
North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission

23rd Annual Meeting – 2015
Kobe, Japan
2015 May 11-15

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NORTH PACIFIC ANADROMOUS FISH COMMISSION HOLDS 23RD ANNUAL MEETING

Kobe, Japan (May 15, 2015)—The 23rd Annual Meeting of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) was held from May 11 to 15, 2015, in Kobe, Japan.

The NPAFC is an international organization that promotes the conservation of Pacific salmon and steelhead in the North Pacific and its adjacent seas. It serves as a venue for cooperation in and coordination of enforcement activities and scientific research. The vast majority of salmon catches in the North Pacific originate from NPAFC member countries, which are Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and the United States.

At the Commission's Annual Meeting, Plenary Sessions and the Commission's three standing committees, Enforcement, Scientific Research and Statistics, and Finance and Administration, were convened to discuss issues related to salmon and steelhead in the NPAFC Convention Area in the high seas of the North Pacific.

The Commission also presented Mr. Koji Imamura, retired President of the Japan Sea-Farming Association and National Federation of Medium Trawlers (Japan), with the 2015 NPAFC Award. This award was given to Mr. Imamura in recognition of his long-term leadership in international relations and ocean salmon fisheries management. His considerable negotiation and consensus-building abilities have significantly promoted the knowledge and conservation of Pacific salmon and steelhead in the North Pacific.

At the Commission's enforcement meetings, multilateral cooperative enforcement operations and regular information exchanges between NPAFC-member enforcement agencies were reviewed. In 2014 the combined multilateral efforts resulted in several significant enforcement actions.

A suspected high seas drift net vessel, *Yin Yuan*, was encountered during a Canadian air patrol and information was relayed to a US Coast Guard ship, which was able to conduct a boarding under the authority of China Coast Guard shipriders who were aboard the Coast Guard ship. Master of the *Yin Yuan* admitted to dumping the net tube, net spreader, and 3.3 km of driftnet over the side of the fishing vessel during the night. Half a ton of net-scarred salmon was discovered in the ship's freezer. The US Coast Guard escorted the *Yin Yuan* to rendezvous with a Chinese Coast Guard vessel for further investigation and prosecution. The remaining fishing gear was confiscated and the ship's master charged the maximum fine by Chinese authorities. Investigations continue against the ship's owner.

Two suspicious vessels, which appeared to be rigged for illegal transshipment activities, were discovered by U.S. Coast Guard air reconnaissance. An INTERPOL Purple Notice was released to alert international enforcement authorities to activities by one of those vessels. As a result, inspectors of the Republic of Korea conducted port state inspections of the vessels and the legitimacy of the vessels was considered suspect. One of the vessels was later detained in Russia for an invalid fishing license while operating in the Russian EEZ.

Such continued vigilance is crucial to the ongoing curtailment of IUU (illegal, unregulated, and unreported) fishing activities and a requirement for sustainable fisheries management and the conservation of salmon in the North Pacific.

At the NPAFC's scientific meetings, leading salmon researchers from member countries reviewed new studies of Pacific salmon and steelhead in international waters and surrounding areas. Catch statistics were compiled from information provided by the member countries.

Preliminary 2014 North Pacific-wide salmon catches were 0.86 million metric tonnes (392 million fish). Chum salmon constituted the majority of the total commercial catch (38% by weight) followed by pink (36%) and sockeye salmon (21%). Coho comprised 5% of the commercial catch, Chinook salmon was 1%, and each of cherry salmon and steelhead trout were < 1% of the catch by weight.

In 2015, salmon research surveys are planned to take place in the Gulf of Alaska, the Bering Sea, the Northwest Pacific and the Sea of Okhotsk. Researchers will be examining conditions such as species abundance, migration, distribution, and growth of salmon at sea.

The NPAFC has planned a three-day international symposium, *Pacific Salmon and Steelhead Production in a Changing Climate: Past, Present, and Future*, in Kobe immediately following the Annual Meeting. The symposium will be a venue for experts from around the Pacific Rim to share information on understanding how climate change and variability impacts the marine ecology of Pacific salmon. Discussions will focus on how to utilize the best available information on marine ecology of salmon populations to explain and forecast annual variation in production.

The Commission meeting closed with the Korean Party inviting the members to come to the 2016 Annual Meeting in Busan, Korea.

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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.
