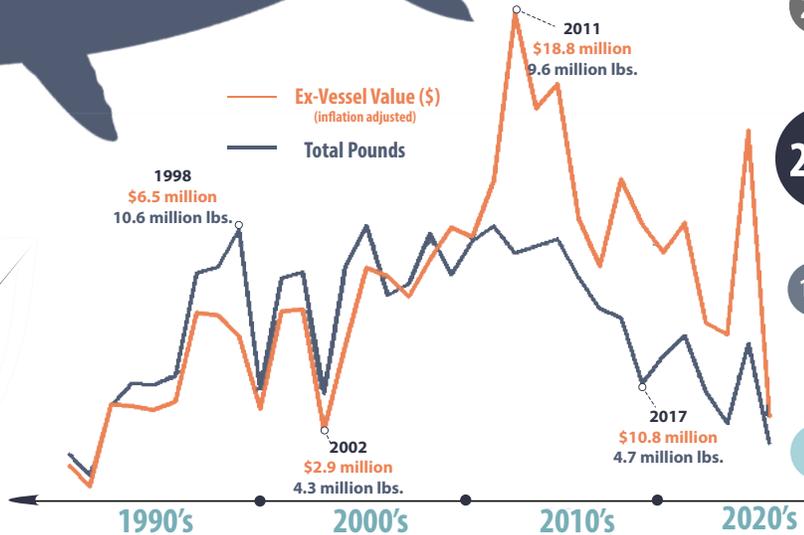
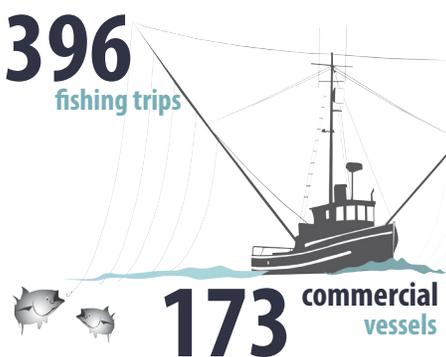
The average size of all albacore landings in 2023 was 6,114 pounds, a 3,000 pound decrease from 2022 but only a 7% decrease from the 10-year average. This indicates that vessels of all sizes were able to make trips this season and there were no substantial limiting factors that kept the smaller vessels in port.

How'd Commercial Fishing GO?

2023 Season Summary



Pounds Landed



Season Summary (cont'd)

Total landings decreased in 2023, with 2.4 million pounds landed in Oregon, which reflects 37% of the ten-year average (2013-22). Tuna fishers collectively made 396 trips on 173 different commercial vessels.

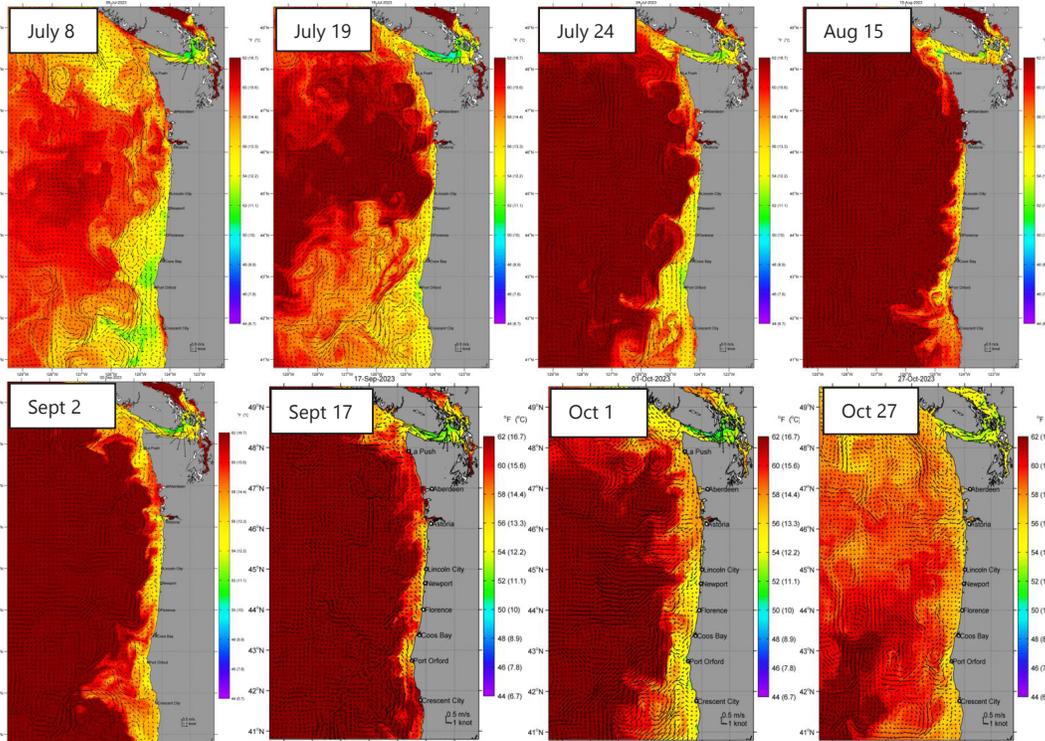
September was the largest contributor of volume at 47.4% of the yearly total and 1,115,077 pounds for the month.

