
North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission

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NORTH PACIFIC SALMON CATCHES REMAIN HIGH IN THE WEST BUT DECLINE IN THE EAST

Portland, Oregon, USA (May 17, 2019)—The North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) announced preliminary North Pacific-wide total salmon catches for 2018, as reported by its member countries Canada, Japan, Korea, Russia, and the United States. Although Pacific salmon abundance in the North Pacific has declined somewhat since 2009, as indexed by aggregate commercial catches, catches remain at near all-time high levels. The total catch in 2018 exceeded one million metric tonnes (1,067 thousand metric tonnes; 651.3 million fish), the highest catch for an even-numbered year.

The member nations' portions of the total catch included 63% by Russia (676.2 thousand metric tonnes), 27% by the United States (286.8 thousand metric tonnes; Alaska—278.1 thousand metric tonnes), 9% by Japan (91.3 thousand metric tonnes), 1% by Canada (12.6 thousand metric tonnes), and less than 1% by Korea (240 metric tonnes).

Pink salmon constituted the majority of the total commercial catch (55% by weight) followed by chum (26%) and sockeye salmon (16%). Coho comprised 2% of the catch, while Chinook salmon, cherry salmon, and steelhead trout were each less than 1% of the catch by weight.

Pink and chum salmon dominate Asian catches. The majority of pink salmon were caught by Russia, which was 86% of the total North Pacific pink salmon catch of 592.1 thousand metric tonnes. The total catch of chum salmon was 272.5 thousand metric tonnes, with the largest portions of the catch by weight from Russia (41%) and Japan (29%). Catches by Asian member countries in 2018 were higher than any year since 2010, and the pink salmon catch was the highest on record.

Interannual variability in the total catch in North America has been more pronounced during the last decade than in previous decades, primarily because of variability in pink salmon catches. The relative abundance of salmon species varies with latitude. In Alaska, pink and sockeye salmon are the primary species, followed by chum salmon. In Canada, sockeye, pink, and chum salmon have historically comprised the largest catch, but in 2018 sockeye, chum and Chinook salmon were the most abundant species caught. In Washington, Oregon, and California, chum, sockeye, and Chinook salmon are typically the most abundant species caught. A particularly low catch of pink salmon (71.3 thousand metric tonnes) in 2018 resulted in the lowest total catches of salmon in North America since 1978.

Hatchery releases of salmon and steelhead from NPAFC member countries have been fairly stable since 1993, with approximately 5 billion fish released annually, but have declined slightly each year since 2014, primarily because of reduced Asian hatchery releases. Hatcheries released 2,147 million fish (44% of the total) in the United States, 1,648 million (34%) in Japan, 842 million (17%) in Russia, 262 million (5%) in Canada, and 11 million (< 1%) in Korea.

Hatchery releases were mostly chum (2,915 million, 59%) and pink salmon (1,437 million, 29%), followed by Chinook (235 million, 5%), sockeye (215 million, 4%), and coho salmon (80 million, 2%), steelhead trout (20 million, <1%), and cherry salmon (7 million, <1%).

Table 1. Preliminary 2018 commercial salmon catches in Canada, Japan, Korea, Russia, and the United States. Commercial catches by foreign fleets in the Russian EEZ are not included. Japanese catch data are based on Fisheries Research Agency data sources, not official statistics. Commercial catch weight for Alaska is based on landed weight (Alaska Department of Fish and Game).

(a) Preliminary 2018 commercial catch in millions of fish.

	Sockeye	Pink	Chum	Coho	Chinook	Cherry	Steelhead	Total
Canada	2.618	0.240	0.751	0.198	0.152	-	-	3.959
Japan	0.000	7.309	26.706	0.001	0.001	-	0.000	34.017
Korea	-	-	0.096	-	-	-	-	0.096
Russia	19.536	420.805	49.772	4.430	0.072	0.010	-	494.625
USA	51.647	41.118	21.197	4.012	0.619	-	0.015	118.608
Alaska	50.649	41.118	20.348	3.737	0.266	-	0.000	116.117
WOC	0.998	0.000	0.849	0.275	0.353	-	0.015	2.491
Total	73.801	469.472	98.522	8.641	0.844	0.010	0.015	651.305

WOC: Washington, Oregon, and California

(b) Preliminary 2018 commercial catch in metric tonnes (round weight).

	Sockeye	Pink	Chum	Coho	Chinook	Cherry	Steelhead	Total
Canada	6,899	514	3,790	586	820	-	-	12,609
Japan	0	9,715	80,338	2	5	1,254	0	91,314
Korea	-	-	240	-	-	-	-	240
Russia	43,280	511,093	110,763	10,682	363	20	-	676,201
USA	121,369	70,822	77,411	13,840	3,331	-	68	286,841
Alaska	118,791	70,822	73,992	13,062	1,432	-	1	278,100
WOC	2,578	0	3,419	778	1,899	-	67	8,741
Total	171,548	592,144	272,542	25,110	4,519	1,274	68	1,067,205

WOC: Washington, Oregon, and California

Table 2. Preliminary 2018 hatchery releases in NPAFC member countries in millions of fish.

