
North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission

17th Annual Meeting – 2009
Niigata, Japan
2009 November 2-6

NEWS RELEASE

Unprecedented high catches of Pacific salmon continue in most areas of the North Pacific, reports the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC). Only at the southeastern part of their range off British Columbia, Washington, Oregon and California are Pacific salmon stocks in low abundance.

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 Niigata, Japan, November 2-6, 2009, for the Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the NPAFC. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Suam Kim of the Republic of Korea, President of the NPAFC.

The Parties reviewed enforcement efforts and activities in the Convention Area in 2009. Agencies responsible for the planning and execution of enforcement activities met to coordinate their enforcement efforts to detect and deter illegal fishing in the Convention Area. Joint long-range aircraft patrols and coordination with each Party's enforcement vessels are used to detect illegal fishing. Member countries conducted 188 ship patrol days and 279 aerial patrol hours in the Convention Area. This year, no Parties sighted any vessels suspected of illegal fishing, although Taiwan (NPAFC observer) sighted one vessel with driftnets deployed. This year's results may reflect a reduction in illegal, unregulated, or unreported fishing in the North Pacific, and may be a result of significant increase in patrol efforts in recent years.

Taiwanese authorities, which are official observers to the NPAFC, reported their efforts to ensure Taiwanese vessels and nationals do not fish salmon in the NPAFC Convention Area.

Due to the continued threat of high seas fishing for salmon in the Convention Area, all Parties reaffirmed their commitment to maintain 2010 enforcement activities at high levels as a deterrent to the threat of potential unauthorized fishing activities. Russian representatives invited all the participants to the Enforcement Evaluation and Coordination Meeting to be held next April in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk.

The NPAFC scientific research focuses on trends in marine production of salmon stocks, their population structure and diversity in marine ecosystems of the North Pacific, and climate change impacts. NPAFC scientists also met to further their understanding of Pacific salmon and their ecosystems. The NPAFC provides the only international forum for scientists to conduct such work.

A review of international cooperation in salmon research over the past several years covered a broad range of issues concerning Pacific salmonid stocks. This exchange helps answer many perplexing questions about salmon abundance. The NPAFC's cooperative research program, the Bering-Aleutian Salmon International Survey (BASIS), documents ocean and atmospheric changes and other biological and ecological dynamics affecting salmonid production. New genetic and otolith marking techniques developed by the Parties are being used to identify the origins of salmon and intermixing of the stocks in the Pacific Ocean. In addition, new high tech tags are being used to track the migratory behaviour of salmon on the high seas.

Last year, NPAFC hosted the International Symposium on BASIS in Seattle, USA. The symposium summarized BASIS research conducted since 2002 and increased understanding of how climate change affects salmon growth and survival in the ocean. Further information is available from the NPAFC website (www.npafc.org). The NPAFC is also working with PICES, ICES and FAO towards another international symposium in 2010 to further overall scientific understanding of the effect of climate change on fish, including salmon.

In 2007, the NPAFC was awarded a grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation in support of a long-term, integrated research and monitoring plan for Pacific salmon. This plan synthesizes past research and identifies critical areas for new research to understand impacts of future climate and ocean changes on the population dynamics of Pacific salmon. The project has been completed and the final report will soon be publically available.

NPAFC is in an active process with outside experts to undertake a review of the organization's performance. A performance review report will be presented at the 2010 NPAFC Annual Meeting.

NPAFC is establishing closer relations with the Western and Central Pacific Fishing Commission (WCPFC) by developing a Memorandum of Understanding between our two organizations.

The drawing of the returned high seas salmon tags was held at the meeting. Three prizes for the total amount of \$1,000 were awarded to the winners.

The American Institute of Fisheries Research Biologists presented their group excellence award to the Commission.

The Commission elected Dr. James Balsiger of the United States as the next President of the NPAFC.

The NPAFC was established by the Convention for the Conservation of Anadromous Stocks in the North Pacific Ocean (the Convention) in 1993. The NPAFC promotes the conservation of Pacific Salmon 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 Eighteenth Annual Meeting of the NPAFC is scheduled to be held in Busan, Korea in November 2010.

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