

North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission

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NORTH PACIFIC-WIDE SALMON CATCHES CONTINUE AT NEAR HISTORIC HIGH LEVELS

Vancouver, BC, Canada (November 22, 2013)—The North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) announced today that total Pacific salmon abundance in the North Pacific remains at near record high levels according to data compiled by its member countries during the NPAFC 21th Annual Meeting. The meeting took place during November 12-15, 2013, in an email format for the first time in the Commission's history. There were 71 participants from the five NPAFC member countries (Canada, Japan, Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and the United States).

The vast majority of North Pacific salmon originate from NPAFC member countries. Initial North Pacific-wide 2013 commercial catch data indicate high catches of pink salmon in Alaska (313,800 tonnes), Russia (241,292 tonnes) and Canada (13,171 tonnes), and high chum salmon catches in Russia (101,395 tonnes) and Alaska (65,120 tonnes). Catches of Chinook salmon remain at low levels (Alaska 1,640 tonnes, Russia 512 tonnes, Canada 214 tonnes). The 2013 commercial catches are preliminary estimates and are incomplete because some regions had not finished their fishery seasons at the time of compilation.

Although the North Pacific Ocean continues to produce large quantities of Pacific salmon, abundance levels vary among species, often from year-to-year. The total commercial salmon catch by Commission member countries in 2012 was over 889,000 tonnes (round weight). Sixty-four percent of the total 2012 salmon catch was from countries in Asia (Russia, Japan, and Korea) and 36% was from countries in North America (United States and Canada). Pink and chum salmon made up the vast majority (81%) of the total catch.

Hatchery release data for 2013 are not yet available. Salmon hatchery releases in 2012 from NPAFC member countries was 5.0 billion fish, a quantity that has been quite stable since 1993. In 2012, United States hatcheries released 1,999 million fish (39.7%), Japan released 1,793 million (35.6%), Russia released 916 million (18.2%), Canada released 313 million (6.2%), and 10 million (0.2%) were released in Korea. Hatchery releases were primarily chum (3,092 million, 61.5%) and pink salmon (1,349 million, 26.8%), followed by Chinook (252 million, 5.0%), sockeye (223 million, 4.4%), and coho salmon (79 million, 1.6%), steelhead trout (22 million, 0.4%), and cherry salmon (14 million, 0.3%).

In 2013, NPAFC member countries continued their successful enforcement collaboration to deter and eliminate illegal high seas fishing. Patrols in the Convention Area included the use of approximately 10 aircraft and 21 surface vessels. Radar satellite surveillance was also used to support long-range aircraft and surface patrols. Regularly scheduled enforcement conference calls maintained real-time coordination among the member countries at the operational level throughout the high-threat season.

Past international collaborative high seas enforcement activities led to seizure of an IUU (illegal, unreported, and unregulated) fishing vessel in both 2011 and 2012. Each vessel was transferred to the appropriate authorities, and in 2013 both vessels were destroyed.

This year, efforts at deterrence of IUU salmon fishing in the Convention Area were successful as there were no vessels of interest engaged in driftnet or other types of illegal fishing activities detected in the Convention Area. The overall reduction in sightings of vessels engaged in illegal fishing activity in the North Pacific testifies to the effectiveness of the Commission's cooperative model of enforcement. Continued vigilance is crucial to the ongoing curtailment of the large-scale high seas driftnet threat and is a requirement for sustainable salmon fisheries management and conservation in the North Pacific.

In 2013 leading salmon researchers discussed factors that may be contributing to variability in abundance patterns among species and they discussed potential changes in abundance that may occur in the next several years. Experts highlighted the possible consequences of higher sea temperatures, which could adversely affect stocks at the southern limit of their distribution, and reported that salmon size-selective mortality during winter months may be more pronounced in northern latitudes. Scientists also observed a recent decline in body weight of Japanese chum salmon and declining productivity of Chinook salmon stocks in Alaska. Investigators agreed climate affects salmon survival and adequate monitoring must be maintained in case of possible future declines in salmon abundance.

Highlights of the meeting and additional information can be found in the attached NPAFC Backgrounder.