The 2023 Oregon albacore season generated \$3,455,829 in total value paid to vessels. The average price was \$1.42 per pound. This is a 40% decrease from the average price of the 2022 season, which was the highest price in the fishery's history.



Ocean Conditions

Warm sea surface temperatures approached and settled along the Oregon coast in late July. With global sea temperatures spiking in different regions of the world and a fleet reminiscent of high catch rates during 2022, many fishers assumed it would be an early and strong albacore season. The momentum of the season did not build until early August when catch began to outpace effort. As soon as landings began to accelerate, there was an unusually strong mid-August weather event that kept the fleet in port for nearly a week, which likely had an adverse effect on landed volume for the month. As September approached, warm sea surface temperatures remained close to the coast and reports of spotty fishing began to improve. Many fishers attempted to make up for lost fishing time from July and August, but there were multiple weather systems that limited access to the fishing grounds during September.



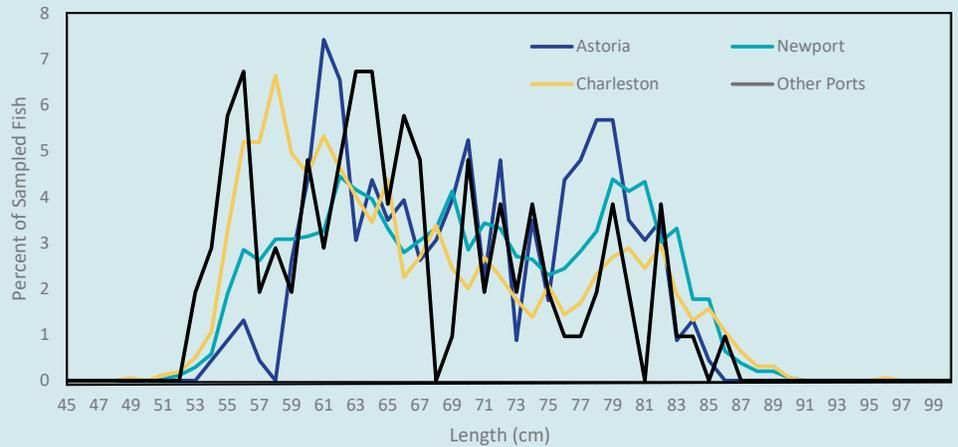
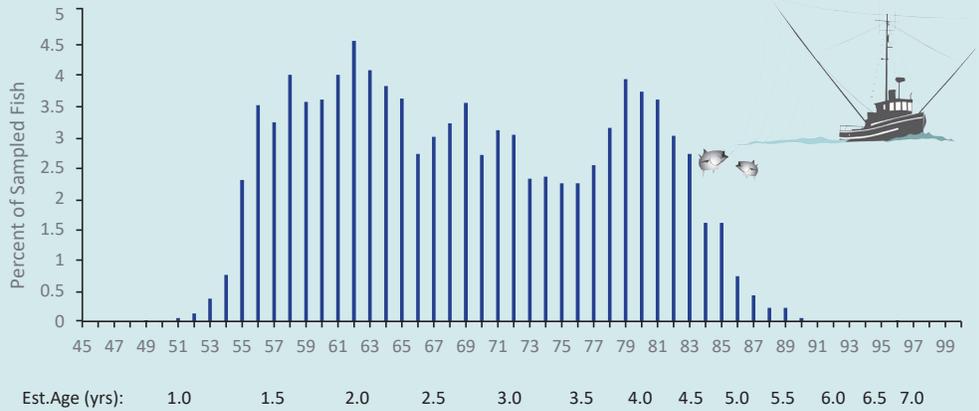
Nowcast sea surface temperature plots off Oregon and Washington for July 8 – October 27, 2023. Images courtesy of Craig Risien, Oregon State University, Northwest Association of Networked Ocean Observing Systems (NANOOS).

