



**Surveillance Report 2**  
**American Albacore Fishing Association (AAFA) –**  
**South Pacific Albacore Troll/Jig Fishery**

Certificate No.: MML-FC-015

**Moody Marine Ltd.**  
September 2009

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**1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Scope against which the surveillance is undertaken:** MSC Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing as applied to the AAFA Pacific Albacore Troll/Jig Fishery.

**Species:** Albacore tuna *Thunnus alalunga*

**Area:** South Pacific

**Method of capture:** Troll/Jig

<b>Date of Surveillance Visit:</b>	<b>23-24 June 2009</b>			
<b>Initial Certification</b>	<b>Date: 23 August 2007</b>		<b>Certificate Ref: MML-FC-015</b>	
<b>Surveillance stage</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>
<b>Surveillance team:</b>	<b>Lead Assessor: Rob Blyth-Skyrme</b> <b>Assessor(s): Joe Powers</b> <b>Mike Laurs</b> <b>Paul Knapman</b>			
<b>Company Name:</b> <b>Address:</b>	American Albacore Fishing Association  4252 Bonita Road, #154 Bonita, CA 91902			
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## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

This report contains the findings of the second surveillance cycle in relation to the American Albacore Fishing Association (AAFA) South Pacific Troll/Jig Fishery. The surveillance audit was carried out in accordance with the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Fisheries Certification Methodology (FCM) Version 6.

An announcement of the surveillance site visit was published on the MSC website on 8th June 2009 (See appendix A) and opportunity was provided to stakeholders to meet with or submit information on the fishery to the assessment team.

Stakeholder representation or comments were received from the Western Fishing Boat Owner's Association with respect to the ongoing MSC assessment of their albacore tuna fishery. No other stakeholders chose to contact Moody International, the AAFA's certification body, with regard to the AAFA South Pacific fishery surveillance audit this year.

The surveillance team met with the client and with a Gary Sakagawa, of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and Chair of Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Scientific Committee. Discussions took place and evidence was gathered on the status of the stock, the performance of the fishery throughout the year, measures to meet the Condition of Certification and changes in management.

It should also be noted that Rob Blyth-Skyrme undertook the role of lead assessor for this audit in place of Andrew Hough who was part of the original assessment team. Rob is an Associate of Moody International.

## 3.0 RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section provides a tabulated format within which general information about the status of the stock and the fishery for this reporting period is provided along with the surveillance team's observations, conclusions and recommendations on the current status of the fishery and the client's progress toward meeting the single Condition of Certification.

With respect to the Condition, the following table sets out the original assessment scoring guideposts and scoring commentary and the requirements of the original Condition alongside the heading 'Activity assessed'. This identifies the areas in which the fishery was determined to perform below the level required by the MSC standard during the initial assessment, and the required actions to address these issues.

As required by the MSC assessment methodology, AAFA produced an Action Plan setting out the stages involved in addressing the Conditions raised. This is set out in the table alongside the heading 'AAFA Action'. NB. This Action Plan was deemed to be adequate by the original main assessment team.

According to the terms of the Action Plan, the client has provided information on the work undertaken to date.

This progress has been evaluated by the Moody Marine surveillance team ('Observations' and 'Conclusion') against:

1. the commitments made in the Action Plan;
2. the intent of the original Condition; and,
3. the original scoring indicator, guideposts and commentary.

The influence of any overall legislative and management changes in the fishery are also taken into consideration.

When the Condition has been judged to have been met, a re-evaluation of the scoring allocated to the relevant Performance Indicator(s) in the original MSC assessment will be included within the evaluation.

Item	Comments
<b>1</b>	<b>Stock status</b>
<b>Observations</b>	<p data-bbox="464 533 756 566"><b>South Pacific Albacore</b></p> <p data-bbox="464 566 1410 629">The current (2008) stock assessment for South Pacific albacore concluded that there are no sustainability concerns regarding the overall stock.</p> <p data-bbox="464 667 1410 898">For this latest assessment, many of the underlying assumptions of the existing stock assessment model were changed. These included moving the central latitudinal boundary of the stock north; using standardised CPUE data as relative abundance indices for the New Zealand troll fishery and some longline fisheries; reducing the weight given to length-frequency data; making the selectivity of longline fisheries seasonal; and changing the biological parameters for natural mortality and reproductive potential.</p> <p data-bbox="464 936 1410 1099">The cumulative effect of these changes was to reduce the biomass estimates of the stock, and raise the fishing mortality estimates, in comparison to previous assessments. The reduced biomass estimate in particular was reported to be realistic. However, the data suggest that recent fishing mortality has been below <math>F_{msy}</math>, and that the stock biomass remains above <math>B_{msy}</math>.</p> <p data-bbox="464 1137 1410 1435">Therefore, there continues to be no conservation issues with fishing at current rates. Since late 2002 catches have been low, apparently attributable to inter-annual variation in oceanographic conditions. At a local scale, very high levels of fishing effort appear to be capable of causing localized depletion of albacore tuna. This is principally an issue for domestic longline fleets where fishing effort is concentrated in a relatively small area, largely due to operational constraints of the fleet. The scale of the local depletion effect is likely to vary seasonally and inter-annually as the rate of exchange of fish with adjacent waters varies.</p> <p data-bbox="464 1473 1177 1507"><i>Management actions in Response to Status and Conclusions</i></p> <p data-bbox="464 1507 1410 1570">No actions are needed to maintain stocks above any recognized target and limit reference points. However, these reference points need to be formally adopted.</p>

