

Observer Paper submitted by the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC)

Progress on the Five-year Work Plan to implement NPAFC/NPFC Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC), endorsed by NPFC and NPAFC in 2023

Abstract:

This document presents the progress on the Five-year Work Plan to implement NPAFC/NPFC Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC), endorsed by NPFC and NPAFC in 2023

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference for the NPAFC/NPFC Data Sharing Platform

Appendix 2: Concept paper on Joint Workshop on “Interactions between fisheries and anadromous fish in the North Pacific high seas” to be held by the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) and the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC)

Progress on the Five-year Work Plan to implement NPAFC/NPFC Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) (endorsed by NPFC and NPAFC in 2023)

March, 2025
NPAFC Secretariat

Exchange of data and information in accordance with the information-sharing and data confidentiality policies of each Commission;

- Create a SharePoint inter-commission communication system to share news, reports, guideline documents, and other information relevant to the management of the mutual area of interest in an easily accessible form.

Timeline	Deliverables	Milestones (as of May 2023)	Progress (as of March 2025)
August 2023– June 2024	NPAFC/NPFC SharePoint Terms of Reference to describe structure, capabilities, access rights, and control issues	Terms of Reference (ToR) agreed by both commissions – September 15, 2023	In August 2024, NPAFC/NPFC Secretariats met and discussed the modality of the SharePoint service and realized that necessary data and information have been exchanged taking appropriate confidentiality measures by each Secretariat even without the Sharepoint service. The Secretariats also recognized that confidential data like bycatch and transshipment data of anadromous species would not be available as the newly endorsed NPFC CMM related to anadromous species prohibits retention of anadromous fish. In December 2024, the NPAFC Secretariat presented a draft Terms of Reference of the NPAFC/NPFC data sharing platform, as appended as Appendix 1, to NPFC Secretariat.
	NPAFC/NPFC SharePoint service in a test mode	Test mode – December 31, 2023	
	NPAFC/NPFC SharePoint service in full operational mode	Full operational mode – June 30, 2024	

- Establish a mechanism of general information exchange (e.g., MCS activity information, fleet activity information, map of catch and fishing efforts).

Timeline	Deliverables	Milestones (as of May 2023)	Progress (as of March 2025)
August 2022– December 2023	NPAFC/NPFC communication and information exchange plan	A plan agreed by the commissions – First half of 2023	The NPAFC/NPFC Secretariats exchange relevant information by e-mail as necessary.
	Regular mutual email conferences to exchange MCS and enforcement activities information	Summer–autumn of 2023	Potential contents for the regular mutual email conferences have not been identified.
2022–2025	NPFC historical footprint (catch and fishing efforts) of the fisheries	Pacific saury, Japanese sardine, chub and blue mackerels, Japanese flying squid, neon flying squid, North Pacific armorhead, splendid alfonso – available on the NPFC website	Completed/Ongoing (as written on the left column)
	Annual data reporting/sharing of Pacific salmon as by-catch by NPFC fishing vessels (voluntary)		No data of Pacific salmon bycatch and transshipment has been reported in the NPFC so far. Data of released bycatch Pacific salmon might be reported in the NPFC in future and it has been recognized that this data should be included in the NPAFC/NPFC data sharing platform.
	Interactive Mapping System (IMS) for the INPFC/NPAFC High-Seas Salmonid Tag- Recovery Database	IMS in a test mode with limited access – May 2023. IMS in full operational mode – May 2024	Completed/Ongoing (The IMS is in full operation since June 2024.)

- Establish a practice of sharing information on suspicious fishing vessels identified in overlapping convention area including stateless vessels and unregistered vessels.

Timeline	Deliverables	Milestones (as of May 2023)	Progress (as of March 2025)
August 2023– June 2024	Vessel of Interest folder which has been treated as confidential at the NPAFC/NPFC Sharepoint	Vessel of Interest folder description is included in the ToR agreed by the commissions – September 15, 2023	In December 2024, the NPAFC List of Vessel of Interest are included as a content of the NPAFC/NPFC SharePoint in its draft Terms of Reference, and will be uploaded to the SharePoint folder after the ToR agreed by the Commissions.
		Vessel of Interest information is included in the folder – June 30, 2024	

Collaboration on research efforts relating to stocks and species of mutual interest, including stock assessments;

- Implement Pan-Pacific research survey plans in winter 2022, organize a comprehensive study of its outcome at the special session of the IYS Synthesis Symposium.