NPAFC Backgrounder

The NPAFC is an international organization that promotes the conservation of salmon (chum, coho, pink, sockeye, Chinook, and cherry salmon) and steelhead trout in the North Pacific and its adjacent seas, and serves as a venue for cooperation in and coordination of scientific research and enforcement activities.

At the 21st Annual Meeting, NPAFC member countries expressed the importance of salmon conservation in the North Pacific achieved through NPAFC's contributions to collaborative enforcement on the high seas to deter IUU fishing, and by cooperative scientific exchanges. Science-related 2013 documents are being finalized following the meeting and will soon be posted on the public area of the NPAFC website. The Commission's three committees—Committee on Enforcement (ENFO), Committee on Scientific Research and Statistics (CSRS), and the Committee on Finance and Administration (F&A)—met earlier in the year.

For the first time, Korea announced that the Korean Coast Guard actively participated in surface and air enforcement activities in the Convention Area by dispatching a patrol vessel with a helicopter on board. In addition, their domestic legislation has been amended to accommodate stricter international fisheries obligations and domestic administrative penalties and sanctions to be imposed on IUU fishing vessels. The legislation will enter into force in Korea at the beginning of next year.

Support for the concept of the International Year of the Salmon was affirmed at the meeting and a study group was identified to develop a clear prospectus that more fully describes the initiative and possible timeline. This prospectus would be the subject of a feasibility meeting to include participants from both government and non-government agencies and industry that have interests in Pacific salmon.

It was agreed that a joint NPAFC-PICES Study Group be established to enhance collaboration between the two organizations so as to more quickly achieve a better and more rapid understanding of the natural and human-influenced variability in marine ecosystems. The first step in this direction will be a co-sponsored joint workshop at the 2014 PICES Annual Meeting in Korea.

In 2013 the NPAFC hosted a successful international workshop on "Migration and Survival Mechanisms of Juvenile Salmon and Steelhead in Ocean Ecosystems" in Honolulu, HI, where 74 presentations were given by international experts on topics related to juvenile salmon in marine habitats.

Presenters at the workshop suggested the initial period after juvenile salmon migrate to sea and the following first winter are critical phases with respect to ocean survival of anadromous populations. Observations have shown there is considerable inter-annual variation in abundance, growth, and survival rates of juvenile salmon in the ocean. Potential ecological interactions affecting juvenile salmon marine survival were identified. Large and small scale climate or ecosystem change is expected to influence salmon production.

New studies using genetic and morphological techniques continue to provide new information on the migration and distribution of salmon stock groups. A detailed workshop report (NPAFC Technical Report 9) will be available for free download from the website in late 2013.

Upcoming Event—In recognition of the importance of being able to understand, explain, and forecast the annual variation in Pacific salmon production, NPAFC will host a 3-day scientific symposium in May 2015 in Japan. The theme is forecasting of Pacific salmon production in ocean ecosystems in a changing climate. This symposium will be open to the public (with a registration fee) and will provide opportunities to review current information on migration and survival mechanisms of salmon in the ocean, to discuss climate impacts on salmon production, and to report on applications for forecasting ocean salmon production for sustainable management of Pacific salmon.

2012 and Preliminary 2013 Commercial Catch Statistics

Concerning tables of commercial salmon catches:

- 2013 catch statistics are preliminary; some fisheries are incomplete at the time of data compilation
- Commercial catches by foreign fleets in the Russian EEZ are not included
- Japanese catch data are based on FRA (Fisheries Research Agency) data sources, not official statistics
- 0.000 or 0 is not zero catch; - means no catch
- NA=data not available at the time of compilation
- WOC means Washington, Oregon, and California

2012 Commercial Catch in Millions of Fish (updated Nov 6, 2013)

	Sockeye	Pink	Chum	Coho	Chinook	Cherry	Steelhead	Total
Canada	0.86	0.78	0.99	0.22	0.16	-	-	3.01
Japan	0.000	3.606	40.073	0.001	0.003	NA	0.000	43.683
Korea	-	-	0.035	-	-	-	-	0.035
Russia	17.773	232.644	34.682	1.739	0.109	0.0047	-	286.9517
USA	35.972	68.052	21.287	3.702	1.195	-	0.029	130.237
Alaska	35.80	68.05	20.185	3.15	0.35	-	-	127.535
WOC	0.172	0.002	1.102	0.552	0.845	-	0.029	2.702
Total	54.605	305.082	97.067	5.662	1.467	0.0047	0.029	463.9167