Item	Comments
<b>2</b>	<b>The Fishery</b>

<b>Observations</b>	<p>The history of the fishery from all sources (not just AAFA) involves distant-water longline fleets of Japan, Korea and Chinese Taipei, and domestic longline fleets of several Pacific Island countries which catch primarily adult albacore over a large proportion of their geographic range. In recent years, the longline catch has expanded considerably with the development or expansion of small-scale longline fisheries in several Pacific Island countries, notably Samoa, American Samoa, Fiji, Tonga, Cook Islands, New Caledonia and French Polynesia. A troll fishery for juvenile albacore has operated in New Zealand coastal waters since the 1960s and in the central Pacific in the region of the STCZ since the mid-1980s. Driftnet vessels from Japan and Chinese Taipei targeted albacore in the central Tasman Sea and in the central Pacific near the STCZ during the 1980s and early 1990s. Surface fisheries are highly seasonal, occurring mainly during December to April. Longline fisheries operate throughout the year although there is a strong seasonal trend in the distribution of the catch with the fishery operating in the southern latitudes (south of 35 S) during late summer and autumn and moving northwards during winter.</p> <p>After an initial period of development, annual catches of South Pacific albacore varied considerably and are now about 60,000 to 70,000 mt. Longline gear accounts for most of the catch, about 25-30,000 mt per year on average prior to about 1998. The increase in longline catch to approximately 70,000 mt in 2005 is largely due to the development of small-scale longline fisheries in Pacific Island countries. Troll catches are relatively small, generally producing less than 10,000 mt per year. The driftnet catch reached 22,000 mt in 1989, but has since declined to zero following a United Nations moratorium on industrial-scale driftnetting.</p> <p>U.S. West Coast albacore vessels must travel more than 10,000 nm to enter the South Pacific albacore fishery and return, not including distance travelled on the fishing grounds. Due to high fuel costs and uncertainty in market conditions, only a very limited number of U.S. vessels participated in the troll fishery for albacore in the South Pacific in 2008. This included one AAFA albacore fishing vessel, which unloaded a partial load of 7 tons of MSC certified albacore caught in the South Pacific upon returning to the West Coast; the vessel made other non-MSC landings in other locations. Official landings statistics for the 2008 South Pacific albacore troll fishery are not yet available; however, unofficial reports indicate that the season was 'good'.</p> <p>Thus, the troll fisheries have been and continue to be a small proportion of the overall catch of South Pacific albacore and the AAFA contribution to the catches has been an even smaller proportion of the troll catch.</p>
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<b>Item</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Condition of Certification</b> - Decision rules and harvest control mechanisms
<b>Activity Assessed</b>	<p>This Condition relates to Principle 1, performance indicators 1.1.3.6 and 1.1.3.7:</p> <p><b>1.1.3.6</b> <b>100 scoring guidepost</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear, documented and tested decision rules are fully implemented and have been fully reconciled with reference points, and the data and</li> </ul>

