



INTERNATIONAL
YEAR OF THE SALMON

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE SALMON KICKED OFF IN THE AMUR BASIN

WWF Russia has joined the International Year for the Salmon initiated for the first time by the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) and the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO).

A very important role of salmon species for humans, their huge habitat and long migrations complicate the salmon research and protection thus demanding joint conservation efforts of governments, grassroots, and science.

Right away, WWF Russia is running several projects on salmon conservation on the Kola Peninsula, in Kamchatka, and in the Amur ecoregion.

“For local people living near the spawning rivers the salmon is traditionally the source of food and income. Therefore, by protecting salmon we conserve forests, water, lots of animals that prey on this fish, we protect local communities and regional economy,” notes Olga Cheblukova, coordinator of the International Year for the Salmon in the Amur River basin, coordinator of PAs projects at WWF Russia Amur branch.

While other countries of the Northern hemisphere restore the depleted salmon populations, in Russia the wild salmon is still a commercial catch. The Amur is the main river of the region and the richest with salmon in Eurasia. It boasts three Pacific salmon – chum, humpback and masu salmon – to spawn in its waters.

Wild salmon of the Amur River basin face overfishing and poaching, logging along the river banks, placer gold mining and other minerals extraction.

A new threat for the valuable fish species comes from a federal decree which once adopted by the Government will ten times reduce the area of spawn protective forest zones. WWF Russia has appealed to Vladimir Putin and Valentina Matvienko asking for a veto for this decree as it threatens the future of 50 million hectares of forests and valuable fish species.

Another problem to be highlighted is that nowadays, the fishing research institutions forecast the salmon number based on the catch volumes without considering the data on the filling of spawning grounds. The information of the empty spawning sites was confirmed by an independent research done in Khabarovsk Province in the fall of 2018.

To support action in salmon conservation WWF Russia Amur branch has kicked off a public awareness campaign Freedom for Salmon. The Coordination Council of Directors of Nature Reserves and National Parks of the Southern Primorye as well as the Amurskaya Coalition of NGOs have teamed up with WWF to protect wild salmon.

The Year for the Salmon started with a broad variety of events in all five Far Eastern provinces of the Amur ecoregion like a Sino-Russian creativity contest among kids, an interregional contest of guidance papers among secondary schools teachers. Participants of the events were about 1500 people. The media has more than 50 publications, reports on television.

Then it will be, celebration of the Day of the Salmon in May in cities and towns of Amur ecoregion, summer camps, environmental field shifts and expeditions, salmon marathon in September-October. Also, the public monitoring of spawning grounds will proceed, which make indigenous peoples.

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