
North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission

2020 E-mail Annual Meeting
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION IS A KEY ELEMENT FOR SUCCESS IN COMBATTING ILLEGAL FISHING IN THE NORTH PACIFIC

Vancouver, BC, Canada (June 11, 2020)—At the Annual Meeting of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC), fisheries enforcement representatives from member countries (Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and the United States) reported on their successful 2019 efforts to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing on the high seas of the North Pacific.

Vessels fishing on the high seas historically used large-scale high-seas driftnets (HSDN)—gear that is now internationally banned due to the high rates of bycatch of non-target species, including salmon. The Convention for the Conservation of Anadromous Stocks in the North Pacific Ocean further prohibits fishing for salmon within the high seas of the North Pacific Ocean. The NPAFC member countries have achieved a unique forum for successful and efficient enforcement of these conservation measures within the NPAFC Convention Area. These efforts have put pressure on fishing vessel operators and their flag States to drastically reduce high-seas driftnet and salmon fishing within the North Pacific.

The coordinated enforcement efforts of the NPAFC member countries in 2019 covered significant portions of the NPAFC Convention Area with over 430 hours of aircraft patrols and more than 260 ship-days, to deter and interrupt IUU fishing activity. These combined multilateral efforts identified multiple violations of Conservation and Management Measures established by regional fisheries management organizations in the North Pacific Ocean; however, none involved high-seas driftnet activity or illegal retention of salmon. This may indicate that the efforts of member countries and enforcement actions are reducing these illegal activities.

Member countries also discussed the status of acceptance of the Food and Agriculture Organization Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate IUU Fishing (PSMA). This global, legally-binding agreement is designed to harmonize and strengthen controls and deter IUU activity by preventing illegally caught fish from entering the global marketplace. The PSMA went into force on June 5, 2016. Currently, 66 members have formally deposited their instruments of adherence. The Republic of Korea ratified on January 14, 2016; the U.S. ratified on February 26, 2016; Japan acceded to the Agreement on May 19, 2017; and Canada ratified on June 20, 2019. The Russian Federation is a signatory to the PSMA and is at the final stage of review for the process of its ratification. Effective and consistent application of the PSMA will add a new level of deterrence by decreasing the profitability of illegal transshipping of fish at sea and in port.

It was agreed that a one-day ENFO/CSRS workshop on “Threats and Knowledge Gaps Related to Pacific Salmon Conservation on the High Seas”, which was to be held on May 17, 2020, will be postponed until May 2021. There will be several presentations from ENFO and CSRS members at the workshop, along with invited speakers.

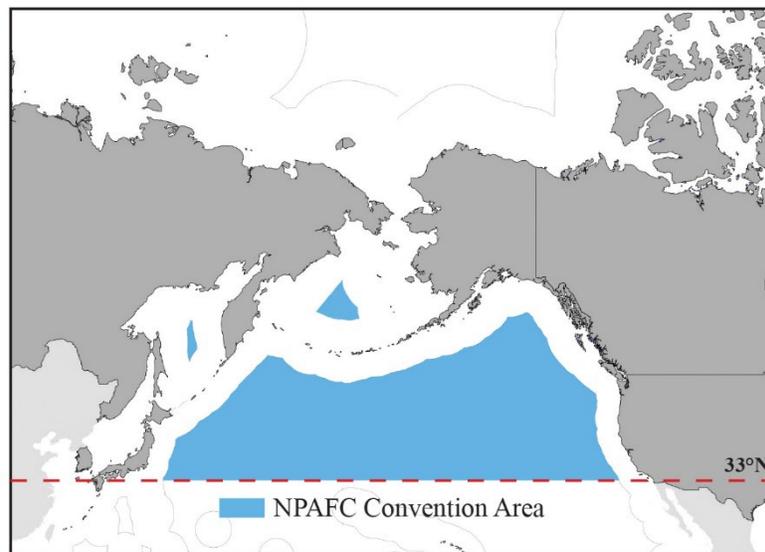
Ongoing efforts to curtail the large-scale high-seas driftnet (HSDN) threat by continuing a constant vigilance at sea and at ports is crucial for sustainable fisheries management and the conservation of salmon in the North Pacific. Multilateral enforcement operations coordinated in the NPAFC area, regular information exchanges between NPAFC-member enforcement agencies, and a consistent enforcement presence in the North Pacific, all act as effective deterrents against IUU fishing activities.

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About NPAFC

The NPAFC is an international organization that promotes the conservation of 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 beyond the 200-mile zones of coastal States. NPAFC member countries include Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America.



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Map credit: modified from © FAO 2016 Regional Fishery Bodies Map, www.fao.org/fishery/rfb/npafc. March 11, 2016.
