



2009 Issue Highlights

Pacific Salmon Treaty

ATA worked closely with Treaty representatives and informed the state and federal governments of the association's positions on the new agreement.

USCG Safety Regulations

ATA spoke out against new and unreasonable safety and stability regulations. The USCG is reviewing comments and its positions and is likely to publish a new set of proposals for comment in 2010.

Offshore Aquaculture

ATA networks with other fishing organizations, environmental and consumer groups in the US and abroad on the many issues associated with fish farming and associated activities. Key legislation has been introduced in Congress several times at the request of two Presidents and the Department of Commerce/NOAA. ATA provided feedback to congress, the agencies, and councils in meetings, hearings, written comments, and briefing sessions in Washington, D.C. and the West and Gulf Coasts. No legislation has passed to date. However, a new offshore aquaculture bill is being drafted and is anticipated for 2010. ATA has also been involved in the Aquaculture Dialogues, which is an attempt to develop international policies to guide aquaculture practices. In these and other forums, ATA continues its efforts to protect fish, fishermen, and fishing communities from the harmful effects of fish farming.

West Coast Salmon Industry

ATA regularly joins forces with fishermen in California, Oregon, and Washington to oppose the poor water policies that have driven fisheries restrictions and closures to protect Klamath, Sacramento, and Columbia River Basin stocks. We work to educate lawmakers and others about salmon, our fisheries, and businesses that are being harmed by habitat degradation. ATA's board and staff have written and testified in support of relief packages to assist impacted fishermen in other states.

Endangered Species Act

ATA continues to seek proportional sharing of pain for listed salmon stocks, which, by rights, should place more emphasis on improving habitat and fish passage, not unnecessary fishing restrictions.

Board of Fisheries

ATA defended proposals to improve data gathering and enforcement for the charter industry and minimize conservation and allocation disputes between all user groups. This resulted in a Charter Task Force, which is slated to begin meeting in fall 2009. ATA has a seat at the table.

Marketing

ATA regularly helps facilitate the presentation of hook and line caught salmon at public and private events, and assists *Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute* with various promotions and tours for buyers and food writers.

Vessel Monitoring Systems

ATA worked to protect the fleet from costly and unnecessary VMS requirements. NMFS has removed VMS requirements, but is likely to raise the issue in the future, so ATA continues to monitor.

Habitat

ATA worked with Southeast groups and ADFG who are questioning the impact of re-opening the Tulsequah Chief Mine in the headwaters of the Taku River. ATA is also in contact with organizations involved in mapping critical salmon habitat and has been able to provide input to those efforts.

Illegal Foreign Fishing

ATA is working with US Senators, Commerce Committee staff, and ADFG to document landings of salmon suspected of passing through high seas gillnets. In addition, we have helped fishermen turn in foreign gear found on the fishing grounds and continue to push for increased high seas enforcement.

EPA Discharge Permits

ATA continued to raise concerns with the Alaska congressional delegation about EPA's court loss, which could mean all boat owners will need federal discharge permits. In 2008, a bill passed mandating a two year study, which is hoped to lead to a permanent permit exemption for small vessels. The study was conducted summer 2009 and ATA worked with EPA contractors to help ensure the fleet and processors were not unduly inconvenienced.

DEC Permits

ATA met with and commented to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, who has decided to revisit the issue of gilling/gutting fish and other measures they believe would improve sanitation onboard fishing vessels. ATA opposes the proposals, because they are not based on identified problems, nor do they provide meaningful improvements to public health. This issue is still in play and one is brewing on the federal horizon as well.

Healthcare Access

ATA worked with Commercial Fishermen of America, United Fishermen of Alaska, the Small Business Majority, National Farmers Union, and others, to secure affordable insurance and healthcare access for small business. The US House passed a bill and the Senate is working on theirs. While none of the bills we've seen offers THE solution, many considerations have been built in that will assist fishermen.

Halibut Allocation

ATA supports efforts by longline organizations to secure fair allocation of the halibut resource in the face of growing guided sport harvest. Board members and/or staff have participated in all key North Pacific Fishery Management Council meetings and many IPHC meetings.

Cooperative Partnerships

ATA works with a number of organizations on a great many projects. For instance, the Halibut Coalition and National Farmers Union, a group of family farmers whose policies are very similar to those of the small boat fishing industry. ATA belongs to the following organizations and encourages your support:

Commercial Fishermen of America - ATA's executive director is a founding board member and ATA is a member group of this new organization, whose first mission for industry is healthcare. CFA's board is made up of commercial fishermen and representatives from all regions and most coastal states. CFA dues are \$50/year and can be paid with your ATA dues.

United Fishermen of Alaska - ATA was a founding group of UFA. Dues are \$150/year and can be paid with your ATA dues.

Save Our Wild Salmon - ATA is a longstanding member group of SOWS, who fights for improved water flows in the Columbia River Basin. ATA will pass along contributions to SOWS.

Halibut Coalition - The Halibut Coalition fights to protect the resource and ensure halibut allocations are reasonable. ATA collaborates with the Halibut Coalition and will forward donations.