2012 Commercial Catch in Metric Tonnes (round weight; updated Nov 15, 2013)

	Sockeye	Pink	Chum	Coho	Chinook	Cherry	Steelhead	Total
Canada	2,150	1,140	5,008	740	993	-	-	10,031
Japan	1	4,912	122,466	2	17	743	-	128,141
Korea	-	-	72	-	-	-	-	72
Russia	44,052	292,878	97,898	4,353	527	9	-	439,717
USA	97,707	114,352	81,400	11,293	6,549	-	132	311,433
Alaska	97,290	114,350	76,650	9,600	2,305	-	-	300,195
WOC	417	2	4,750	1,693	4,244	-	132	11,238
Total	143,910	413,282	306,844	16,388	8,086	752	132	889,394

Preliminary 2013 Commercial Catch in Metric Tonnes (round weight, compiled as of Nov 6, 2013)

	Sockeye	Pink	Chum	Coho	Chinook	Cherry	Steelhead	Total
Canada	622	13,171	3,406	190	214	-	NA	17,603
Japan	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Korea	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Russia	50,770	241,292	101,395	9,641	512	10	-	403,620
USA								
Alaska	80,610	313,800	65,120	14,980	1,640	-	-	476,150
WOC	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

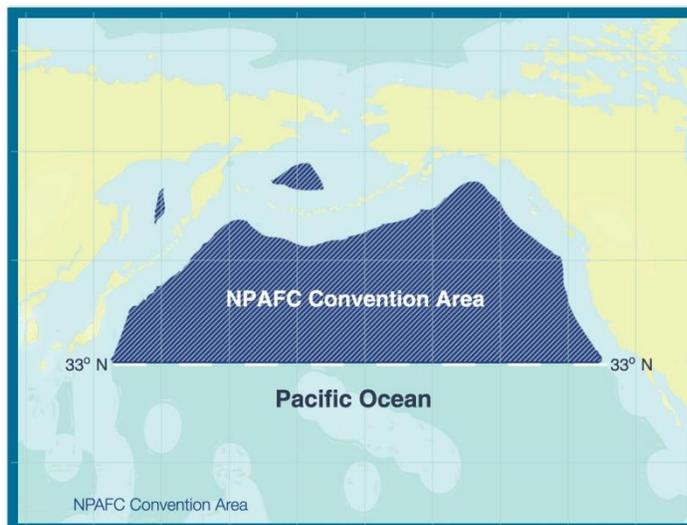
2012 Hatchery Releases

Concerning the table of salmon hatchery releases:

- Canada's releases includes only releases from facilities operated under the direction of the Salmonid Enhancement Program
- WOCI: Washington, Oregon, California, and Idaho

2012 Hatchery Releases in Millions of Fish (compiled April, 2013)

	Sockeye	Pink	Chum	Coho	Chinook	Cherry	Steelhead	Total
Canada	133.142	22.532	103.001	12.125	41.341	-	0.407	312.546
Japan	0.284	137.771	1,641.499	-	-	13.058	-	1,792.612
Korea	-	-	9.710	-	-	-	-	9.710
Russia	12.404	245.026	652.156	5.092	0.911	0.696	-	916.285
USA	76.680	943.630	685.270	61.610	209.860	-	21.760	1,998.800
Alaska	61.040	942.920	633.340	24.160	9.520	-	-	1,670.970
WOCI	15.64	0.71	51.93	37.45	200.34	-	21.76	327.83
Total	222.510	1,348.959	3,091.636	78.827	252.112	13.754	22.167	5,029.954



The NPAFC Convention Area is located in international waters north of 33°N latitude in the North Pacific, Bering Sea and the Sea of Okhotsk.