Fish Lengths

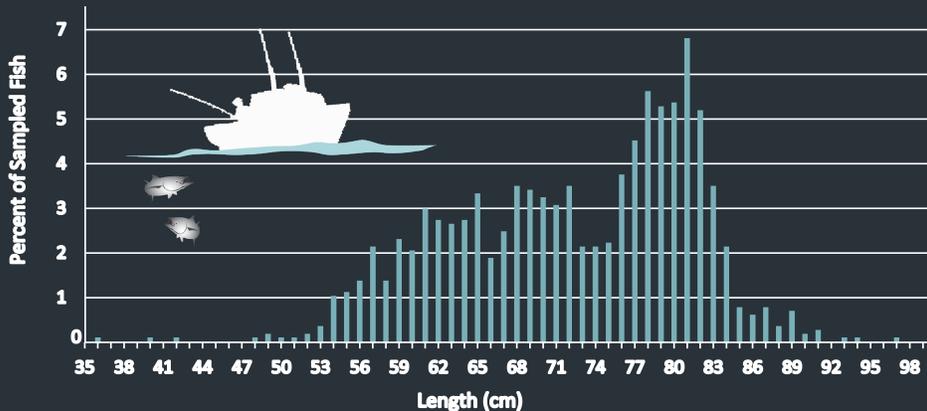
Commercial Albacore

Albacore samplers collected fork length measurements from unsorted commercially harvested albacore during offloading from July through October of 2023. Samplers measured 5,422 albacore over the course of the 2023 season. The distribution created this year is unique in its representation of all size classes encountered in the fishery. Typically, there is a sharp modal distribution with a certain size represented by 8-10% of sampled fish. This year, the highest percentage encountered is just over 4.5% of sampled fish at 62 cm, which further asserts the scattered distribution and representation of all size classes. The overall average length is 69.1 cm, representing fish weighing approximately 15.6 pounds and aged roughly 2.7 years.

