North Pacific Fisheries Commission

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Submitted by PICES

# Report on Joint NPFC-PICES activities

**Abstract:** The attached paper is provided by PICES – the North Pacific Marine Science Organization. received by the Secretariat on 3 April 2026. The partnership is supported by the *Framework for Enhanced Scientific Collaboration in the North Pacific.*

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**Report on Joint NPFC-PICES activities for the 10th Commission meeting, April 2026**

*Sonia Batten, PICES Executive Secretary*

## Background

The North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES) and the NPFC are both intergovernmental organizations which have several member countries in common and an overlapping geographic scope. PICES is a scientific organization that fosters multi-national, collaborative and trans-disciplinary science to advance the understanding of North Pacific ecosystems, and works with partner organizations to address shared priorities for scientific advancement.

Both organizations endorsed a *Framework for Enhanced Scientific Collaboration in the North Pacific,* firstly in 2019 and then again in 2024 (for 2025-2029) after representatives from both organizations met to review and revise the first Framework. The full document can be found here: MOU-NPFC-2025-2029.pdf

The revised Framework maintains three focus areas as still of priority for joint activities (support for stock assessments for priority species, vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) and the ecosystem approach to fisheries), but also noted that climate change impacts will be considered across all priority areas and incorporated where relevant. Examples of impacts include: Distributional changes of fish stocks, the impact of ocean acidification and factors affecting species life history parameters and productivity. Data sharing and data management were also seen as something to be encouraged.

This report summarizes recent and other upcoming planned joint activities.

### 1. Working Group on Small Pelagic Fish

PICES Working Groups typically run for 3-4 years to address high priority topics via multiple terms of reference. PICES and ICES formed a second joint Working Group on Small Pelagic Fish (WG53) in 2024, to continue the work of its predecessor (WG43) and NPFC has two representatives, Dr. Toshihide Kitakado and Dr. Kazuhiro Oshima, as ex-officio members of the WG. One of this WG's terms of reference is to plan and implement the upcoming SPF-2026 Symposium. 2026 Pelagic Symposium - Scope - PICES PICES is grateful for the financial support that NPFC has provided for this Symposium, which will be held in May 2026 in La Paz, Mexico.

### 2. Working Groups on Seamounts

In 2020 PICES formed a Working Group on the Ecology of Seamounts (WG47) and even though NPFC was not formally represented in the WG, some NPFC scientists were involved in its work including the Chair of the NPFC Scientific Committee at that time (Dr Janelle Curtis) who co-chaired WG 47.

NPFC Scientific Committee members co-convened a hybrid workshop at PICES-2022 with members of WG47 on "*Distributions of pelagic, demersal and benthic species associated with seamounts in the North Pacific Ocean and factors influencing their distributions*". A full report can be found in PICES-Press-2023-Vol31No1.pdf

At PICES-2023 in Seattle, USA, NPFC co-sponsored a topic session, "S14: BIO Topic Session Seamount biodiversity: vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) and species associated with seamounts in the North Pacific Ocean". The WGs' final report is in editing and will be published in 2026.

A follow-on WG was convened at PICES-2025 (WG56) on "*Deep-sea connectivity with focus on seamount ecosystems*". This WG is currently being populated with members and will no doubt reach out to NPFC for collaboration.

### 3. The BECI (Basin-scale Events and Coastal Impacts) project

PICES and the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) were partners in developing the "Basin-scale Events and Coastal Impacts (BECI) project: A North Pacific Ocean Knowledge Network, which will enhance ocean intelligence to support climate informed decision making, particularly for transboundary fishes. BECI is endorsed as a United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development project. At SC-07, NPFC expressed its support for the development and implementation of the BECI project in line with the NPFC-PICES Framework for Enhanced Scientific Collaboration. The BECI Science Director, Kathryn Berry, presented BECI updates at the NPFC SC09 meeting. The project progress was well received, and official project endorsement by NPFC was granted.

At PICES-2025 the BECI team provided demonstrations of the Knowledge Portal (which can be viewed on the project's website Home - Basin Scale Events & Coastal Impacts ) They have also prepared and are circulating the attached outreach document to seek support. The project is awaiting a funding decision (in May) that would allow a proposal for more extensive funding to be prepared, and is actively looking for other funding sources since the pilot phase has reached the end of its support.

### 4. Representation at Annual Meetings

NPFC and PICES routinely participate in each other's annual meetings/scientific committee meetings. The most recent PICES annual meeting, PICES-2025, was held in Yokohama, Japan from November 8 -16 and NPFC members participated in several sessions, including a presentation given by the Executive Secretary Robert Day to PICES Governing Council.

PICES-2026 will be held in Nanaimo from October 24-20th and the website is now open PICES 2026 Annual Meeting - Scope - PICES with the schedule of sessions and workshops and registration information.