	<p>assessment limitations, and have been periodically evaluated.</p> <p><b>80 scoring guidepost</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear decision making rules exist, are fully documented, but may not have been fully evaluated. Decision rules are reconciled with appropriate reference points and with data and assessment limitations.</li> </ul> <p><b>60 scoring guidepost</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It can be demonstrated that decision making, though not documented, is logical and appropriate. Rules may not have been tested</li> </ul> <p><b>Score 75</b></p> <p>The scientific basis for decision making is well established and documented. At this point in the stock's exploitation history, decision rules are not mandatory, but effort should be made soon to begin the definition/evaluation process. Decision rules are currently based on the fundamental B/BMSY and F/FMSY benchmarks. Reconciliation with reference points and data/assessment limitations is undertaken as discussed above. The overarching decision rule to maintain stocks at or above MSY has been established and codified by the Commissions. Thus, this decision rule in place is consistent with reference points from the assessment and the limitations of data that are inputs to the assessment.</p> <p><b>1.1.3.7</b></p> <p><b>100 scoring guidepost</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mechanisms are in place to contain harvest as and when required to maintain (or allow the target stock to return to) productive levels. Specific measures to demonstrate effectiveness are in place.</li> </ul> <p><b>80 scoring guidepost</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate mechanisms are in place to contain harvest as and when required to maintain, or allow the target stock to return to, productive levels</li> </ul> <p><b>60 scoring guidepost</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mechanisms exist to monitor and (if necessary) reduce harvest, but may not fully contain harvest, or have not been tested/evaluated</li> </ul> <p><b>Score 75</b></p> <p>Mechanisms (should they be needed) can be initiated through the IATTC and WCPFC. Comparable actions have been taken by IATTC and WCPFC for other species (such as yellowfin and bigeye tunas). Currently, measures are in place in all three Commissions to not allow increases in fishing effort on albacore. This is exemplified by the Conservation and Management Measure WCPFC-03 which went into place on Feb 16, 2006.</p> <p><b>Condition</b></p> <p>It is recognised that the South Pacific albacore stock is assessed to be in a situation where recent catches are less than the MSY, aggregate fishing mortality is less than FMSY and the adult biomass is greater than BMSY. As such, at this point in the stock's exploitation history, decision rules are not mandatory, and specific mechanisms to control harvest are not needed (although these have been implemented for other species when required). However, to expedite the precautionary consideration of such rules and</p>
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	<p>mechanisms, AAFA are required to take appropriate steps to request that management agencies begin a process to develop a framework for development and clear documentation of decision rules and appropriate harvest control mechanisms in the fishery.</p> <p><b>Timescale:</b> Appropriate requests from AAFA should be made within 6 months of certification of the fishery.</p>
<p><b>Conclusion from 1<sup>st</sup> Surveillance Report</b></p>	<p>AAFA has confirmed their commitment to continue to advocate that management agencies begin a process to develop a framework for development and clear documentation of decision rules and appropriate harvest control mechanisms in the fishery.</p> <p>Because there are no sustainability concerns regarding the overall status of the stock the management agencies have not felt inclined to formally adopt the reference points nor develop decision and harvest control rules</p> <p>While AAFA have met the requirement of the Condition it remains open until clear decision making rules are developed, fully documented and reconciled with appropriate reference points and with data and assessment limitations.</p> <p>AAFA have an on-going commitment to continue to advocate for sustainable and well managed albacore fisheries in the South Pacific and we heard that they will continue to press for the development of clearly documented decision rules and appropriate harvest control mechanisms in the fishery. Evidence of this commitment will be reviewed at the next annual audit.</p>
<p><b>AAFA Action</b></p>	<p>AAFA seeks to promote and support the responsible management actions being put forward, including international resolutions calling for fishing effort not to be increased. Attendance and participation in the discussions and meetings of the appropriate scientific and regulatory bodies afford AAFA opportunities to present its position and views in support of such actions.</p> <p>AAFA continues its practice of keeping up to date, attending, and participating in the key discussions and meetings of the appropriate scientific, regulatory, and government bodies tasked with policy and management responsibilities for the South Pacific albacore and the stock's troll/jig fisheries. These bodies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Western and Central Pacific Fishery Management Council</li> <li>• General Advisory Committee (GAC) to the U.S. Section to the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC);</li> <li>• National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS);</li> <li>• National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA);</li> <li>• Department of Commerce;</li> <li>• Department of State;</li> </ul> <p><b>AAFA's actions</b> in accordance with this plan have included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The development of a written Code of Conduct for its members and supporters that acknowledges, affirms, and promotes responsible and sustainable albacore fisheries.</li> </ol>

