
North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission

2020 E-mail Annual Meeting
2020 May 19–June 11

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NORTH PACIFIC-WIDE SALMON CATCHES REMAIN HIGH BUT NOTABLY LOW CATCHES FOR SOME SALMON SPECIES

Vancouver, BC, Canada (June 11, 2020)—The North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) announced preliminary North Pacific-wide total salmon catches for 2019, as reported by its member countries Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and the United States. Although total Pacific salmon abundance in the North Pacific remains near all-time high levels, as indexed by aggregate commercial catches, catches have declined somewhat since 2009. The total catch in 2019 was 968.7 thousand metric tonnes (563.3 million fish) and was marked by particularly low catches for some salmon species in NPAFC member countries.

The member countries' portions of the total catch included 51% by Russia (499.2 thousand metric tonnes), 42% by the United States (406.9 thousand metric tonnes of which 401.9 thousand metric tonnes was caught in Alaska), 6% by Japan (59.5 thousand metric tonnes), and less than 1% by Canada (2.9 thousand metric tonnes) and Korea (130 metric tonnes), respectively.

Pink salmon constituted the majority of the total commercial catch (54% by weight) followed by chum (24%) and sockeye salmon (19%). 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. Catches between 2011 and 2017 generally declined, but the past two years have seen an increase primarily in pink salmon catches. However, the chum salmon catch has declined since 2015 and in 2019 was 168.4 thousand metric tonnes, compared to the 10-year average of 236.0 thousand metric tonnes. This decline was attributed to the lowest chum catches (55.9 thousand metric tonnes) in Japan since 1970.

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. In Alaska, pink and sockeye salmon are the primary species, followed by chum salmon. In Canada, chum, sockeye, and pink salmon were the most abundant species caught, but exceptionally low catches of these salmon species in 2019 resulted in the lowest total catches of salmon (2,973 metric tonnes) on record for Canada in the NPAFC database dating back to 1925. In Washington, Oregon, and California (WOC), Chinook, chum, and coho salmon are typically the most abundant species caught, but particularly low catches of chum, sockeye, and coho salmon in 2019 resulted in the lowest total catches of salmon (4,965 metric tonnes) on record for WOC in the NPAFC database.

Hatchery releases of salmon and steelhead from NPAFC member countries have been stable since 1993, with approximately 5 billion fish released annually, but the highest hatchery releases (5.5 billion fish) on record occurred in 2019, primarily because of increased Asian hatchery releases. Hatcheries released 2,023 million fish (37% of the total) in the United States, 1,918 million (35%) in Japan, 1,181 million (21%) in Russia, 384 million (7%) in Canada, and 11 million (< 1%) in Korea.

Hatchery releases were primarily chum (3,469 million, 63%) and pink salmon (1,357 million, 25%), followed by sockeye (341 million, 6%), Chinook (241 million, 4%), and coho salmon (82 million, 2%), steelhead trout (20 million, <1%), and cherry salmon (8 million, <1%).

Table 1. Preliminary 2019 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 2019 commercial catch in millions of fish.

	Sockeye	Pink	Chum	Coho	Chinook	Cherry	Steelhead	Total
Canada	0.302	0.151	0.186	0.201	0.123	-	-	0.963
Japan	0.003	1.418	17.098	0.000	0.001	-	0.000	18.520
Korea	-	-	0.050	-	-	-	-	0.050
Russia	19.687	274.273	36.660	3.412	0.074	0.008	-	334.114
USA	55.577	129.228	19.873	4.107	0.838	-	0.006	209.629
Alaska	55.567	128.894	19.586	3.918	0.293	-	0.001	208.259
WOC	0.010	0.334	0.287	0.189	0.545	-	0.005	1.370
Total	75.569	405.070	73.867	7.720	1.036	0.008	0.006	563.276

WOC: Washington, Oregon, and California

“0.000” means non-zero catch but too low to report

“-” means zero catch

(b) Preliminary 2019 commercial catch in metric tonnes (round weight).

	Sockeye	Pink	Chum	Coho	Chinook	Cherry	Steelhead	Total
Canada	155	335	1,083	587	813	-	-	2,973
Japan	5	2,089	55,879	1	5	1,481	0	59,460
Korea	-	-	130	-	-	-	-	130
Russia	46,736	330,083	112,407	9,643	326	13	-	499,208
USA	132,304	192,836	64,444	12,937	4,418	-	20	406,959
Alaska	132,282	192,251	63,316	12,453	1,690	-	2	401,994
WOC	22	585	1,128	484	2,728	-	18	4,965
Total	179,200	525,343	233,943	23,168	5,562	1,494	20	968,730

WOC: Washington, Oregon, and California

“0” means non-zero catch but too low to report

“-” means zero catch

Table 2. Preliminary 2019 hatchery releases in NPAFC member countries in millions of fish.

