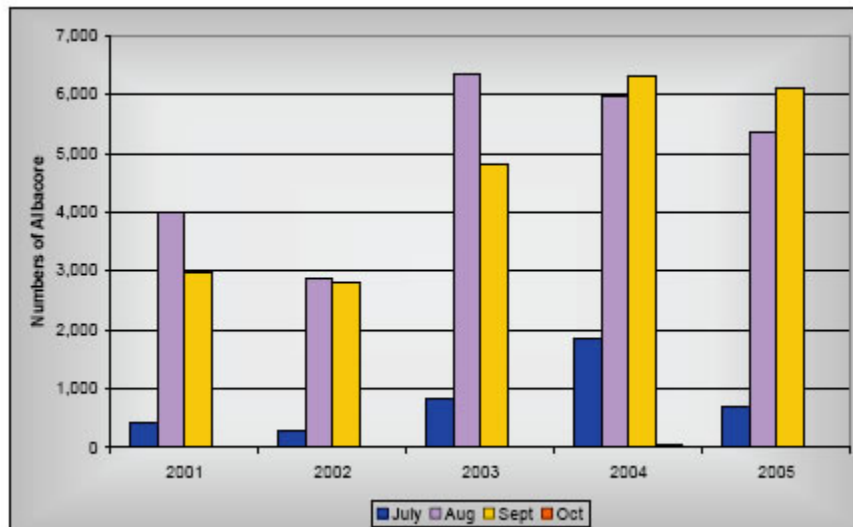


## Albacore Tuna Recreational Fishery Washington

The best months for catching albacore off the coast of Washington is **July, August, and September**. Even though albacore can be caught June through October, August and September tend to be the most popular months for anglers. The tuna are usually plentiful during August and September and the weather tends to be a little calmer during this time too.

Albacore are typically 50 to 100 miles off the Washington coast during the summer but occasionally they will come in as close as 35 miles, and on rare occasions, they have been known to come in as close as 15 miles. A typical albacore trip can last one to three days depending on the distance traveled to the tuna grounds.

Albacore are caught on jigs and live bait. Jigs are trolled behind the vessel until a “hook up” and then the vessel drifts while the jig caught tuna are being played by the fishermen. In the mean time, fishermen who are not playing a jig caught tuna will fish for tuna using a live anchovy and light weight gear. The anchovy is carefully placed on a single hook with little or no weight then it is free spooled out in the water until a tuna strikes. Tuna caught on bait poles are extremely fun to catch because they have a lot of fight in them and the battle can last for

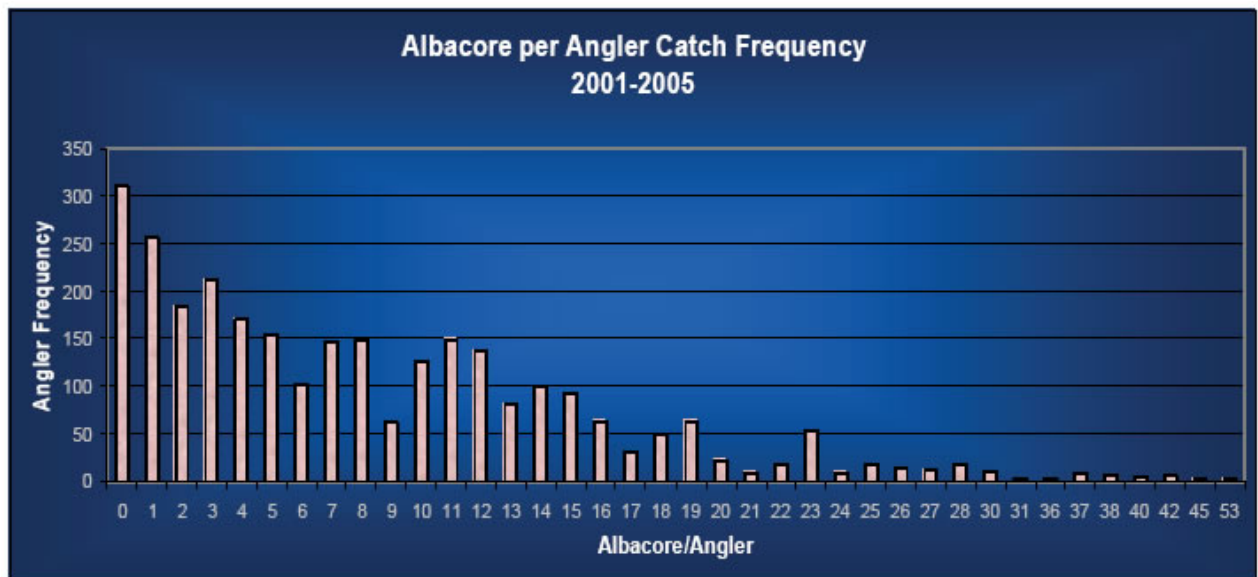


**Albacore catch by month**

Currently, there is no bag limit on albacore; however, in 2005, NMFS and the State Department committed, at the international level, to not increase U.S. fishing effort on albacore above current levels. To avoid overfishing on albacore in the future, the West Coast states are exploring whether to implement state bag limits for albacore. Oregon currently has an albacore bag limit of 25; Washington and California are in the process of considering bag limit options for their respective states.

Beginning in 2006, a recreational fishing license is required to fish for albacore. Anglers can purchase either a saltwater angling license, or combo license, or a multi-day stamp.

Using real data collected by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's Ocean Sampling Program (OSP) the average catch per recreational fisherman from 2001 through 2005 was 8.4 albacore per person. The highest recorded catch during this period is 53 albacore per person but, as can be seen in the following chart, catching more than 23 albacore per person is uncommon.



Washington catches about 27% of the total coastwide sport albacore catch. California catches 61% while Oregon catches 12% of the recreational albacore.

Even though Washington recreational anglers catch 27% of the coastwide sport albacore catch, Washington's sport catch is less than 10% of the total Washington albacore catch.

The majority of the recreational catch is landed into Westport. In 2005 88% of Washington's sport albacore catch was landed in to Westport and only 10% of the catch was landed into Ilwaco. In 2005, the North Coast (Neah Bay and La Push) made up 2% of the recreational catch but some years their catch was less than 1%.

Recreational albacore catches in Washington can be broken down to charter boat anglers versus private anglers. Private anglers, those who do not charter a boat, make up about 20% of total anglers, and tend not to catch as many albacore per angler as charter anglers. From 2001 to 2005 private fishermen averaged 3.2 albacore per angler but charter fishers averaged 9.6 albacore per angler.

Albacore fishing in Washington is becoming more popular each year. In 2000, 884 anglers caught 7,416 albacore. By 2005, 1,509 anglers caught 13,163 albacore. In 2000, the average catch was 8.4 albacore per angler but, in 2001, the albacore catch averaged 13.1 albacore per angler. By 2005 the average catch was back at 8.7 albacore per angler.

**For more information or to book a trip call 503-720-9033**