Timeline	Deliverables	Milestones (as of May 2023)	Progress (as of March 2025)
August 2021–February 2022	NPFC suggestions to the NPAFC Pan-Pacific High Seas Research Expedition cruise plans.	NPFC proposal submitted to the NPAFC – November 2021	Completed (as written on the left column)
	NPFC participation in the country leads meetings to coordinate/contribute to the Expedition plans.	NPFC Science Manager / Scientific Committee Chairperson participates in the country leads meetings in August 2021–February 2022	Completed (as written on the left column)
		NPAFC presented a report on the expedition finding after its completion in 2022	Completed (as written on the left, and NPAFC published the report as NPAFC Technical Report Nos. 20 and 22 in 2023.)

- Coordinate research activities identified in the NPFC/PICES and NPAFC/PICES Frameworks for Enhanced Scientific Cooperation in the North Pacific Ocean.

Timeline	Deliverables	Milestones (as of May 2023)	Progress (as of March 2025)
October 2023–May 2025	Coordination of research activities identified in the NPFC/PICES and NPAFC/PICES Frameworks		A multi-year initiative Basin-Scale Events to Coastal Impacts (BECI) has been identified as one of the potential coordinations of research activities among NPFC/NPAFC/PICES. Details will be discussed by the commissions.

Implementation of conservation and management measures for stocks and species of mutual interest;

- Establish a mechanism to share the IUU vessel list of each Commission and its related information.

Timeline	Deliverables	Milestones (as of May 2023)	Progress (as of March 2025)
August 2021–May 2023	Accessible links to the NPAFC and NPFC IUU vessel list on both Commissions’ website	NPAFC is developing the IUU vessel listing process with a study group, and the NPAFC IUU vessel list is expected to be established for the first time – May 2023	NPFC IUU vessel list has been linked on NPAFC website. In May 2023, launching of the NPAFC IUU Vessel List was adopted at its 30th Annual Meeting. Draft NPAFC IUU Vessel List will be discussed at the 32nd NPAFC Annual Meeting in May 2025. Once the NPAFC IUU Vessel List will be adopted, the List will be linked on the NPFC website.

- Expand cooperation to collect and share information relating to species of special interest for each Commission.

Timeline	Deliverables	Milestones (as of May 2023)	Progress (as of March 2025)
August 2021–December 2025	Information exchange on research cruise plans that can collect information on Pacific salmon and NPFC priority species	Lists of scientific cruise plans are exchanged – May 2022 NPAFC/NPFC/PICES Topic Session (or Workshop) on this issue is proposed for October 2023 at the PICES Annual Meeting	NPAFC/NPFC/PICES Topic Session (or Workshop) on the issue has not been held at the PICES Annual Meeting. NPAFC member countries' research cruise plan in 2024 was delivered to NPFC Secretariat in August 2024.
	Mutual scientific documents and publications on Pacific salmon and NPFC priority species distribution, relationships, and potential impact	Mutual scientific documents and publications on Pacific salmon and NPFC priority species are published in 2023–2025	Since 2023, NPAFC has been seeking opportunity to hold NPAFC/NPFC Joint Workshop. A proposal of the joint workshop was proposed at NPFC SC09 as shown in the appendix 2 of this observer paper. The SC09 endorsed the proposal on its scientific aspects. However, after having internal discussion in NPAFC just before this TCC meeting, NPAFC would like to change the schedule to have an NPAFC workshop related to transshipment etc. in May 2026 first (subject to funding approval at NPAFC Annual Meeting in May 2025) and then come back to this joint workshop proposal.

- Develop, publish, and distribute public information about conservation on the high seas and consequences of IUU activity.

Timeline	Deliverables	Milestones (as of May 2023)	Progress (as of March 2025)
2021–2025	News releases and journal articles on the Commissions activities related to high seas resources conservation, MCS, and law enforcement	Secretariats annually exchange information on the relevant publications	Ongoing (as written on the left column)

Appendix 1

(Draft)

Terms of Reference for the NPAFC/NPFC Data Sharing Platform

This is the Terms of Reference for a secure data sharing platform to be established between the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) and the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) to exchange confidential information of mutual interests related to enforcement and scientific activities.

