
North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission

19th Annual Meeting – 2011
Nanaimo, B.C., Canada
2011 October 23-28

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) just completed its 19th Annual Meeting in Nanaimo, BC, Canada on October 28, 2011. Representatives from Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and the United States, the primary states of origin for salmon stocks in the North Pacific, were in attendance. The meeting was chaired by Dr. James Balsiger of the United States, President of the NPAFC.

The NPAFC Annual Meeting brings the world's leading salmon researchers together to discuss the science and conservation of Pacific salmon during their ocean life phase. The meeting also brings together enforcement officials from the Commission's member countries to review past actions and plan new efforts to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated (or IUU) salmon fishing in the North Pacific.

Scientists shared the information that catches of Pacific salmon remain at high levels. The total commercial catch by all producing countries in 2010 was just over 913,000 tons. Fifty-four percent of the 2010 salmon catch was from countries in Asia (Russia, Japan, Korea) and 46% from countries in North America (United States and Canada). Pink and chum salmon composed the majority (78%) of the total catch. The catch composition shifted in 2010 as compared to the previous year. Catch of pink salmon decreased by 35% and chum salmon catch decreased by 13% in 2010. The sockeye salmon catch in 2010 increased by 18% over the 2009 catch and totaled 173,000 tons. The higher sockeye catch was primarily due to increased abundance in Canada and Russia. In 2010 there was also a 9% increase of Chinook and a 6% increase of coho salmon over the Pacific-wide catch of these species in 2009.

To better understand the high abundance of pink and chum salmon, the NPAFC will host an international workshop titled, "Explanations for the High Abundance of Pink and Chum Salmon and Future Trends," on October 30-31, 2011, following the NPAFC meeting. The workshop will bring together scientists specializing in ocean pink and chum salmon abundance and ocean ecology. Information on salmon production trends and variability in regions of the North Pacific, survival strategies of pink and chum salmon, and the ecological capacity of the ocean to produce salmon will be presented.

On the enforcement front, fisheries enforcement agencies from NPAFC member countries reaffirmed their commitment to maintain activities at high levels as a deterrent to the threat of unauthorized fishing and reviewed their operations to detect and deter illegal fishing for salmon in 2011. Their cooperative efforts to detect, detain, and apprehend vessels engaged in IUU fishing on the high-seas of the North Pacific is central to the enforcement responsibilities of the NPAFC. The North Pacific is a large area, and finding individuals breaking international law is most effective when the member countries work together and share information as they patrol the North Pacific. At the meeting, member countries reviewed 2011 patrol efforts, which included 120 ship patrol days, 388 aerial patrol hours, and the use of radar satellite surveillance on the high seas of the North Pacific.

Enforcement cooperation was successful in reducing illegal high-seas fishing in 2011. This past August, the stateless fishing vessel *Bangun Perkasa* was spotted on the high-seas of the North Pacific by an aircraft of the Fisheries Agency of Japan. They passed this information to the U.S. Coast Guard, which responded with a patrol vessel. The *Bangun Perkasa* was engaged in unauthorized and illegal high-seas large-scale drift-net fishing. The U.S. Coast Guard patrol vessel utilized the WCPFC high-seas boarding and inspection regime and found 30 tons of squid and 54 shark carcasses. The vessel was seized for violation of U.S. Law. Such strong coordination across national agencies and international organizations enables timely detection and apprehension of vessels engaged in illegal fishing. At their next meeting in March 2012 in Jeju, Korea, enforcement agencies will develop a joint schedule for aircraft and surface patrols in the North Pacific for 2012 enforcement activities.

Over the last year, the NPAFC has been studying recommendations made by an independent review panel to evaluate the Commission's performance based on objectives set out by the Convention that created the Commission. A list of actions based on the review panel's recommendations was adopted at the Annual Meeting. This list of actions will be posted on the NPAFC website.

The Twentieth Annual Meeting is scheduled for October 2012 in St. Petersburg, Russia.

The Convention for the Conservation of Anadromous Stocks in the North Pacific Ocean established the NPAFC in 1993. 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. Member countries are Canada, Japan, Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and the United States. The NPAFC Convention Area is the waters of the North Pacific Ocean and its adjacent seas north of 33 degrees North Latitude beyond the 200-mile zones of the coastal states.

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