	Sockeye	Pink	Chum	Coho	Chinook	Cherry	Steelhead	Total
Canada	138.661	14.721	61.835	8.002	38.224	-	0.285	261.728
Japan	0.187	112.766	1,527.884	-	-	7.224	-	1,648.061
Korea	-	-	10.710	-	-	-	-	10.710
Russia	14.306	257.159	567.337	2.546	0.949	0	-	842.297
USA	61.723	1,052.345	747.397	69.907	195.437	-	20.037	2,146.846
Alaska	44.734	1,051.799	697.061	30.731	9.528	-	-	1,833.853
WOCI	16.989	0.546	50.336	39.176	185.909	-	20.037	312.993
Total	214.877	1,436.991	2,915.163	80.455	234.610	7.224	20.322	4,909.642

WOCI: Washington, Oregon, California, and Idaho

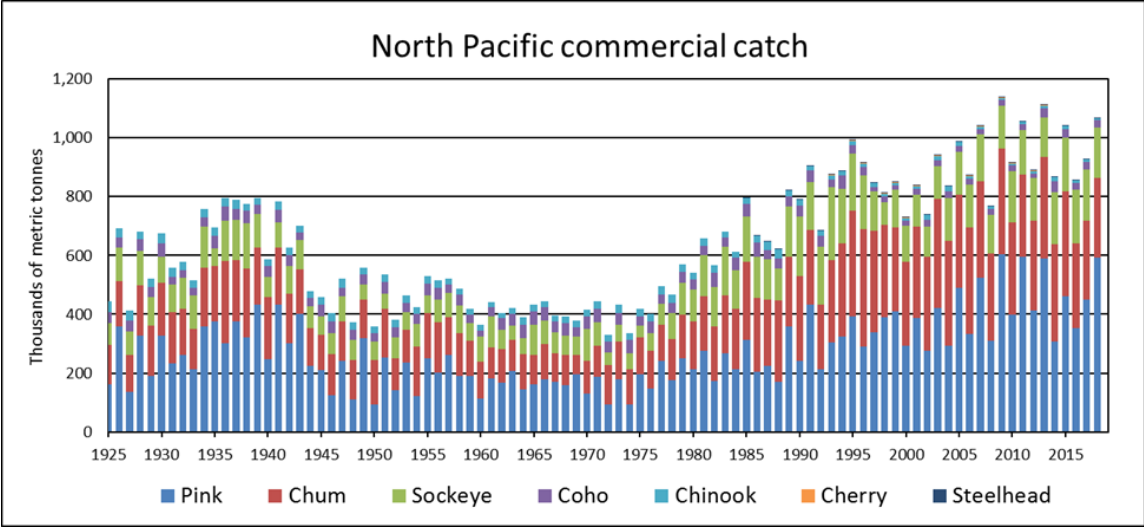


Figure 1. North Pacific commercial catch (thousands of metric tonnes) of Pacific salmon by species from 1925 to 2018 (2018 catches are preliminary).

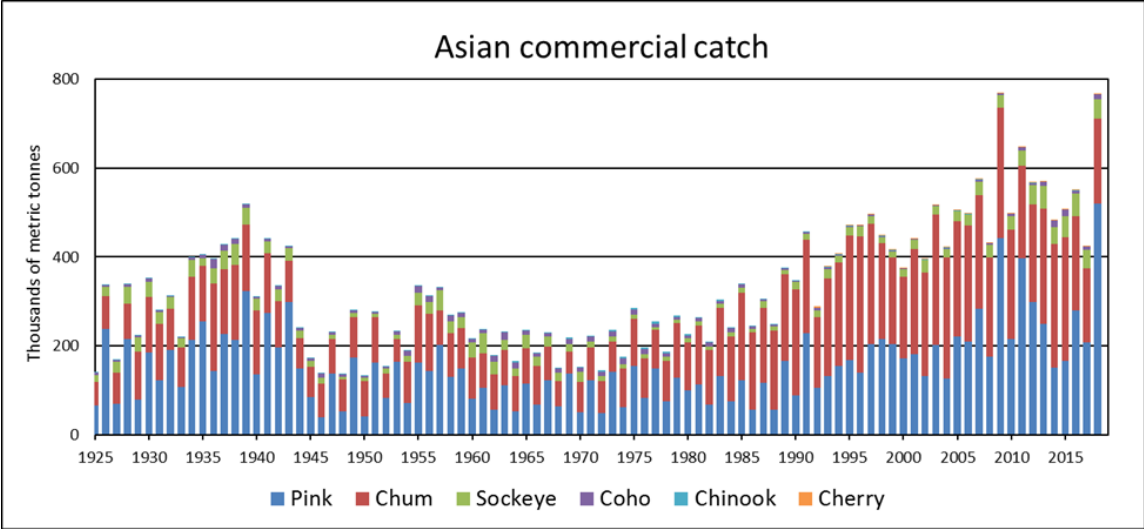


Figure 2. Asian commercial catch (thousands of metric tonnes) of Pacific salmon by species from 1925 to 2018 (2018 catches are preliminary).

