



Press Release



2020 GULF OF ALASKA EXPEDITION: RETURN OF THE PACIFIC LEGACY

The International Year of the Salmon (IYS) and Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF) are happy to announce the successful completion of the second Gulf of Alaska Expedition with the safe arrival of Canadian charter vessel *Pacific Legacy* and their international team of scientists to Victoria Harbour on April 7th 2020. Scientists on the vessel were studying the factors that regulate the abundance of salmon during the ocean residence and determining if these surveys can provide an early measure to the number of salmon that will return to North American rivers.

This expedition follows the first international expedition last year aboard the Russian research vessel the R/V *Professor Kaganovskiy* that carried out similar studies in the Gulf of Alaska. In this second expedition, there were 51 stations spaced out over the southern Gulf of Alaska, each about 8 hours apart. At each station there were extensive oceanographic measurements and a trawl net fished at the surface for one hour. Numerous samples were collected from all salmon including a tissue sample for DNA analysis which will identify the exact spawning location.

The *Pacific Legacy* set sail with 12 scientists from Canada, Russia, and the United States on March 11th, 2020. Due to the ongoing situation regarding the pandemic, scientists from the United States disembarked the ship during a routine stop in Prince Rupert as a precaution against the possibility of borders being closed between the neighboring countries. Upon arrival, scientists from Russia were unable to return home right away due to the pandemic, and are currently working on the cruise report at their colleague's home in Nanaimo, B.C. Despite the changing landscape, scientists continue to take this unique opportunity to finally get back to studying the factors that are regulating salmon abundance as they work on their research and findings from the expedition.

Data collected from both expeditions are being made available to all interested researchers and a conference will be held when possible to bring researchers from both expeditions together to finalize interpretations and publish the findings. Although we were unable to hold a media event to welcome the *Pacific Legacy* home, we are considering a virtual briefing to provide more information to the media next month.

This second expedition is part of the International Year of the Salmon and is supported by the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission and the Pacific Salmon Foundation. The expedition was privately funded by the organizations whose logos are attached and organized by Dick Beamish, Brian Riddell and the participants.

About International Year of the Salmon

International Year of the Salmon (IYS) is a 5-year initiative to establish the resilience of salmon and people in a changing world. It is a hemispheric partnership being led by the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) in the North Pacific, the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) in the North Atlantic, as well as by NGOs, private sector, government and academic organizations.

About Pacific Salmon Foundation

The Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF) is a federally incorporated non-profit charitable organization dedicated to the conservation and restoration of wild Pacific salmon and their natural habitats in British Columbia and the Yukon. Operating independently from government, The Foundation facilitates dialogue and undertakes positive initiatives in support of Pacific salmon amongst all levels of government including First Nations; as well as industry, communities, individual volunteers and all fishing interests.

Access to the **2020 Gulf of Alaska Expedition web page** can be found here:

<https://yearofthesalmon.org/gulf-of-alaska-expedition2020/>

Credited photos from the 2020 Gulf of Alaska Expedition are available on the IYS Flickr page:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/145318619@N06/albums/72157713890289512>

For more information regarding the 2020 Gulf of Alaska Expedition, please contact Dr. Richard Beamish (rabeamish@shaw.ca) or Dr. Brian Riddell (briddell@PSF.CA). For more information regarding the virtual briefing please contact IYS Director Mark Saunders (msaunders@yearofthesalmon.org).

Quotes:

“There is one thing that is crystal clear - that is that both of these expeditions provide ample evidence that we need to understand the bigger picture of what regulates salmon abundance... That bigger picture is the time that they are spending in the ocean outside of the coastal area and we really know very little about it... These kinds of expeditions are difficult to mount because they are expensive and require about four weeks on the water”

Richard Beamish as quoted by Carla Wilson in “*Ship returns after international team spends month at sea studying salmon*”, Times Colonist, published 04/08/2020

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