
North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission

2020 E-mail Annual Meeting
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE SALMON (IYS) CONTINUES AFTER SUCCESSFUL FOCAL YEAR

Vancouver, BC, Canada (June 11, 2020)—Continued support for the IYS Initiative by the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) was unanimously agreed upon by all five member countries (Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the United States) at the 28th NPAFC Annual Meeting. Implementing 2019 as the IYS focal year was a resounding success during which the IYS developed as a brand and grew in its outreach and communication capabilities. Throughout the focal year, the IYS website experienced a significant amount of activity, which included the registering of various projects and events as well as increased use of social media platforms. Many partnerships were formed, maintained, and strengthened during this time, with considerable progress being made on IYS Signature Projects, particularly the High Seas Expeditions.

In October 2019, the NPAFC hosted a joint workshop with the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES) to review preliminary findings of the 2019 International Gulf of Alaska Expedition. The 2019 Expedition was the first in decades to conduct a thorough salmon winter ecology survey in the Gulf of Alaska, and the first to employ international scientific collaboration between all five Pacific salmon producing countries on a research vessel. It was also the first time that genetic stock ID had been performed on-board a ship. The PICES workshop was followed by the official announcement of a second Gulf of Alaska Expedition in March 2020, organized by Dr. Dick Beamish (Fisheries and Oceans Canada Emeritus) and Dr. Brian Riddell (Pacific Salmon Foundation). The Pacific Salmon Foundation and the British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BC SRIF) contributed to the 2020 expedition, along with donors from the fishing industry, foundations, and private individuals. This expedition employed a team of 12 scientists from Canada, the Russian Federation and the United States and is a continuation of the international scientific effort to identify mechanisms and environmental factors that could determine the annual abundance and condition of Pacific salmonids in the Gulf of Alaska.



Photo of the Russian research vessel Professor Kaganovskiy, which was used for the 2019 International Gulf of Alaska Expedition, docked in Vancouver BC while it prepares for a month at sea in the Gulf of Alaska.

Currently, the third salmon winter ecology survey is being planned and will be the biggest IYS survey to date. A Preliminary Cruise Plan was developed and approved during the IYS Working Group meeting and published as NPAFC Doc. 1922 (Rev 1). The IYS Pan-Pacific High Seas Expedition 2021, funded through BC SRIF and contributions from the five NPAFC member countries, among other donors, will employ multiple research vessels operating simultaneously to survey the full breadth of the North Pacific Ocean (NPO) in winter 2021. These vessels will carry leading scientists from Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the United States, who are committed to answering questions about the mechanisms affecting the abundance, distribution, migration, growth and fitness of Pacific salmon and associated species. The 2021 Expedition will provide a platform for collaboration across the five NPAFC member countries and IYS partners to conduct integrated ecosystem research that will support the sustainable management of salmon in a rapidly changing NPO.

The IYS continues to pursue other Signature Projects. With support gathered during the focal year, time and resources can now be directed into projects such as Data Mobilization, which seeks to generate open access data with an international standard that can be easily and rapidly accessed. The IYS has been making significant progress on Data Mobilization through our partnership with the Hakai Institute and the Tula Foundation. The Likely Suspects Framework, which aims to identify bottlenecks of salmon mortality using a holistic approach across all life stages, has also been moving forward with our Atlantic partners such as The Missing Salmon Alliance. The IYS plans to host a workshop in the fall of 2020 (COVID-19 permitting) to further develop the Likely Suspects Framework. This workshop, “Salmonscape,” will be funded by the Pacific Salmon Commission. The IYS Working Group also recommended the formation of a Data Standardization Study Group for the data generated from the High Seas Expeditions (2019, 2020 and 2021).

Thus far, the IYS has been successful in achieving its overarching goal to *build resilience of salmon and people in a changing world*. The High Seas Expeditions have been especially rewarding in strengthening international collaboration and increasing outreach and communications capacity. Moving forward from the focal year, it will be essential that the IYS strengthens and maintains these partnerships for years to come, and continues to increase its scope for raising awareness about the state of Pacific salmon and the work that is being done to protect them and promote sustainable populations.

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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.