	Sockeye	Pink	Chum	Coho	Chinook	Cherry	Steelhead	Total
Canada	271.734*	9.319*	57.088*	8.157	38.025	-	0.081	384.404
Japan	0.184	129.563	1,780.416	-	-	7.725	-	1,917.888
Korea	-	-	10.950	-	-	-	-	10.950
Russia	15.323	283.202	878.624	2.982	0.874	0.410	-	1,181.415
USA	53.879	934.711	741.552	70.983	201.804	-	19.777	2,022.706
Alaska	39.021	934.711	689.399	32.754	10.003	-	-	1,705.888
WOCI	14.858	-	52.153	38.229	191.801	-	19.777	316.818
Total	341.120	1,356.795	3,468.630	82.122	240.703	8.135	19.858	5,517.363

WOCI: Washington, Oregon, California, and Idaho

* This includes hatchery releases and spawning channel production

“-” means zero hatchery release

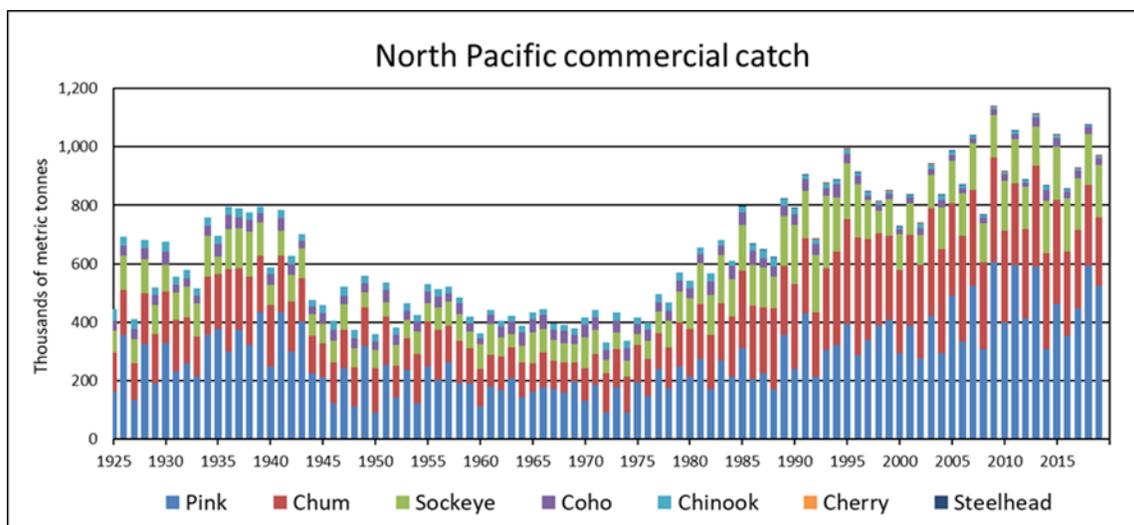


Figure 1. North Pacific commercial catch (thousands of metric tonnes) of Pacific salmon by species from 1925 to 2019 (2019 catches are preliminary).

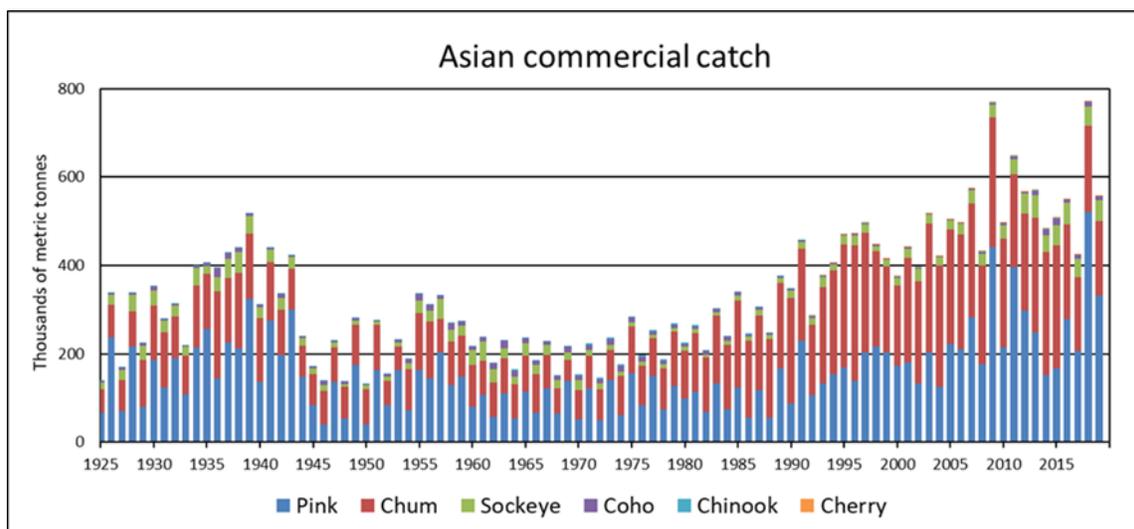


Figure 2. Asian commercial catch (thousands of metric tonnes) of Pacific salmon by species from 1925 to 2019 (2019 catches are preliminary).

