

IYS Implementation Progress in 2018 and its Focal Year of 2019

By Mark Saunders, IYS Director
North Pacific Region

Happy International Year of the Salmon! It seems a little surreal that we are actually here at the focal year of the IYS. It has been just over six years since Dr. Dick Beamish submitted his 2012 NPAFC document proposing an International Year of the Salmon to gain support for field and analytical research related to understanding the mechanisms affecting productivity in the high seas and the limitations in our ability to forecast and effectively manage Pacific salmon. After hundreds of hours of meetings within the NPAFC and with our partners, we have succeeded in defining and launching a five-year IYS initiative that remarkably will begin with a survey of the Gulf of Alaska in February of 2019 and will culminate in 2022.

I would like to share some of the IYS highlights from 2018 and consider what is ahead in 2019. Before I go any further, however, I have to acknowledge the commitment and creativity of the IYS team, including our leadership and Secretariat Staff. I want to particularly acknowledge the contribution of Madeline Young, who helped shape the IYS over the past two years, and I wish her well in her new position with DFO's salmon management team.

The IYS Working Group and the North Pacific Steering Committee have provided excellent direction and support. I have worked particularly closely with Doug Mecum, Carmel Lowe, Vladimir Radchenko, and Suam Kim who have provided strong executive direction that enabled us to negotiate the challenges we faced throughout the year. Dr. Shigehiko Urawa has been tireless in supporting the IYS and its link to the NPAFC Science plan. All the Secretariat staff have embraced the challenge of the IYS and have



Former IYS Coordinator, Madeline Young. Photo credit: NPAFC Secretariat



Mark Saunders currently works for the NPAFC Secretariat as the Director for the North Pacific Region of the International Year of the Salmon (IYS) initiative. In 2016 he retired from the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans

(DFO) where he headed up a Salmon, Aquaculture and Freshwater Ecology Division at the Pacific Biological Station in Nanaimo, BC, with staff working on salmon stock assessment, freshwater habitat, molecular genetics, fish health, and marine ecology. Mark has been active at NPAFC since 2009, serving as CSRS Chairperson from 2011–2014, and he is currently the Chairperson of the International Year of the Salmon (IYS) Working Group.

helped immeasurably. I would like to single out Jennifer Chang for her skill and dedication in administering the IYS.

Vision While not splashy, one of the key achievements was the development of a strategic implementation plan laying out the logic of the IYS. The NPAFC US Commissioner, Joe Mentor Jr. hosted a productive session in Seattle to set this in motion. The IYS Vision “to ensure salmon and people are resilient in a rapidly changing world” is to be achieved over five years through a series of workshops/symposia and high-impact projects focused on five research outcomes and one outreach outcome that will set the conditions for resilience. This approach is proving to be compelling in discussions with potential partners within government, NGO’s or the private sector.

Opening Events The opening event in Vancouver was one of the most rewarding and nerve-racking events that I have been part of. In partnership with the Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF), we went quite a way out of the box when hosting a media event in Vancouver in October. Madeline Young, our new Coordinator Stephanie Taylor, and Jennifer Chang worked as a team with experts from the PSF, DFO, and contracted companies to pull off an

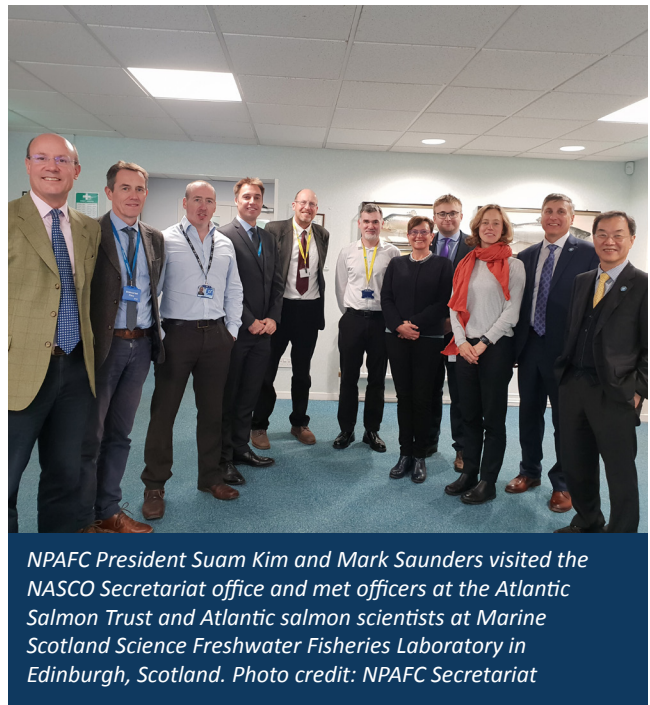
extraordinary event that has sparked considerable interest in the Pacific across all sectors. Speakers included the Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, British Columbia Premier John Horgan, Chief Bob Chamberlain and representatives from Korea, Japan, and the United States consulates, respectively.