Structure

1. The data sharing platform will be either: (1) a SharePoint site created and hosted through an NPAFC Office 365 subscription, or (2) a secure subdomain of npafc.org hosted on the NPAFC webserver. The platform will have limited access with authentication for authorized users only.

Capabilities

2. The data sharing platform includes the following information and data:
 - (a) NPFC and NPAFC List of IUU Vessels (link to each Secretariat's webpage)
 - (b) NPAFC List of Vessels of Interest
 - (c) Released Pacific salmon by-catch data (voluntary data from NPFC)
 - (d) NPFC historical footprint (catch and fishing efforts) of fisheries (link to NPFC webpage)
 - (e) Interactive Mapping System (IMS) for the INPFC/NPAFC High-seas Salmonid Tag-Recovery Database (link to NPAFC webpage)
 - (f) Information on research cruise plans that can collect information on Pacific salmon and NPFC priority species (if available)
 - (g) Information on enhanced scientific cooperation in the North Pacific Ocean, namely BECI (link to the BECI website) and potential NPAFC/NPFC joint workshops (general information and link to the workshop website, when available)

Access rights

3. Access to the data sharing platform is restricted to the users who are authorized by either NPAFC or NPFC Secretariats.
4. The authorized user may enter the data sharing platform using individually allocated user or organizational IDs and passwords.
5. The information in the data sharing platform shall not be open to the public unless written permissions by both NPAFC and NPFC Secretariats are obtained.

Control

6. The data sharing platform is hosted by the NPAFC.

7. Any information/data is uploaded/deleted by the NPAFC Secretariat upon request by the Secretariat which provides/provided the information/data.
8. The cost for hosting the data sharing platform is provided by the NPAFC.
9. Any other issues related to the data sharing platform and, when necessary, updates of these Terms of Reference will be discussed and fixed by the NPAFC and NPFC Secretariats.

(End of draft)

Appendix 2 (Not for discussion) (For reference only)

(Draft) Concept paper on Joint Workshop on
“Interactions between fisheries and anadromous fish in the North Pacific high seas”
to be held by the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC)
and the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC)

1. Background

The North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission was established in 1992 under the Convention for the Conservation of Anadromous Stocks in the North Pacific Ocean to promote the conservation of anadromous stocks (Pacific salmon and steelhead trout) in the Convention Area. This area includes the waters of the North Pacific Ocean and its adjacent seas, north of 33 degrees North Latitude beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured. In the Convention Area, direct fishing for anadromous fish is prohibited, incidental taking of anadromous fish shall be minimized to the maximum extent practicable, and the retention of anadromous fish caught incidentally in fisheries targeting non-anadromous fish shall be prohibited.

At the 2023 NPAFC Committee on Enforcement (ENFO), one Party suggested holding a joint workshop(s) with NPFC on transshipment management and Pacific salmon bycatch. The NPAFC Secretariat contacted the NPFC Secretariat to discuss the possibility of co-hosting a workshop on transshipment and the implications of salmon bycatch. Both Secretariats agreed a later workshop would be beneficial but should be scheduled at a later date since the NPFC was in an early phase of the implementation of NPFC Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) 2022-03 on Transshipments.

At the NPFC 8th Commission Meeting (COM08) in April 2024, the NPFC adopted CMM 2024-16 to protect anadromous fish in the NPFC Convention Area, which prohibits directed fishing for anadromous fish, prohibits retention of anadromous fish, encourages parties to minimize or avoid the incidental capture of anadromous fish, requests parties maintain records of incidentally caught and released anadromous fish, and requests annual reporting and sharing of these data.

At the 2024 NPAFC ENFO meeting, while parties were considering the adoption of the NPFC CMM 2024-16, the topic of the joint workshop was modified from “transshipment” to “interactions between fisheries and anadromous fish.” The NPAFC Secretariat contacted the NPFC Secretariat to begin discussions regarding the details of the joint workshop, but it was determined that the details of the joint workshop, including topics, moderators, guest speakers, could not be prepared by neither Secretariats.

Thus, this concept paper, which describes the details of the joint workshop, was prepared by the NPAFC Secretariat asking advices from Co-Chairpersons of the NPAFC ENFO/CSRS Working Group on Inter-committee Coordination (WGIC), to be presented at the NPFC Scientific Committee, Technical and Compliance Committee, and Commission Meeting.