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

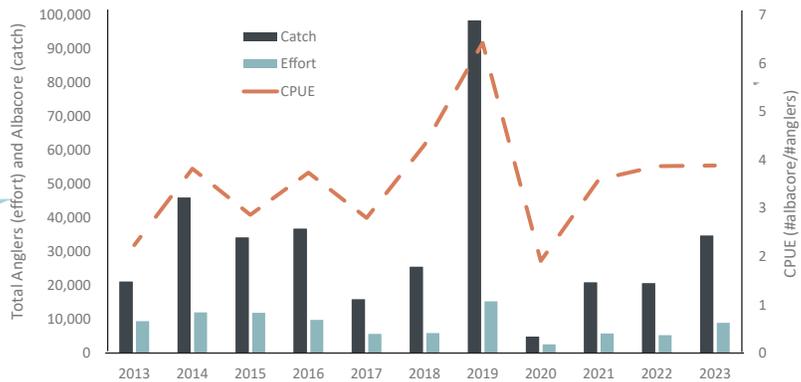
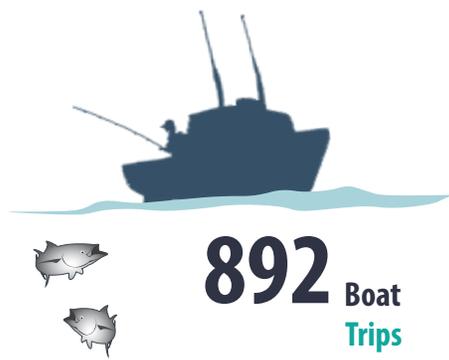
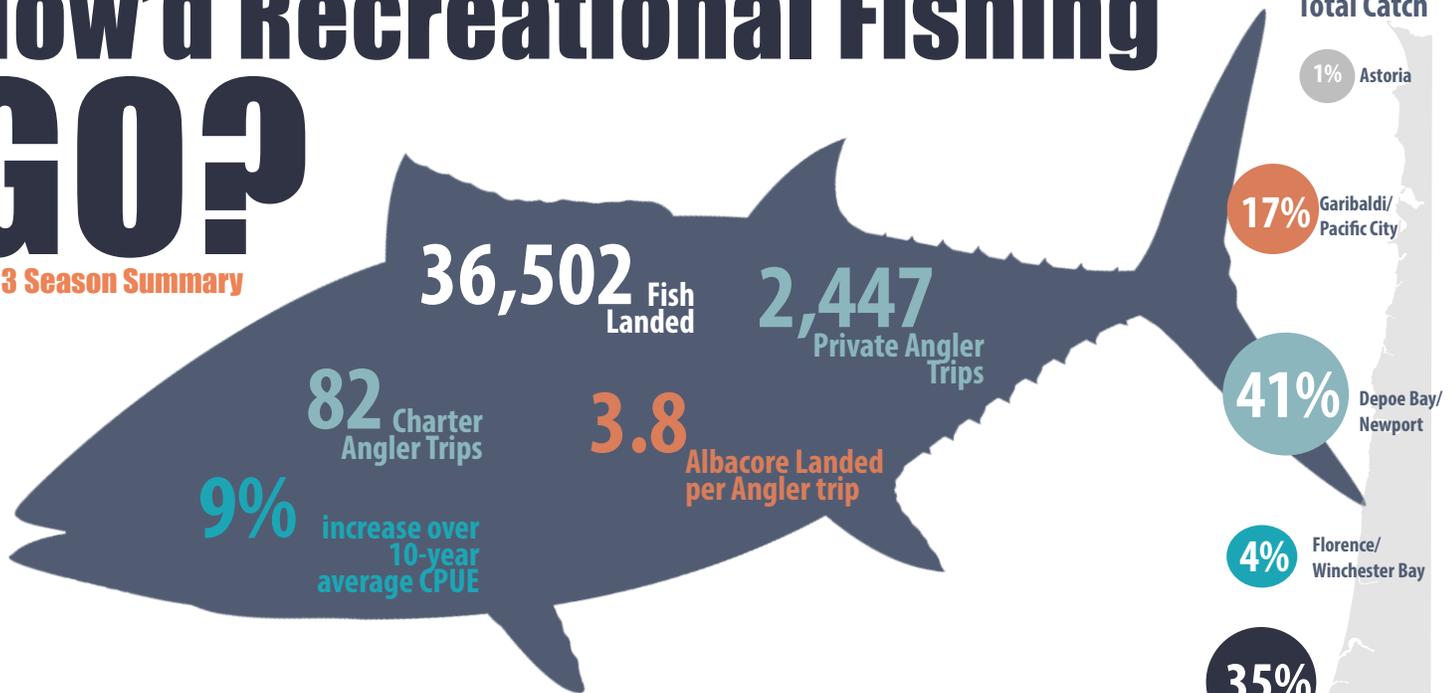


ODFW samplers collected length data on 1,179 recreationally harvested albacore in 2023. The graph on the left shows the length frequency distribution of non-sorted, randomly sampled albacore during the 2023 recreational season. The distribution shows an increase of larger fish due to recreational fishers opting to keep the more prized fish, but overall, the distribution shows a similar scattered pattern as in the commercial fishery. The overall average length is 72.2 cm.