President Suam Kim was an excellent ambassador for NPAFC and the IYS, attending the opening event in Vancouver, the Russian opening of the IYS that was held as part of the Second Global Fishery Forum in St. Petersburg on September 15th, and the opening event in Scotland on October 26th. I had the pleasure of attending the event in Scotland with Dr. Kim and we were ably hosted by Dr. Emma Hatfield, the NASCO Executive Secretary, NASCO President Jóhannes Hansen, and NASCO Deputy Secretary Sarah Robinson. We had a remarkable tour of salmon restoration sites in the Scottish Highlands as well as excellent meetings with the Scottish Minister and federal Science staff at the Marine Fisheries—Freshwater Fish Laboratory, in Pitlochry Scotland. I should no longer be surprised but I was struck by the similar science and policy issues that are being dealt with by each agency we encounter. It was excellent to see the NASCO office in Edinburgh. We also met with Board members of the Atlantic Salmon Trust and had some very fruitful discussion of potential research collaboration with the United Kingdom and NGO's more broadly.

The Republic of Korea's IYS announcement was made on October 20, 2018, during the Yangyang Salmon Festival in Yanagyang, Gangwon Province, the Republic of Korea. In the lead-up to the openings, Dr. Vladimir Radchenko and Dr. Emma Hatfield introduced the IYS to the Regional Fishery Body Secretariats' Network (RSN) held during the FAO's COFI meeting in August in Rome.



The IYS opening event took place on October 11, 2018 in Vancouver, BC, Canada. Photo credit: Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF)



NPAFC President Suam Kim and Mark Saunders visited the NASCO Secretariat office and met officers at the Atlantic Salmon Trust and Atlantic salmon scientists at Marine Scotland Science Freshwater Fisheries Laboratory in Edinburgh, Scotland. Photo credit: NPAFC Secretariat



The IYS opening event took place on October 11, 2018 in Vancouver, BC, Canada. Photo credit: Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF)

Workshops/Symposia

Not surprisingly, this was a very busy year as we held workshops and symposia to develop priorities and plans for high-impact projects to address IYS outcomes, as well as further our understanding associated with these outcomes. In addition, IYS posters were presented at numerous conferences/meetings to raise awareness of the IYS. Some of the workshops included:

- IYS Local Symposium on *Sustainable Management of Chum Salmon in Changing Environments*, Tokyo, Japan (March 2018)
- The First NPAFC-IYS Workshop on *Pacific Salmon Production in a Changing Climate* was held in Khabarovsk, Russia (May 2018) and it was very successful with 60 participants in attendance.
- *Toward Effective Coupling of the Science of a Changing Climate with Salmon and People*, Santa Barbara, USA (June 2018). This scoping workshop was co-convened with our partner, the National Center for Ecosystem Analysis and Synthesis (NCEAS) and brought together salmon ecologists and climatologists from both the Atlantic and the Pacific basins.
- IYS Special Session at the 2018 Long-Term Marine Ecosystem Research International Symposium, Busan, Republic of Korea (December 2018). Dr. Radchenko and I were invited to attend this

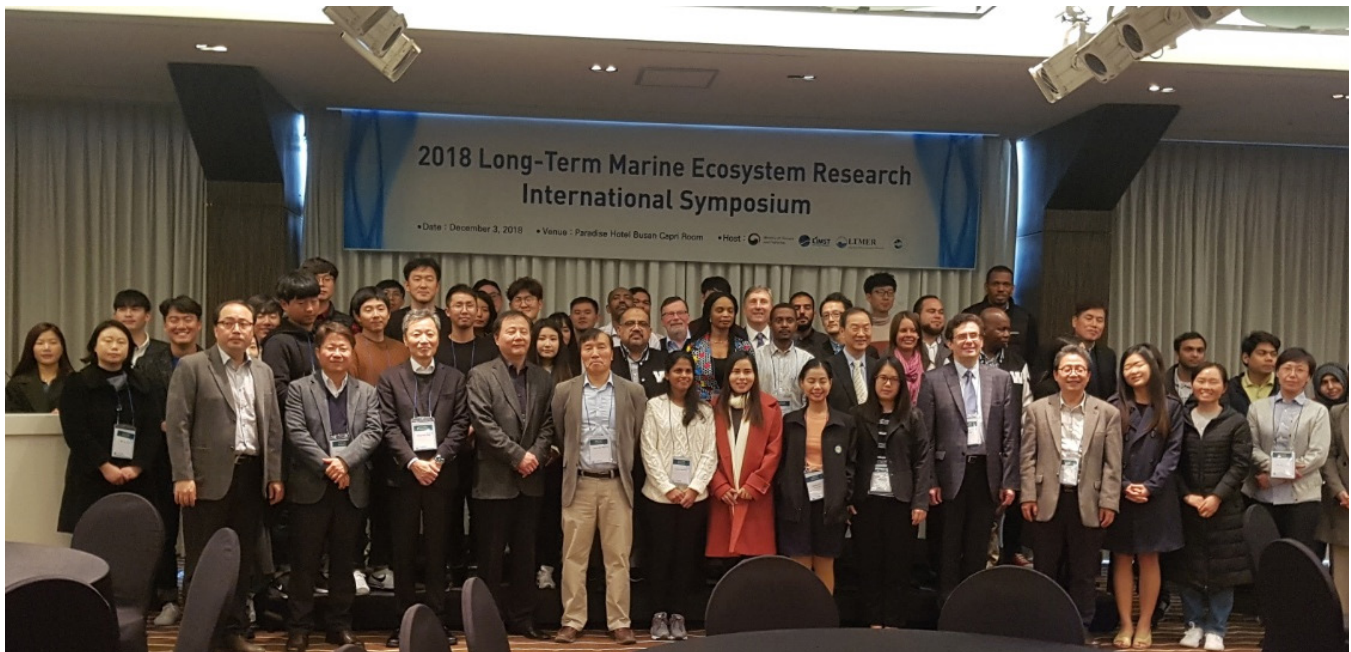
symposium. After we introduced the IYS and NPAFC high seas research, we held very productive meetings with Korean academic professors and students that may lead to collaborative ecosystem research with Korea as part of the IYS.

