



Press Release



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE SALMON TO ANNOUNCE SCHEDULING OF PAN-PACIFIC WINTER HIGH SEAS EXPEDITION

The International Year of the Salmon (IYS) and North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) are rescheduling the Pan-Pacific Winter High Seas Expedition to 2022. While originally planned to take place in 2021, the unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in re-scheduling the expedition to late winter 2022. The 2022 Expedition will build on research from the 2019 and 2020 International Gulf of Alaska Expeditions, which have helped advance our understanding of the winter ecology of Pacific salmon in the North Pacific Ocean (NPO). The 2022 Expedition is a comprehensive ecosystem survey which aims to investigate how increasingly extreme climate variability and associated changes in the physical environment of the NPO influence abundance, distribution, migration, growth, fitness, and survival of Pacific salmon and surrounding species.

In an effort to advance our understanding of the mechanisms that regulate salmon distribution, productivity, and survival in coastal and high seas environments, as many as four vessels will go to sea in late winter 2022 to conduct the first ever pan-Pacific, epipelagic ecosystem survey. The principal objective is to demonstrate the value of an international pan-Pacific winter ecosystem survey to inform how increasingly extreme and volatile climate conditions in the NPO might influence the survival of Pacific salmon and associated species. Recent research has indicated that increasingly poor and variable marine survival has contributed to declines in many salmon populations in the North Pacific and North Atlantic oceans since the mid 1990s. This effort aims to improve our understanding of these mechanisms and better inform management decisions.

The IYS is working with the five NPAFC member countries Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and the United States, as well as with academic and government partners and NGOs to plan the expedition. We presently have notional indications still subject to formal approvals that Canada, the Russian Federation, and the United States will each make one research vessel available to cover one of the five survey zones in the North Pacific Ocean. Canada will be sending out its newly commissioned 63m fisheries research vessel the *CCGS Sir John Franklin*. The remaining two zones will be covered by a chartered research vessel.

NEW FUNDING ANNOUNCED FOR THE 2022 IYS PAN-PACIFIC WINTER HIGH SEAS EXPEDITION

The IYS and NPAFC are pleased to announce that the North Pacific Research Board (NPRB) has recently committed to a contribution of USD\$350K to help fund the 2022 Pan-Pacific Winter High Seas Expedition. At present, we also have CAD\$300K in funding committed by Fisheries and Oceans Canada as a part of their British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund. Approximately CAD\$2M is still required for a charter vessel to ensure comprehensive coverage of two zones in the Central North Pacific. The IYS continues to seek funding from interested parties and organizations.

About International Year of the Salmon

The IYS is a five-year initiative (2018-2022) to establish conditions for the resilience of salmon and people in a changing world. It is a hemispheric partnership led by the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission in the North Pacific, the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization in the North Atlantic, as well as by NGOs, private sector, government, and academic organizations.

About the North Pacific Research Board

The NPRB is committed supporting efforts to facilitate and fund research to increase understanding of North Pacific marine ecosystems and to inform the sustainable use and management of fisheries and other marine resources. As part of its mission and long-term vision, NPRB aims to be an influential force in furthering collaborative marine research, fostering cooperation and partnerships with other entities in the region, and working toward common goals in ensuring the health and sustainability of North Pacific marine ecosystems.

Information about the IYS International High Seas Expeditions can be found here:

IYS High Seas Expeditions:

<https://yearofthesalmon.org/high-seas-expeditions/>

2019 International Gulf of Alaska Expedition:

<https://yearofthesalmon.org/gulf-of-alaska-expedition-2/>

2020 Gulf of Alaska Expedition:

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

Quote:

“The NPAFC is very excited to be partnered with the North Pacific Research Board in this important work for salmon and Pacific Rim countries. In addition to the funding, the NPRB brings extensive expertise in supporting ocean science, designing and implementing ecosystem research programs, and facilitating the publication of results and dissemination of data. This expertise and financial support will contribute, not only to the expedition in 2022, but also to an ongoing legacy of effective collaborations and partnerships in NPO research.”

Dr. Suam Kim – NPAFC President