
North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION IS KEY ELEMENT FOR SUCCESS IN COMBATting ILLEGAL FISHING IN THE NORTH PACIFIC

Victoria, B.C., Canada (May 19, 2017)—At the Annual Meeting of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC), fisheries enforcement representatives from member countries (Canada, Japan, Korea, Russia, and United States) reported on successful 2016 efforts to combat IUU (illegal, unreported, and unregulated) fishing on the high seas of the North Pacific. The parties scrutinized over 2,000 fishing vessels, arrested one, and watch-listed two others.

Vessels fishing on the high seas historically used largescale high seas driftnets – a gear that is now internationally banned due to the high rates of bycatch of non-target species, including salmon. The Convention for the Conservation of Anadromous Stocks in the North Pacific Ocean further prohibits fishing for salmon within the high seas of the North Pacific Ocean. The NPAFC member Parties have achieved a unique forum for successful and efficient enforcement of these conservation measures within the NPAFC Convention Area. These efforts have brought pressure on fishing vessels and their flag states that have drastically reduced high seas driftnet and salmon fishing within the North Pacific.

In 2016, Canada and the United States conducted joint fisheries enforcement patrols using Canadian aircraft from facilities in Japan and U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) vessels to help maximize patrol duration and range. In a bilateral arrangement, the United States hosted People’s Republic of China Coast Guard law enforcement officers aboard a USCG cutter to further increase enforcement effectiveness of ship patrols. The coordinated enforcement efforts of the member countries in 2016 covered significant portions of the NPAFC Convention Area, over 548 hours of aircraft patrols, and more than 218 ship days, to deter and interrupt IUU activity.

Through these patrols, 2,225 fishing vessels were sighted and one vessel was interdicted. Canadian patrol aircraft sighted the Fishing Vessel *MYS URUMPET* which was suspected of using large-scale driftnets within the Russian exclusive economic zone. The sighting information was relayed to Russian Authorities, resulting in fines for the vessel master equivalent to US\$30,000 and inspection of five additional vessels.

In addition, two vessels were added to the NPAFC Vessel of Interest List subsequent to the results of the sharing of sighting reports during the 2016 patrol period. F/V 海达[Haida]705, under the People’s Republic of China flag, was sighted by Fisheries Agency of Japan patrol vessel to be equipped with driftnet gear (net tube, rollers) and carried radio buoys used for driftnets within the Convention Area. Through coordination with Russia, U.S. Coast Guard patrol aircraft sighted the refrigerated cargo ship *Fabian*, unflagged with vessel name painted over and showing signs of suspicious activity within the NPAFC Convention Area in the Bering Sea.

Member Parties also discussed the status of acceptance of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement. This international agreement is designed to harmonize and strengthen controls and deter illicit activity by

preventing illegally caught fish from entering the global marketplace. The Agreement went into force on June 5, 2016. Currently, 46 members have formally deposited their instruments of adherence. Republic of Korea acceded on January 14, 2016; and the U.S. ratified on February 26, 2016. Effective and consistent application of this Agreement by nations will add a new level of deterrent by decreasing the profitability of illegal transshipping of fish at sea and in port.

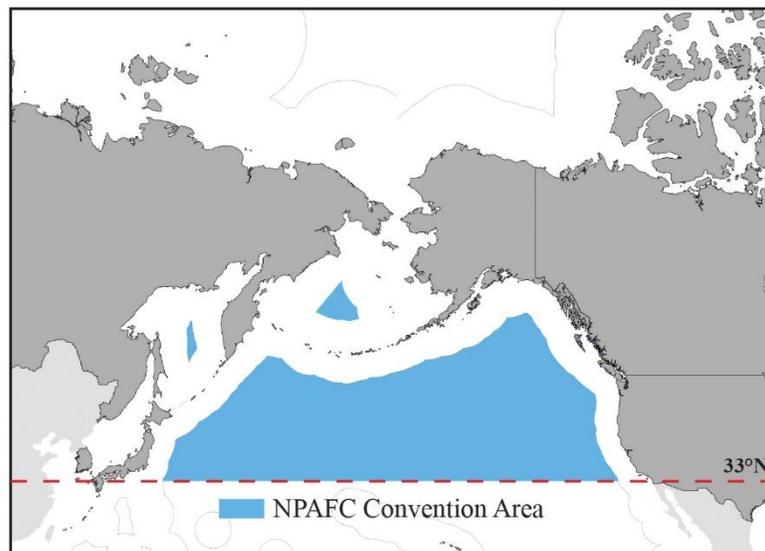
Ongoing efforts to curtail the large-scale high seas driftnet threat by continuing a constant vigilance at sea and in port is crucial for sustainable fisheries management and the conservation of salmon in the North Pacific. Multilateral enforcement operations coordinated in the NPAFC arena, regular information exchanges between NPAFC-member enforcement agencies, and a consistent enforcement presence in the North Pacific all act as effective deterrents against IUU fishing activities.

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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 the United States of America.



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Map credit: modified from © FAO 2016 Regional Fishery Bodies Map, www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/npafc. March 11, 2016.