IYS Meetings

In 2018 we had over 80 meetings with partners or potential partners. Partnerships crossing cultures and great distances unquestionably take time to develop. Our relationship with NASCO and Atlantic partners grew very positively in 2018, particularly after face-to-face meetings of the two Presidents and our IYS Coordinating Committee and its technical team.

Website and Social Media Presence

As a latecomer to the world of social media, I have greatly appreciated the know-how and enthusiasm that our young staff bring to establishing our IYS net presence. Without their savvy, we will fail in reaching the public. Madeline did a fantastic job of leading our website development with the website developer MyLoudSpeaker and our collaboration with NASCO. Our Facebook page is customized for the North Pacific and our Twitter feed is used to push people to our website. I encourage you to have a look at the site and make sure your projects and activities are posted. I am constantly impressed by the articles that we are able to post. It will be interesting to hear how useful the sites are to members from non-English speaking countries.



Participants at the IYS Special Session of the 2018 Long-Term Marine Ecosystem Research International Symposium, Busan, Republic of Korea. Photo credit: Gwangju Institute of Science and Technology

The IYS Focal Year—2019

The New Year truly brings a turning of the page for the IYS as we move headlong from planning into implementation. It seemed until the opening event in October that there was a chance the IYS would not occur. But here we are. It is happening!!

The last two weeks of January are jam-packed with meetings of our Working Group & North Pacific Steering Committee in Vancouver, BC. After those two meetings are 3 days of workshops on IYS Salmon Status and Trends and International Salmon Data Laboratory (ISDL). The goal of these foundational planning workshops is to review the data requirements for understanding status and trends of salmon in both the Pacific and Atlantic basins, and to consider projects to address issues of data availability in relation to effectively reporting the status of salmon and assessing the factors that are driving trends.

It is particularly exciting that on February 14th/15th the Russian Research Vessel *Professor Kaganovsky* will arrive in Vancouver BC to load and depart for the Gulf of Alaska, to conduct what we expect to be ground-breaking research into the mechanisms driving salmon productivity in the Northeast Pacific Ocean. Scientists from all five countries will participate in this expedition that has been funded by a group of private individuals, corporate organizations, NGOs and government funders.

The NPAFC will hold its annual meeting in Portland, OR, USA and will host its Second NPAFC-IYS Workshop on *Salmon Ocean Ecology in a Changing Climate* on May 18–20, 2019. Convened jointly with the Salmon



Russian Research Vessel “Professor Kaganovsky”. Photo credit: TINRO-Center, Vladivostok, Russia

Ocean Ecology Meeting it will provide an opportunity for researchers to present studies and findings on all five IYS research themes, but there will be emphasis on three topics—the current status of salmon and their environments, salmon in a changing ocean conditions, and new technologies/integrated information systems for salmon research and management. Portland is a vibrant community that strongly identifies with salmon and we look forward to celebrating the focal year of the IYS with this lively city.

Later in the year, we will convene planning workshops related to the IYS outcomes, in particular, identifying projects related to new technologies such as eDNA and microchemistry, as well as the Human Dimension. We also look forward to having Pacific representatives attend symposia and workshops planned in the Atlantic. NASCO’s annual meeting is being held in Tromso, Norway in June with a special symposium on *the Management of Atlantic Salmon in a Changing Climate*. Again, please visit the website <https://yearofthesalmon.org> to see all of the activities from festivals to symposia planned across the salmosphere.

I feel particularly privileged in having the opportunity to meet with peoples across the hemisphere these past several years to promote and develop the IYS. Across all the countries that I have visited and the interests that I have met with, I am convinced that the timing of the IYS as it has been developed could not be better. In the years since Dick Beamish initially proposed the IYS, the need for collaboration has only grown, as the uncertainty in our socio-ecological systems has grown dramatically as well. We have a significant challenge and an even bigger opportunity in front of us to use the “call to action” that was envisioned in the 2016 proposal. Together, we will capitalize on the positive responses that we have received through the opening events to secure resources, either private or public, and continue our work implementing the IYS.