
North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission



INTERNATIONAL
YEAR OF THE SALMON

International Year of the Salmon North Pacific Opening Event
Vancouver, Canada
2018 October 11

EMBARGOED UNTIL 12 PM OCTOBER 11

NPAFC ANNOUNCES THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE SALMON (IYS) THAT WILL INCLUDE A RETURN TO THE HIGH SEAS

Vancouver, Canada (October 11, 2018)—The North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) officially launched the International Year of the Salmon (IYS) in the North Pacific on October 11, 2018. The ambitious five-year initiative will include a high seas expedition to the central Gulf of Alaska in the winter of 2019, which will be the focal year for IYS outreach and research across the northern hemisphere.

The Opening Event—hosted by the NPAFC and the Pacific Salmon Foundation—was held at Jack Poole Plaza in downtown Vancouver, overlooking Burrard Inlet. An audience of media and over 100 leaders in salmon conservation from government, Indigenous groups, NGOs, academia, and industry from around the Pacific Rim and the Atlantic basin were introduced to the IYS. After a traditional First Nations welcome from Chief Wayne Sparrow of Musqueam Indian Band on behalf of the local Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, Dr. Brian Riddell from the Pacific Salmon Foundation and Mr. Mark Saunders from the NPAFC reflected on the challenges faced by salmon and described the IYS initiative as an innovative part of the solution.

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, officially announced the IYS in the North Pacific. This was followed by speeches from British Columbia Premier John Horgan, Chief Bob Chamberlin and dignitaries from NPAFC member countries Japan, the Republic of Korea and the United States.

The IYS is an initiative of the NPAFC and its North Atlantic partner, the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) to establish a new hemispheric-scale partnership of government, Indigenous Peoples, academia, NGOs, and industry to effectively connect the hundreds of organizations that have capacity and desire to address the scientific and social challenges facing salmon and people in an increasingly uncertain environment.

The partnership will engage in a call to action for an intense burst of outreach and research through 2022 that will fill knowledge gaps, develop tools to equip and train a new generation of scientists and managers and raise awareness among decision-makers which in combination will achieve the conditions necessary for the future *resilience of salmon and people in a rapidly changing world*.

Some IYS Signature Projects that will begin to address gaps in our understanding of salmon and provide tools to improve forecasting and management of salmon include: a winter expedition in the Gulf of Alaska in March 2019 to address gaps in knowledge of salmon in the open ocean, a “Likely Suspects” program to identify key factors affecting the survival of salmon from freshwater to the high seas and back, the application of new technologies—such as telemetry, genomics, and microchemistry—to unlock the mysteries of salmon migration and survival, high-tech solutions to efficiently bring salmon communities together, and the design of modern management systems that include indigenous peoples.

The High Seas Expedition will take place in late February through late March 2019 in the Gulf of Alaska aboard the 62m Russian Research Vessel “Professor Kaganovsky”, with scientists participating from all five NPAFC countries. The end-of-winter trawl survey in the Gulf of Alaska will, for the first time, provide a comprehensive understanding of the abundance, condition, country of origin and location of stocks from salmon producing countries. This information is needed to understand how climate and the changing ocean environment affect salmon production. The \$CAN1.2M project has been jointly funded by a combination of government, industry, NGO and private contributions.

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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. NPAFC member countries include Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America.