# BASIN-SCALE EVENTS & COASTAL IMPACTS PROJECT

*Uniting the North Pacific to better understand the ocean we share*

*We have more ocean knowledge than ever before, yet we are still collectively struggling to fully understand, effectively respond, and strategically adapt to changing environmental conditions and human pressures in the marine environment. The North Pacific Ocean is experiencing more severe and frequent extreme events, such as marine heatwaves, and important commercial and culturally significant fish species continue to decline in health and numbers. Management and conservation of shared resources, such as transboundary fishes, is more challenging than ever.*

## Our Mission

Our mission is to break down knowledge silos that hinder our collective ability to understand and adapt to changing ocean conditions in the North Pacific Ocean and make information more accessible for the people who need it. We will achieve this by developing a centralized information hub to connect, collate, synthesize and distribute ocean information from diverse sources and disciplines across the Pacific Rim. By fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing across jurisdictional boundaries, we work to enhance ocean intelligence at regional and larger scales and support informed decision-making for resilient fisheries and marine conservation.

## Our Focus

Our initial focus is to integrate information on key oceanographic variables and indicators for ecosystem health, as well as ecological and biological information on key transboundary fish species (e.g. Pacific salmon species, tuna species, Pacific saury).

## What We Will Deliver

We are developing the North Pacific Ocean Knowledge Network, a centralized information platform. The platform's seven interactive dashboards will transform how existing North Pacific Ocean information is accessed, organized, synthesized and used:

**Interactive Map** - Visualize environmental conditions, ecosystem status, species distributions, and management areas spatially

**Ocean State**
Access current conditions, track extreme events, and compare to historical patterns across systems

**Fish Dynamics**
Species profiles featuring distribution patterns, climate vulnerability, life history traits, food web roles, and biological information for key transboundary species

**Ecosystem Status**
Compare regional health indicators and track changes across Large Marine Ecosystems

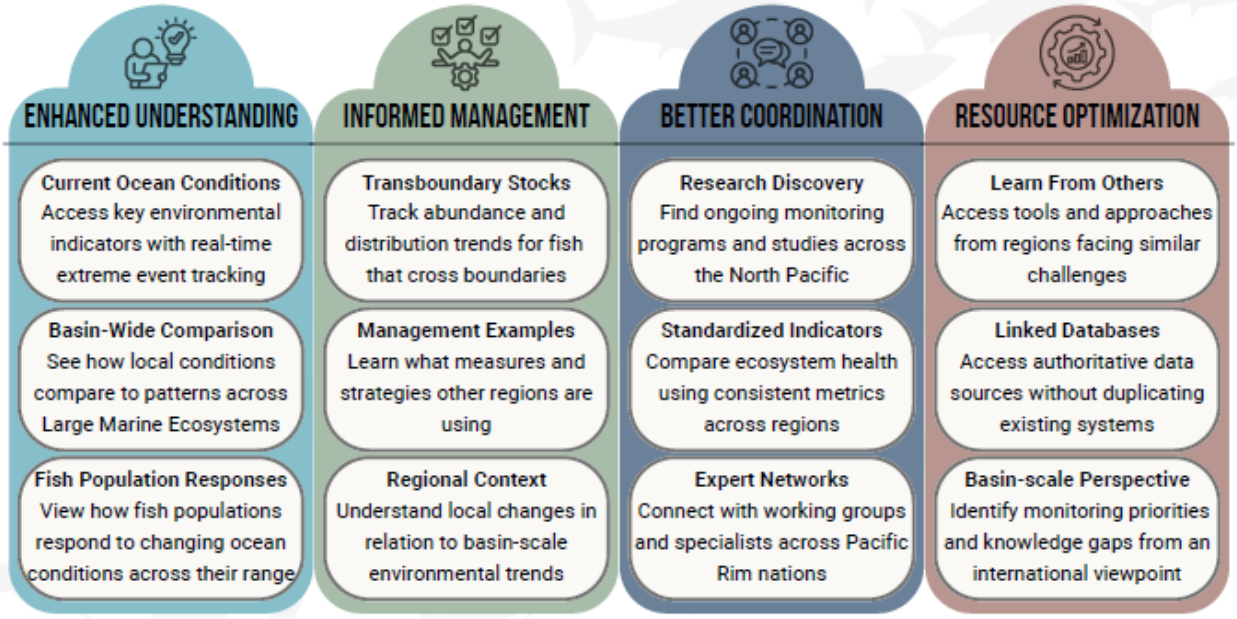
**Knowledge Library**
Find management tools, research findings, ecological models, and data resources in one searchable platform

**Network Community**
Connect with experts, join working groups, and access current research across the North Pacific basin

**Human Dimensions** - *Coming Soon*
Understand community impacts, economic effects, and social responses to environmental change

The platform is designed as a hybrid knowledge system that strategically links to existing databases. It also selectively integrates and synthesizes critical information for comprehensive ecosystem assessments and cross-regional comparisons of key ocean health indicators. We will use emerging AI technologies to enhance content discovery and keep information current.

The North Pacific Ocean Knowledge Network is designed to support decision and policy makers, managers, conservationists, researchers, small- and large-scale ocean industry, and coastal communities. Some examples of the main benefits include:




## Who We Are

The BECI project is endorsed by the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and was co-developed by the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES) and North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC). The project is funded by the British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF).

## Partnership & Investment Opportunities

We are actively seeking additional partners and funders to expand our network's capabilities and reach. Your contribution will strengthen scientific collaboration across the Pacific Rim. It will enable us to transform fragmented ocean information into practical knowledge products to support decision-making.

We have developed a proof-of-concept platform. Email us to schedule a demonstration.

Get involved and stay connected: Contact us at beci@pices.int or visit www.beci.info for project updates.

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