	<p>2. The provision of extensive verbal and written testimony to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) supporting sustainability of the U.S. North and South Pacific albacore fisheries:</p> <p>AAFA have testified to the PFMC that they should make representations to the WCPFC on investigating appropriate biological reference points and corresponding management measures, in order to maintain spawning stock biomass at or above desirable levels. AAFA also testified that means for achieving and maintaining compliance by all participating nations with effective and efficient enforcement of management provisions should be implemented. The establishment of an incentive-driven system to reward “early adopters” for initiating rapid action and compliance with international measures was also advocated.</p> <p>As reported last year, AAFA have also provided leadership in emphasizing the need for communication and coordination of efforts between the WCPFC and the IATTC concerning the international management of South Pacific albacore.</p>
<b>Observations</b>	<p>AAFA have made considerable efforts over the course of their South Pacific albacore fishery certificate to achieve the requirements of this condition, as originally drafted. This was recognised last year when it was said “AAFA have met the requirement of the Condition”.</p> <p>An additional element was, however, introduced through the first audit report in order to satisfy the requirements of performance indicator 1.1.3.6. This was that clear decision making rules were developed, fully documented and reconciled with appropriate reference points and with data and assessment limitations. This year, the audit team closely scrutinised the requirements and intent of the original condition, as well as those of this additional element. The team concluded that these additional requirements were required.</p> <p>Managers of the South Pacific albacore fishery are now moving forward on the development of appropriate management measures. Four working papers regarding the application of reference point management in WCPO tuna fisheries will be presented and discussed at the 5<sup>th</sup> Scientific Committee meeting of the WCPFC being held in August 2009.</p> <p>An important outcome for South Pacific albacore has been the adoption by the WCPFC of the program of work for the calendar year 2009 recommended by the fourth regular session of the Scientific Committee. The total scientific program is being funded in the amount of Euros 2,533,00 by the European Union and is being implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). The scientific program includes enhanced stock assessments and understanding of the pelagic ecosystem of albacore in the South Pacific. Specific albacore studies include an updated stock assessment to be completed in 2009 which will seek to address many of the areas of key uncertainty that were present in the 2008 assessment. In addition a tagging program designed to investigate the vertical as well as horizontal habitat is being conducted as are modelling studies to evaluate EEZ scale oceanographic effects in the context of current South Pacific albacore fisheries management. Albacore will also benefit generally from training programs implemented to improve the collection of fisheries statistics; development of new technologies including satellite remote sensing for the detection of IUU fishing activities; and other studies.</p>

	<p>In addition, the WCPFC has recently funded work by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) to further investigate age, growth and reproductive characteristics of South pacific albacore to build on earlier work.</p> <p>We believe that the overall scientific program is of great importance for this fishery, and should allow much improved understanding of productivity across the spatial extent of the stock. In turn, this should support the development of a more informed management regime.</p>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<p>AAFA has made considerable efforts to promote and support both domestic and international responsible management actions, as appropriate, regarding the South Pacific albacore resource over the course of this certificate.</p> <p>It is clear that the WCPFC managers are working to advance understanding of the South Pacific albacore and its fishery, to support the management regime that already includes a commitment to cap fishing effort at historic (1999-2005) levels.</p> <p>In conclusion, satisfactory progress is being made on this condition, and further work, as described, should allow this condition to be closed.</p>

Item	Comment
<b>4</b>	<b>Any complaints against the certified operation; recorded, reviewed and auctioned</b>
	No complaints were received against the certified operation in the course of this year's certification.

Item	Comment
<b>5</b>	<b>Any relevant changes to legislation or regulations</b>
	<p>Following the awarding of their MSC certificates, AAFA introduced and implemented its own certificate-sharing programme.</p> <p>Because AAFA operates under the Californian Fish Marketing Act there is a requirement within the "Act" that the Certificate-Sharing Program be limited to AAFA members. AAFA has created a two tier membership that allows full or partial membership. Both forms of membership allow participation in the MSC programme, however, only full membership affords full privileges and voting rights.</p> <p>We were made aware that some other fisheries organisations had taken issue with the AAFA requirement for fishermen to become at least partial members. The efficacy or legitimacy of this requirement is beyond the scope of our expertise or remit, but we understand that the MSC have reviewed the program and are content with the approach.</p> <p>AAFA has provided Moody Marine with updates on their membership thereby ensuring that a record of vessels that form part of the certificate sharing program is maintained. The assessment team has been pleased to note that membership of AAFA, and participation on the certificate-sharing programme, continues to grow. Figures provided this year show that AAFA membership has grown from 26 vessels in 2006, to 53 vessels in 2008, to 71 vessels in 2009.</p>

Item	Comment
<b>6</b>	<b>Any relevant changes to management regime.</b>
	There were no substantive changes reported within this year's annual reporting cycle.

<b>5</b>	<b>Overall Conclusions</b>
	<p>The overall management of the fishery continues to at least the level as during the main assessment.</p> <p>The client has devoted substantial effort and demonstrated significant progress regarding conditions placed on the certification of the AAFA South Pacific albacore troll/jig fishery, and considerable progress is being made towards the development of stock reference points and an associated sustainable fishery management regime. As such, progress towards closing the single condition is certainly satisfactory</p> <p>The client has confirmed their intent to continue to participate in the management and advisory forums and advocate the development of formalised and documented decision-making management processes on the stock.</p> <p>MSC Certification should therefore continue, with surveillance audits to the same schedule.</p>

**Information Sources:**

Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, 2009. Helping albacore tuna come out of the can. <http://www.csiro.au/news/Helping-Albacore-Tuna.html>

EU EDF 9B Scientific Support for Oceanic Fisheries Management in the Western and Central Pacific (SCIFISH); Provisional 2009 Work Plan and Cost Estimate, 10pp.

