
North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission

12th Annual Meeting – 2004
Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan
2004 October 24-29

NEWS RELEASE

Representatives of Canada, Japan, Republic of Korea, Russia, and the United States, the primary states of origin for salmon stocks in the North Pacific, met in Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan on October 24-29, 2004, for the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC). The meeting was chaired by Mr. Koji Imamura, President of the NPAFC.

The NPAFC was established by the Convention for the Conservation of Anadromous Stocks in the North Pacific Ocean (the Convention) which became effective on February 16, 1993. The Convention prohibits directed fishing for salmonids on the high seas of the North Pacific Ocean and includes provisions to minimize the number of salmonids taken in other fisheries. The NPAFC promotes the conservation of salmonids in the North Pacific and its adjacent seas and serves as a venue for cooperation in and coordination of enforcement activities and scientific research.

The NPAFC's Committees on Enforcement, Scientific Research and Statistics, and Finance and Administration met to consider activities of the Parties in support of the objectives of the Convention.

The Parties reviewed enforcement efforts and activities in the Convention Area in 2004. All of the agencies directly responsible for the planning and execution of enforcement activities within the Convention Area attended. The Parties coordinate their enforcement efforts to detect and deter illegal fishing in the Convention Area. Joint long range aircraft patrols and coordination with each Parties enforcement vessels are used to detect illegal fishing in the Convention Area. The Parties have been successful in reducing illegal salmon fishing in the Convention Area. However, each year suspected high sea drift net vessels are detected in the Convention Area. To build on the successes of this coordinated effort the Commission will complete development of a new Integrated Information System (IIS) on enforcement. The IIS will allow the Parties to keep all electronic information about illegal or suspected vessels in the Convention Area on a closed website. The Parties plan to begin testing the new system in 2005.

Due to the continued threat of high seas fishing for salmon in the Convention Area, all Parties agreed to maintain 2005 enforcement activities at high levels as a deterrent to the threat of potential unauthorized fishing activities. Russia invited all the participants to the Enforcement Evaluation and Coordination Meeting in 2005.

International cooperation in salmon research among the Parties was reviewed and discussed on a broad range of issues concerning Pacific salmonid stocks. This exchange is helping in the quest to seek answers to many perplexing questions concerning changes in abundance of salmon. The Parties' cooperative research program, Bering-Aleutian Salmon International Survey (BASIS), is documenting ocean and atmospheric changes and other biological and ecological dynamics affecting salmonid production. New genetic techniques have been

developed by the Parties and some of the techniques are being used to identify the origins of salmon. In addition, some of the new tracking methods are being used to monitor the migratory behaviour of salmon on the high seas. An International Workshop "BASIS-2004: Salmon and Marine Ecosystems in the Bering Sea and Adjacent Waters" will be held following this meeting in Sapporo. Canada invited the participants to the Research Planning and Coordinating Meeting to be held in spring 2005.

The NPAFC scientific initiatives will be integrated with other international organization's research and data needs to meet the common challenges facing salmon. An NPAFC-PICES Joint International Symposium "The Status of Pacific Salmon and Their Role in North Pacific Ecosystem" will be held in 2005.

The drawing of the returned high seas salmon tags under the NPAFC International High Seas Salmon Tagging Project funded by the North Pacific Research Board was held at the meeting. Four prizes for the total amount of \$10,000 were awarded to the winners.

The total 2003 commercial salmon catch was 955,655 metric tons. This is an increase from the 2002 commercial catch of 726,852 metric tons and was the second highest level recorded. Low return in some areas present a puzzling situation. Collective scientific efforts will be used to help answer this and other questions.

The Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the NPAFC is scheduled to be held in the Republic of Korea in October 2005.

For Information

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