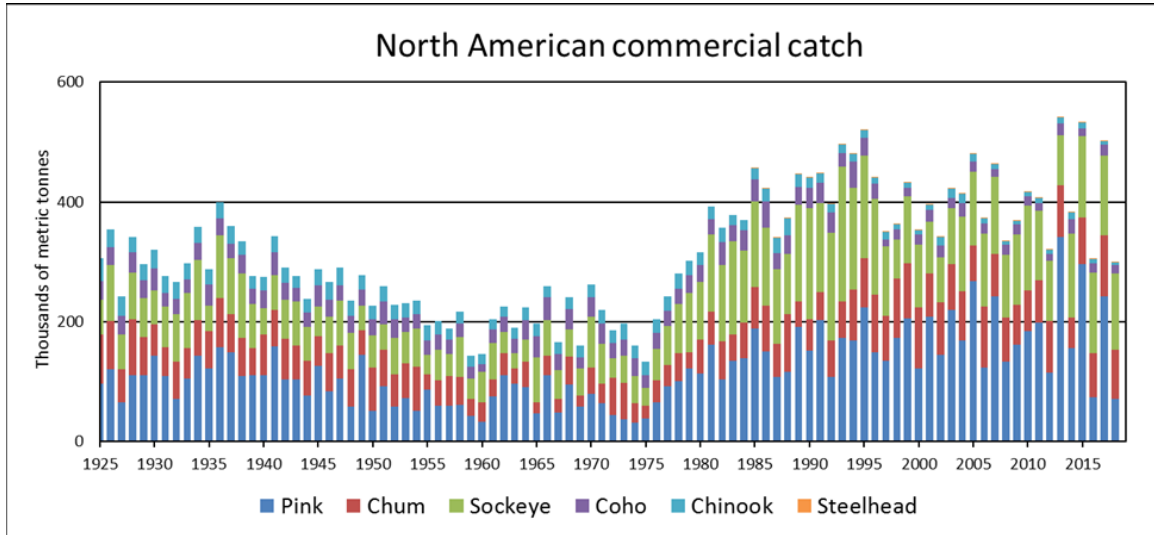


Figure 3. North American commercial catch (thousands of metric tonnes) of Pacific salmon by species from 1925 to 2018 (2018 catches are preliminary).

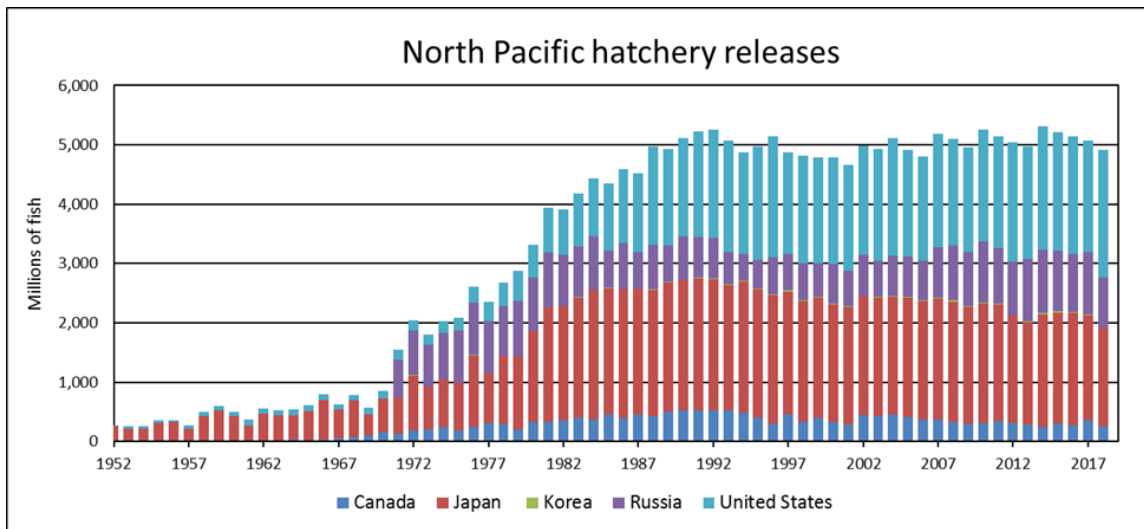


Figure 4. Annual North Pacific hatchery releases (millions of fish) of Pacific salmon by member countries from 1952 to 2018.

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About NPAFC

The NPAFC is an international organization that promotes the conservation of Pacific 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, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America.