2. Objectives

The Joint Workshop on “Interactions between fisheries and anadromous fish in the North Pacific high seas” aims to do the following:

- For NPAFC and its member countries—facilitate sophisticated enforcement activities in the NPAFC Convention Area.
- For NPFC and its member countries—facilitate implementation of CMM 2024-16 and protect anadromous fish in the NPFC Convention Area.

3. Potential Workshop Topics

(1) Fishing methods which may catch anadromous fish directly or incidentally.

- Implementation of the NPFC Transshipment measure, training for Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) practitioners in the analysis of transshipment data, and a special focus on the transshipment of bycatch including anadromous species.
- Implementation of the NPFC CMM on anadromous fish.
- Review of fishing methods which may catch anadromous fish directly or incidentally in the ocean but not limited to the high seas area.

(2) Historical direct fishing activities for anadromous fish in the North Pacific high seas

- Review of historical direct fishing activities for anadromous fish in the North Pacific high seas analyzed as a part of the International Year of the Salmon (IYS).

(3) Impact of climate change on migration patterns of anadromous fish in the North Pacific high seas

- Review of areas of potential incidental taking of anadromous fish in fishing activities directed for non-anadromous fish.

(4) Contribution of enforcement activities to scientific research

- Review of physical vessel inspection processes to identify potential opportunities for scientific research sampling etc.

(5) Other issues

4. Potential Time and Place

The Workshop is expected to be held in conjunction with the NPFC Commission Meeting (COM10) in March 2026 in Japan. If not, it will be held in association with the NPFC Commission Meeting (COM11) in March 2027 or with the NPAFC Annual Meeting in 2027 (most likely in May). There may be other options.

5. Format, Duration, Language, and Openness of the Workshop

- The Workshop will be held in hybrid format.
- Duration of the Workshop is one day.
- The Workshop will be held in English with no interpretation service.
- The Workshop will be closed to public because it deals with sensitive information regarding incidental taking of anadromous fish unless otherwise decided by the Science Committee.

6. Organization for the Workshop

(1) Secretariat of the Workshop

The Secretariats of NPAFC and NPFC will cooperatively serve as the Secretariat of the Workshop, although the NPAFC Secretariat will serve as the first point of contact. The NPAFC Secretariat will support the Science Committee's preparation of the announcements for the Workshop, call for papers, and workshop booklet with abstracts.

(2) Local Secretariat

The Local Secretariat will be responsible for securing a venue and logistics for the organization of the event, including preparation of AV equipment for the hybrid format of the Workshop. The Local Secretariat will be the Secretariat of the NPFC when the Workshop will be held in Japan.

(3) Science Committee

The Science Committee of the Workshop is formed with members nominated by NPAFC or NPFC, who will be responsible for the following tasks.

- Nomination of invited keynote speaker(s), if necessary.
- Formulation of contents/program of the Workshop.
- Nomination of the moderator of each session.
- Preparation of announcements for the Workshop, call for papers.
- Selection of papers.
- Preparation of workshop booklet with abstracts.
- Chairing the Workshop.
- Review of extended abstracts.
- Selection of recordings of the presentations which may be open to the public on NPAFC webpage
- Decision on the necessity of, and timeline and possible locations for the second workshop.

7. Speakers

The speakers will be selected among scientists and administrative/enforcement officers from the Parties of the NPAFC and NPFC, as well as any other relevant academies and enforcement agencies.

8. Press

The Workshop will not be announced to the press and the press will not be invited to the Workshop.

The Workshop is announced only on the websites of the NPAFC and the NPFC, and directly to the relevant persons/parties from the Science Committee.

9. Participation Fee

Workshop will be free of charge.

10. Hotel Accommodation for the Participants

No hotel accommodations will be provided to participants, including discounted room rates or blocking of rooms.

11. Publications

Extended abstracts of the presentations, which may be open to the public, will be compiled and published online as an NPAFC Technical Report.

The recordings of the presentations, which may be open to the public, will also be uploaded to the NPAFC webpage.

12. Costs

The cost necessary to hold the Joint Workshop will be equally divided by the Secretariats of NPAFC and NPFC.

The necessary cost may include the following:

- meeting venue of the Workshop
- hybrid format AV equipment
- recording of the meeting
- travel and accommodation costs related to invited keynote speaker(s)
- coffee breaks; once in the morning and once in the afternoon