

# Albacore Tuna

BC's Albacore Tuna Fishery is Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Certified

## SPECIES

Pacific Albacore Tuna (*Thunnus alalunga*)

## OTHER NAMES

Longfinned Tuna, Tombo, Germon

## ABOUT

Albacore tuna is a highly migratory finfish found throughout the Pacific Ocean below 50° North. It belongs to the *Sombridae* family (tunas, bonitos, mackerels). It is distinguished by a dark blue back and silver-white sides and belly. Adult albacore tuna have pectoral fins that extend past the second dorsal fin and anal fin. Mature albacore tuna can reach as much as 45 kg (100 lbs) although the average market weight of troll-caught albacore is 9 kg (20 lbs). Approximately 5,600 metric tonnes of tuna are harvested each year in British Columbia (BC).



Albacore tuna has a mild taste and soft texture. Its flesh is pink when raw and off-white when cooked. Due to its white meat colour, albacore tuna is referred to as the “Chicken of the Sea” and is often labeled as “white meat” tuna.

## STOCK STATUS

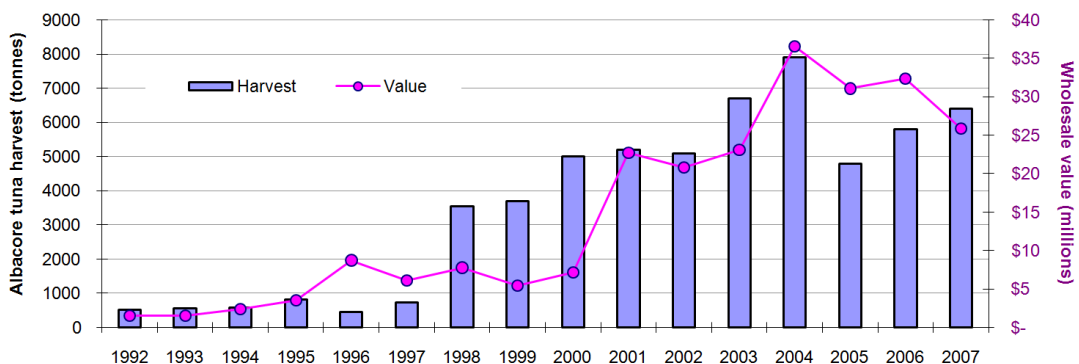
Stocks are generally stable and healthy, and recent recruitment has been good by long-term historical standards. BC's tuna fishery is governed by the US/Canada Tuna Treaty and is monitored to ensure that actual albacore harvests are below maximum sustainable levels (*DFO - Fisheries Management*).

## MANAGEMENT

BC's tuna fishery is managed federally by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). Hail-out/ hail-in and logbooks are required. No total allowable catch (TAC) has been established. The fishery is open to any commercial vessel with a Schedule II option (*DFO - Fisheries Management*).

## PRODUCT VALUE

Harvests and wholesale values fluctuate: 7,300 tonnes at \$36.4 million in 2004, 6,400 tonnes at \$25.9 million in 2007. BC fishermen catch around 5,000 tonnes on average per year (*BC Seafood Industry Year in Review*).



**LIFE HISTORY**

There are two albacore stocks – one in the north Pacific and one in the south Pacific.

Albacore is found mostly in the sub-tropical regions of the Pacific, Indian and Atlantic oceans, inhabiting depths of 0-600 metres (0-2,000 feet). Younger fish tend to reside near the surface while older, large fish reside in deeper, cooler waters, and closer to the equator than juvenile albacore. Albacore reach sexual maturity at 4-5 years of age. Breeding seasonally during periods of warm temperatures, tuna spawn within 20 degrees of the equator in groups with each female producing an average of 2 million eggs per spawning. Juveniles migrate between Japan and North America.

Albacore are high in the food chain and prey on smaller fish and invertebrates throughout the water column. Sharks, larger tuna and toothed whales are predators.

**PRODUCTS**

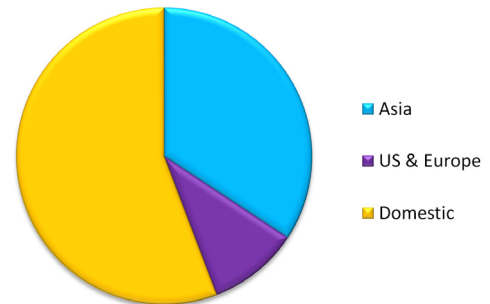
Albacore tuna is available fresh, frozen-at-sea (whole fish, steaks & loins), hot and cold smoked, and canned.

**PRODUCT MARKET**

Albacore tuna is sold in Canada, the United States, and the EU (primarily Spain). Blast-frozen tuna is sold to the sushi/sashimi market in Japan and North America.

**MARKET TREND**

There is an increased interest in the domestic market for albacore.

**LINKS**

DFO - Fisheries Management Plans: [www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/ops/fm/fishmgmt\\_e.htm](http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/ops/fm/fishmgmt_e.htm)

BC Seafood Industry Year in Review: [www.env.gov.bc.ca/omfd/reports/index.html](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/omfd/reports/index.html)

BC Tuna Fishermen's Association: [www.bctfa.com](http://www.bctfa.com)

Canadian Albacore Tuna Website: [www.canadianalbacoretuna.com](http://www.canadianalbacoretuna.com)

BCSeafood.ca: [www.bcseafood.ca/index.php](http://www.bcseafood.ca/index.php)

Fish and Seafood Online: <http://www.ats-sea.agr.gc.ca/sea-mer/index-eng.htm>

Marine Stewardship Council: <http://www.msc.org/>