
North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission

5th Annual Meeting -- 1997
Victoria, B.C., Canada
1997 October 27-31

NEWS RELEASE

Representatives of Canada, Japan, Russia, and the United States, the primary states of origin for salmon stocks in the North Pacific, met in Victoria, British Columbia, on October 27 - 31, 1997, for the Fifth Annual Meeting of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC). Observers from Republic of Korea and the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES) were also in attendance. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Koji Imamura, President of the NPAFC.

The Honourable David Anderson, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, attended the meeting to deliver a statement on behalf of the Government of Canada.

The NPAFC was established by the Convention for the Conservation of Anadromous Stocks in the North Pacific Ocean (the Convention) which entered into force 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 amount 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, Finance and Administration, and Scientific Research and Statistics met to consider activities of the Parties in support of the objectives of the Convention.

The Committee on Enforcement reviewed unauthorized salmon fishing activities in the Convention Area in 1997 on the basis of information provided by the Parties. The cooperative enforcement efforts of the Parties resulted in the detection of six driftnet vessels engaged in illegal fishing operations in or near the Convention area. One of the vessels, NANA O 55008, was registered in the People's Republic of China. The Government of the People's Republic of China also indicated it would take action against the NANA O 55008 if sighted in one of its ports. The Government of the People's Republic of China indicated that the stateless vessel, PU YU 6026, was ultimately seized by its authorities. The United States, in cooperation with Canada and Japan, seized the stateless high seas driftnet vessel, CAO YU 6025, fishing in the Convention Area. Due to the continued threat of high seas fishing for salmon in the Convention Area, all Parties pledged to maintain 1998 enforcement activities at levels similar to those of 1997, as a deterrent to the threat of potential unauthorized fishing activity.

The Parties concurred that the *Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas*, approved by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 1993 and open for acceptance, could serve as a mechanism to obligate non-member States to support and cooperate with the objectives and principles of the Convention. A country's acceptance of the FAO Agreement would, *inter alia*, obligate it to ensure that its fishing vessels do not undermine the effectiveness of conservation and measures adopted by such regional fisheries organizations as the NPAFC. The Parties decided, as appropriate, to encourage States or entities not party to the Convention to whom the FAO Agreement is open, to adopt the FAO Agreement as soon as possible.

The Committee on Scientific Research and Statistics conducted extensive discussions on the effects of climate change on salmon in the North Pacific Ocean. In light of the dramatic low returns of some major economically important stocks, scientists are addressing questions about the relationship between changes in abundance and in ocean and atmospheric conditions. NPAFC scientists are gathering data from around the Pacific Rim, and will meet March 26-27, 1998 in Vancouver, B.C., to discuss these issues. Total salmon catch among the Parties in 1996 was 847,730 metric tons. In addition, nearly 4.4 billion juvenile salmon were released in the Convention Area in 1996.

The Committee on Finance and Administration considered and adopted the 1997/98 budget. Administrative topics were discussed and approved .

The Sixth Annual Meeting of the NPAFC is scheduled to be held in Russia in 1998.

For Information

Dr. Irina Shestakova,
NPAFC Secretariat
6640 Northwest Marine Drive
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1X2, Canada

~~Exec (604) 228-1128~~
Fax: (604) 228-1135
e-mail: wmorris@unixg.ubc.ca