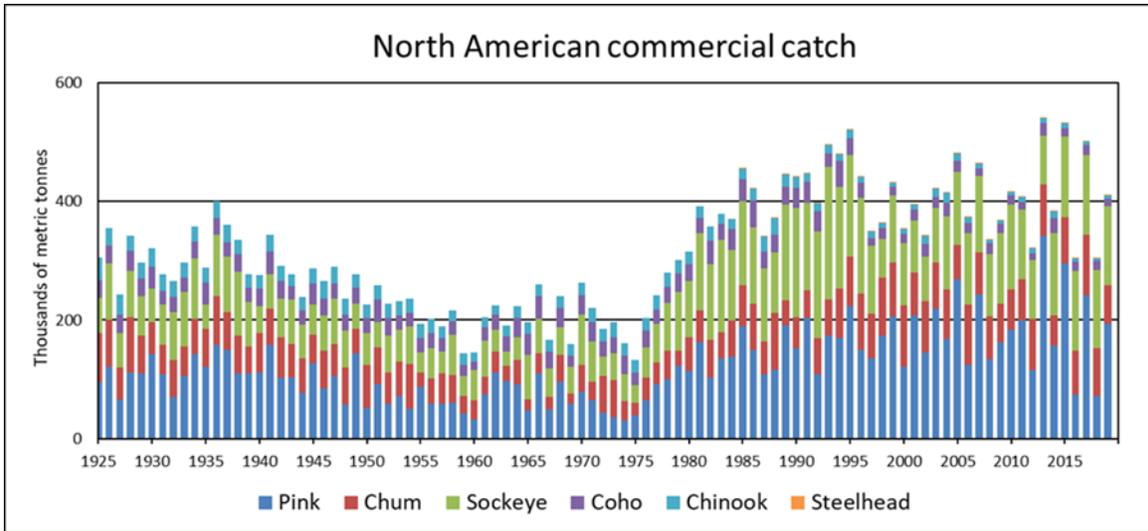


Figure 3. North American commercial catch (thousands of metric tonnes) of Pacific salmon by species from 1925 to 2019 (2019 catches are preliminary).

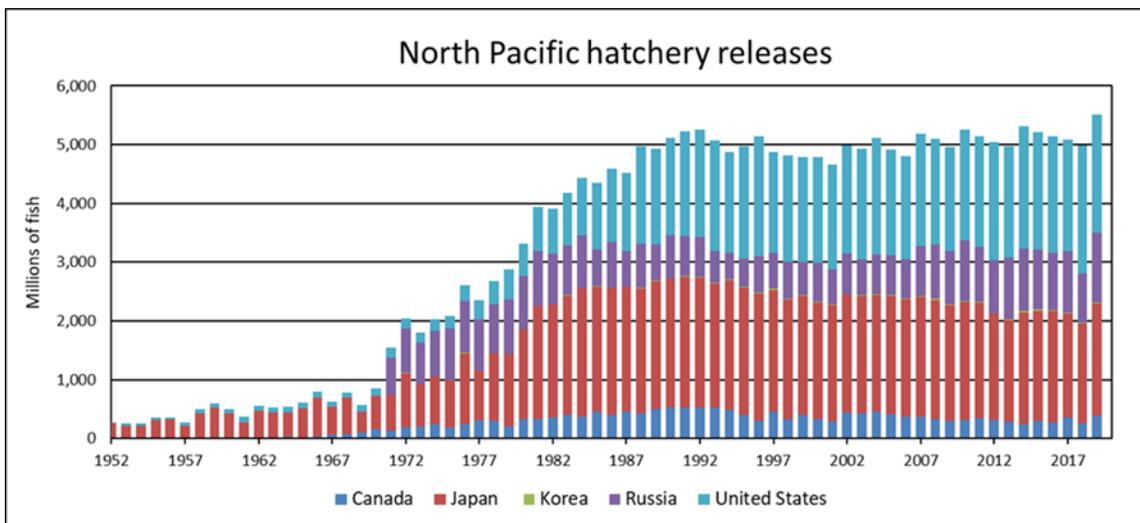


Figure 4. Annual North Pacific hatchery releases (millions of fish) of Pacific salmon by member countries from 1952 to 2019.

* Canadian estimates include both hatchery releases and spawning channel production.

-END-

Contact: Vladimir Radchenko
 NPAFC Executive Director
 Phone: +1-604-775-5550
 E-mail: secretariat@npafc.org
 Website: <https://npafc.org>

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 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.