How'd Recreational Fishing GO?

2023 Season Summary



Total Catch

1% Astoria

17% Garibaldi/
Pacific City

41% Depoe Bay/
Newport

4% Florence/
Winchester Bay

35% Charleston

1% Bandon/
Port Orford

1% Gold Beach/
Brookings

Recreational Catch

Access to albacore for recreational vessels in Oregon can be highly variable, depending on weather conditions and distance offshore to the fishing grounds. Recreational vessels were limited by the same weather system that limited commercial access in mid-August, but they were largely unimpeded until fall weather and sea patterns dominated the coast in September and October. Because of this, the recreational season tends to end earlier than the commercial season. Distance to the fishing grounds was not a substantial limiting factor during the season.

There were an estimated 82 charter angler trips and 2,447 private recreational angler trips over the 2023 season. An estimated total of 36,502 albacore were caught in the recreational fishery and 1,179 of those were measured for fork length.

Recreational catch occurred in July, August, September, and October. Unlike the commercial fishery with September as its highest producing month, the highest catch volume took place in August in the recreational fishery.

Recreational activity occurred in nearly every Oregon port, although data reported is limited to the ports that had recreational samplers during the albacore season. Charleston had the highest estimated volume at 12,050 albacore caught when targeted and Pacific City had the highest catch rate with a CPUE of 5.45. The CPUE for all sampled ports combined over the 2023 season is 3.88, which is only 0.01 higher than 2022 and a 9% increase from the prior ten-year average CPUE of 3.55.

Albacore Fishery Monitoring Update

How Does ODFW 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 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/MPR/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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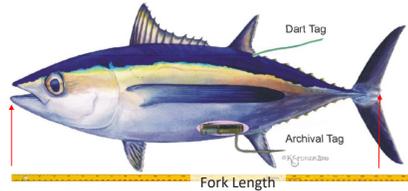
LOOK OUT FOR TAGGED FISH

REWARD: TAGGED ALBACORE

Tagged Albacore have a green dart tag in their back

Archival tags are data recording devices that are implanted in the belly with a stalk sticking out.

\$500: Whole fish w/Archival tag/ **\$300:** Archival tag only/ **\$20:** Dart tag only



TO CLAIM YOUR REWARD

Record

- 1) Date
- 2) Catch latitude and longitude
- 3) Fork Length and unit (cm or in)
- 4) Dart and/or Archival Number
- 5) Fisherman/ gear type/ contact info

Contact

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erickac@afrr.org OR
Owyn Snodgrass +1 (858) 546-7000
owyn.snodgrass@noaa.gov

- US Commercial: Fish and/or tags can be delivered to the nearest processor.
- US Recreational: Contact above to coordinate shipping and reward.
- Outside the US: Contact National Fishery Agency or people listed above.

NOTE: All shipping costs will be paid for by NOAA



Research funded by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration and the American Fishermen's Research Foundation

The South West Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) recently worked with the American Fishermen's Research Foundation to deploy 78 archival tags in albacore tuna off Oregon. A critical part of this effort is recovering the tags. As such there is cash reward offered for the return of information from tagged albacore. Tagged albacore have a green dart tag in their back. The reward is \$500 for the whole fish, \$300 for the tag only, and \$20 for the dart tag.

For more information contact:

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OR
Owyn Snodgrass (858)546-7000
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IN MEMORY OF KEITH MATTESON

Finally, this report and all efforts throughout the season are dedicated to

Keith Mason Matteson
(10/15/1958 - 8/15/2023).

Keith provided steady guidance and advice long after retiring from the albacore coordinator position and was happy to pass on knowledge learned over the years. Keith loved working for ODFW and especially with the albacore fishery. Keith's endless positivity and deep care for Oregon's resources have made a lasting impact in the agency and will be carried on in his memory.

