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Korean Research Plan for Salmon in 2013

by

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Korean Research Plan for Salmon in 2013

Salmon are political resources due to the characteristics of transboundary distribution and economic importance. The interest in chum salmon biology in Korea was much increased since the establishment of the Yangyang Salmon Station (formerly Cold-water Fish Research Center) of Korea Fisheries Resources Agency 1980s. The enhancement program of chum salmon has been expanded thereafter, so that chum salmon were transplanted 18 streams in the coast of the Korean Peninsula. On the other hand, however, the ecological research on salmon species was very limited until recently due to the lack of research program. Though the involvement to the North Pacific Anadromous Fisheries Commission (NPAFC) requires scientific investigation on salmon research of each member nation, the conspicuous increase in research funding was not achieved. Oceanic environments have been rapidly altered by climate change during the last a few decades and ocean ecosystems including salmon populations will be modified under the global warming situation. Especially, a special intention is needed for stocks in southern boundary of distribution such as Korean chum salmon.

1. To reveal the mechanisms of mass mortality of chum salmon during their early life in rivers and coastal areas in conjunction with the fluctuation of return rates, we will carry out the researches as follows;

- (1) Identification of prey and predator species for juvenile salmon in the rivers and coastal areas,
- (2) Stage-by-stage estimation of survival rate after releasing in the rivers and coastal areas,
- (3) Monitoring of environmental factors in the river and coastal areas,
- (4) Examination of growth rate during the early life history using otolith and compare the growth rate between released juvenile salmon and wild juvenile salmon, and
- (5) Investigation on the optimal releasing period for juvenile salmon.

2. Climate change effects on salmon distribution, migration route, and abundance will be investigated. This research includes

- (1) Continuous monitoring activities on environmental conditions in the Korean waters and the western Pacific Ocean, and
- (2) Climate change effects on the biological characteristics of chum salmon returned to the Korean waters.

3. Otolith thermal marking on Korea chum salmon will be carried out to provide information about growth, survival during the early ocean life stage, and hatchery origins from 2013 release (2012 brood).
4. For the stock identification, we will developed new microsatellite loci of chum salmon to investigate genetic variation and population structure of Korean populations.
5. We plan to expand cherry salmon releasing program, and as the first step of cherry salmon research, we will examine stomach contents to know the prey items of cherry salmon and the competitions for preys with other fish species in the coastal area and ocean.
6. We will investigate genetic variation of non-anadromous masu salmon in korea to give baseline data for the strategy of conservation and management.