Hoyle, Simon D., Langley, Adam D., and Hampton, W. J. 2008. Stock assessment of Albacore tuna in the south Pacific Ocean. Secretariat of the Pacific Community No. WCPFC-SC4-2008/SA-WP-8.

The American Albacore Fishing Association (AAFA) Certificate Sharing Program For The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Certification of U.S. Vessels Of The North Pacific & South Pacific Albacore Pole & Troll Fisheries. 2009

The American Albacore Fishing Association (AAFA) Membership Information. 2009.

WCPFC Scientific Committee, Fourth regular session, meeting in Port Moresby, PNG, 11-22 August 2008: Annual report- part 1. Information on fisheries, research, and statistics- USA.

WCPFC Scientific Committee, Fourth regular session, meeting in Port Moresby, PNG, 11-22 August 2008: Compendium of fisheries indicators for target tuna species.

WCPFC Scientific Committee, Fourth regular session, meeting in Port Moresby, PNG, 11-22 August 2008: Estimates of annual catches in the WCPFC statistical area.

WCPFC Scientific Committee, Fourth regular session, meeting in Port Moresby, PNG, 11-22 August 2008: Preliminary study of age, growth, and spawning activity of albacore in Australia's eastern tuna and billfish fishery.

WCPFC Scientific Committee, Fourth regular session, meeting in Port Moresby, PNG, 11-22 August 2008: Standardized CPUE for distant-water fleets targeting South Pacific albacore.

WCPFC Scientific Committee, Fourth regular session, meeting in Port Moresby, PNG, 11-22 August 2008: Stock assessment of albacore tuna in the South Pacific Ocean.

WCPFC Scientific Committee, Fourth regular session, meeting in Port Moresby, PNG, 11-22 August 2008: Summary report.

WCPFC Scientific Committee, Fourth regular session, meeting in Port Moresby, PNG, 11-22 August 2008: The influence of changes in length-frequency sampling methodologies on the South Pacific Albacore Stock assessment.

WCPFC Second Session, 12-16 December 2005: Conservation and management measure for South Pacific albacore -2005-02.

WCPFC Second Session, 12-16 December 2005: Resolution of reduction of overcapacity -2005-02.

**Contacts**

Natalie Webster, AAFA

Chip Bissell, AAFA

Gary Sakagawa, NMFS and Chair of WCPFC Scientific Committee

**Meetings Conducted**

23<sup>rd</sup> June 2009. Meeting between Henry Bissell (AAFA) and Mike Laurs and Rob Blyth-Skyrme (Moody International).

23<sup>rd</sup> June 2009. Meeting between Gary Sakagawa (NMFS and Chair of WCPFC Scientific Committee), Henry Bissell (AAFA), and Mike Laurs and Rob Blyth-Skyrme (Moody International)

24<sup>th</sup> June 2009. Meeting between Peter Flournoy (WFOA), Henry Bissell (AAFA), and Mike Laurs and Rob Blyth-Skyrme (Moody International)

**Standards and Guidelines used:**

1. MSC Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing
2. MSC Fishery Certification Methodology Version 6. September 2006
3. MSC TAB Directives – all

## Appendix A



**American Albacore Fishing Association (AAFA)  
Pacific Albacore Pole & Line and Troll/Jig Fishery  
Marine Stewardship Council Certification – 2009 Surveillance Audit  
Certification Body: Moody Marine Ltd**

### Surveillance Audit

MSC certification requires annual surveillance audits of all certified fisheries. These audits have two principal functions:

1. To review any changes in the management of the fishery, including regulations, key management or scientific staff or stock evaluation
2. To evaluate the progress of the fishery against any Conditions of Certification raised during the Main Assessment

During the audit, we shall be speaking with representatives of the fishery, fishery management and any other stakeholder who would like to provide information that may help in our audit. We expect to carry out most meetings over the period 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> June in San Diego.

Should you have any information on this fishery that you feel should be considered in the assessment, please advise us. We have set 24<sup>th</sup> June a-side to meet with stakeholders as appropriate. If you would like to arrange a meeting, please advise us of:

- a) your name and contact details
- b) your association with the fishery
- c) the issues you would like to discuss

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8<sup>th</sup> June 2009

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