
North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTISTS DISCUSS HIGH SEAS PACIFIC SALMON ISSUES

Portland, Oregon, USA (May 16, 2014)—International scientific experts of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) member countries (Canada, Japan, Korea, Russia, and United States) have completed a five day meeting in Portland Oregon to review current information related to salmon abundance and biology at the Commission's 22nd Annual Meeting.

The NPAFC Annual Meeting is the forum for salmon scientists from NPAFC member countries to plan, review, and coordinate exchanges of scientific data and samples, and to assess scientific studies of Pacific salmon and steelhead in international waters and areas adjacent to it. At the meeting, scientists discussed their national research plans and salmon research survey plans in the Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea, Northwest Pacific and Okhotsk Sea. They presented salmon catch and hatchery statistics, coordinated salmon marking and tagging plans, and reviewed and updated personnel, sample, and data exchanges.

Several studies were presented characterizing salmon oceanic habitat in relation to salmon distribution and abundance. A pilot study of high seas pink and sockeye salmon distributions suggested salmon oceanic habitat cannot be ascertained solely based on sea surface temperature data. Another study indicated, pink salmon spatial distribution was affected by oceanographic characteristics, intensity of currents, and fluctuations of pink salmon abundance. A novel approach using coded-wire tag data estimated the numbers of hatchery-origin coho and Chinook salmon in commercial salmon catches and escapements.

Based on genetic analysis, juvenile sockeye salmon caught in the international waters of the central Bering Sea during summer were found to be primarily from Bristol Bay, with smaller contributions from Russian and Canadian rivers.

Juvenile chum salmon caught in the eastern Bering Sea in late-summer/fall originated from coastal western Alaska, and most juvenile chum salmon caught in the Chukchi Sea originated in Kotzebue Sound. Juvenile Chinook salmon caught in the eastern Bering Sea originated in coastal western Alaska and the Yukon River.

The NPAFC is planning two upcoming events that will be of interest to researchers and others concerned with the effects of climate change on distribution and production of Pacific salmon. Both of these events are open to the public (with registration fee).

A one-day workshop on linkages between the winter distribution of Pacific salmon and their marine ecosystems and how this might be altered with climate change will be jointly convened by NPAFC and PICES (North Pacific Marine Science Organization). This workshop will be held on October 17, 2014, at the PICES 2014 Annual Meeting in Yeosu, Korea.

The NPAFC will also host a three-day international symposium on “Pacific Salmon and Steelhead Production in a Changing Climate: the Past, Present and Future,” May 17-19, 2015, in Kobe, Japan. The goal of this symposium is to utilize the best available information on marine ecology of salmon and steelhead populations to explain and forecast annual variation in their production. Researchers will review recent research on ecological mechanisms regulating marine distribution and production, climate change impacts on populations and their ecosystems, retrospective analysis of key populations as indicators of conditions in North Pacific marine ecosystems, and implications of ecosystem models for management of salmon and steelhead.

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About NPAFC

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. 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. NPAFC member countries include Canada, Japan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, and United States of America.
