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# North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## PREPARATIONS UNDERWAY FOR INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE SALMON

*Busan, Republic of Korea (May 20, 2016)*—Based on agreement reached at the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC), preparations for initiating the International Year of the Salmon (IYS) have begun.

Salmon are an important biological and economic resource throughout their range, yet they face many challenges and uncertainties, especially those associated with climate change. The need to protect this unique resource generated the momentum for organizing an International Year of the Salmon (IYS).

The IYS theme is “Salmon and people in a changing world”. The extraordinary life history of salmon exposes them to many environmental and anthropogenic factors influencing their health and abundance, and IYS seeks to raise awareness of what we as humans can do to ensure salmon and their varied habitats are conserved and restored.

The NPAFC focused on improving scientific understanding and awareness of the factors affecting salmon. Understanding salmon abundance and increasing awareness of environmental challenges and measures being taken to mitigate these challenges are some of the topics being addressed. An improved understanding of the issues critical to salmon is expected to stimulate and support research and conservation of salmon and their habitats.

In the North Pacific, the total abundance of salmon has been higher than the long-term average in recent decades, largely because of a greater abundance of pink and chum salmon in the western North Pacific. This abundance, however, is not a trend seen in all regions. In British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and California, for example, average abundances of sockeye, coho, and Chinook salmon have been lower than the long-term average for several decades, and many populations in these regions have been designated as threatened or endangered. The causes of this lower productivity are poorly understood, which raises concerns for the future of salmon populations. If our scientific effort to understand the factors affecting salmon under a changing climate is not rapid enough to effectively support management of this important resource, it compromises the social and economic benefits that salmon provide now and could provide in the future.

Therefore, the IYS also seeks to stimulate an investment in research which will create a legacy of improved knowledge, tools, and a new generation of scientists equipped to provide timely advice that better informs conservation, restoration, and rational management of all salmon.

Thus far, the NPAFC has sponsored two scoping meetings attended by international and regional fisheries management organizations, governmental and non-profit organizations, and international salmon scientists to help frame the purpose, scope, and governance strategies necessary to deliver a successful International Year of the Salmon.

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The IYS initiative is comprised of three phases (planning, launch, and research) with the intention that the IYS focal year will take place in 2018. The IYS concept has been developed at NPAFC with the strong support of other organizations that share the hope that a new initiative such as the IYS will bring increased understanding of “Salmon and people in a changing world”.

Over the next six months, core partners are anticipated to join with NPAFC to help plan the International Year of the Salmon. Organizations and individuals concerned with salmon and interested in IYS planning and making this exciting initiative a reality are encouraged to contact the NPAFC.



Representatives of intergovernmental and regional fisheries organizations, governmental, non-profit, and scientific organizations who participated in the Second IYS Scoping Meeting held in Vancouver, BC, Canada, March 15-16, 2016.

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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.

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