

**REPORT OF THE 14th ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
TO THE CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF
POLLOCK RESOURCES IN THE CENTRAL BERING SEA**

31 August - 1 September 2009
Stevenson, Washington

Final: 01 September 2009

1. Opening of the Conference

Mr. Robert D. Mecum, Acting Director of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Alaska Region, United States, welcomed the delegations of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Pollock Resources in the Central Bering Sea to the 14th Annual Conference. He invited the representatives of Japan, Republic of Korea (Korea), Poland, the Russian Federation (Russia) to present opening statements. China was not present.

2. Welcome Address and Opening Statements of the Delegates

Opening statements provided by the Parties are included in Appendix 1. A list of the participants is presented in Appendix 2.

3. Elections

3.1 Chair

Ms. Patricia Livingston, NMFS (United States) was elected as Chair of the Conference.

3.2 Chair of Scientific and Technical Committee

Ms. Patricia Livingston (United States) was also elected the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Committee.

3.3 Rapporteur

Mr. Paul Niemeier (United States) served as Rapporteur for both the Plenary and the Scientific and Technical Committee Meetings.

4. Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda was adopted (Appendix 3).

5. Report of the Scientific and Technical Committee

The Chair of the Scientific and Technical (S&T) Committee reported on the results of the S&T Committee meeting of 31 August–1 September 2009. The resulting report was distributed to the Parties (Appendix 4).

6. Action Items

6.1. The review of scientific data and conservation measures of the Coastal States related to pollock fishing in the Bering Sea

6.1.1 The United States and Russia submitted fishery catch statistics and research results which were included in the Scientific and Technical Committee Report. The Parties discussed the conservation and management measures taken by the United States and Russia.

6.2. Establishment of a Plan of Work for the Scientific and Technical Committee

6.2.1 There were no recommendations for a Plan of Work for the Scientific and Technical Committee.

6.3. Establishment of the Allowable Harvest Level (AHL)

6.3.1 The Parties agreed that AHL for 2010 be set at zero. The total biomass has not reached the level necessary pursuant to the Convention to set an AHL to anything other than zero.

6.4. Establishment of the Individual National Quotas

6.4.1 Since AHL was set at zero, no individual national quotas could be established. Japan pointed out the necessity of adopting procedures to allocate individual quotas if an AHL is adopted.

6.5. Adoption of appropriate conservation and management measures based upon the advice of the Scientific and Technical Committee

6.5.1 There was no action on this item. Conservation and management measures will remain at status quo at this time.

6.6 The establishment of the Terms and Conditions for Trial Fishing in 2010

6.6.1 The Scientific and Technical Committee recommended that countries planning to conduct trial fishing give at least one month lead time prior to fishing in order to facilitate enforcement efforts.

6.6.2 The Parties agreed to adopt the same terms and conditions for trial fishing in 2010 as agreed to at the 2008 Annual Meeting.

6.7 Trial Fishing Plans in 2010

6.7.1 No Parties presented any plans to conduct trial fishing in 2010.

6.8. Measures taken to investigate and penalize violations of the Convention

6.8.1 Poland said that, in the regard to the vessels suspected of supporting IUU fishing in and around the Convention Area, it is likely that such illegal fishing is occurring in the U.S. and

Russian EEZs. This could lead to underreporting in the levels of catches. Poland encouraged the United States and Russia to fully investigate these incidents, as they may affect pollock abundance.

6.9. Consideration of matters related to the conservation and management of living marine resources other than pollock in the Convention Area

6.9.1 No other living marine resources were discussed.

6.10. Meeting Observers

6.10.1 There was no discussion on this topic.

7. Future Annual Conferences

7.1 Consideration of virtual meetings

7.1.1 The United States distributed a proposal for revised Rules of Procedure (Annex III of the Report of the First Annual Conference) for holding virtual meetings. The U.S. side explained the proposal to the other Parties in detail. During the discussion on teleconferences, Korea pointed out some limitations of teleconferences. All Parties supported the concept of teleconferences. After considerable discussion and some modification, the Parties adopted the revised rules (Appendix 5). As an exception, the United States will host the first virtual meeting in 2010. It is the U.S. expectation that the Parties will resume the normal rotation for hosting future virtual meetings for 2011. Japan noted it needs to conduct a legal review of the rules and procedures, but it agrees to participate in virtual meetings.

7.1.2 The Parties recommended that the Party hosting the Annual Conference distribute available scientific information at least 45 days in advance of the Annual Conference, if possible.

7.1.3 The Parties discussed the future format for Scientific and Technical Committee Meetings. The Parties adopted revised rules of procedure for Annex IV, Rule 2, of the Report of the First Annual Conference (Appendix 6) that reflect the changes in rules of procedure for the Annual Conference. In effect, the Party that hosts the Annual Conference will also host the Scientific and Technical Committee Meeting, although the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Committee Meeting does not necessarily have to be from the host Party

7.2 15th Annual Conference

7.2.1 The United States agreed to host the 15th Annual Conference, and the Scientific and Technical Committee Meeting, virtually, with the understanding that the Scientific and Technical Committee Meeting would be held well in advance of the Annual Conference. It will endeavor to distribute the meeting documents in a timely manner via the NOAA website for the Convention.

7.3 Election of the Chair and Vice Chair

7.3.1 Dr. James Balsiger, Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS, United States, was named as Chair of the Plenary Meeting and Patricia Livingston was named as Chair of the Scientific and Technical Committee Meeting for the 2010 meeting.

8. Other Issues

8.1. There were no other issues.

9. Closing Statements

The Parties made oral closing statements. Written statements were not provided.

Appendices

1. Opening Remarks
2. Delegation List.
3. Plenary Agenda.
4. Report of the Scientific and Technical Committee.
5. Annex III – Annual Conference rules of Procedure
6. Annex IV – Scientific and Technical Committee Rules of Procedure

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31 August - 1 September 2009
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U.S. Opening Remarks:

I'm Doug Mecum and I am the Acting Administrator for the Alaska Region of the National Marine Fisheries Service. On behalf of the U.S. Delegation, I'd like to welcome you to the beautiful Columbia River Gorge and the Skamania Lodge. Even though our meeting time is short here, I hope that you make time to avail yourself of the Lodge's amenities. Perhaps the beauty of this area will entice you to extend your stay.

I know many of you from previous Annual Conferences and it is good to see you again. For those who are new to these meetings, welcome. It is somewhat ironic that one of the agenda issues the United States hopes to get agreement on at this meeting is how to conduct future Annual Conferences of the Parties. Some of the Parties have said that it is difficult to justify the expense of attending and hosting Annual Conferences given the fact that the Aleutian Basin pollock stocks have shown no signs of recovering to the levels that would permit commercial fishing in the Convention Area. They feel that it is unnecessary to conduct face-to-face Annual Conferences until such circumstances change. China has conveyed to us that it is not represented here this week because it does not have the funding available to send a delegation. The U.S. delegation believes it is important to hold Annual Conferences to exchange information on the pollock stocks in the Bering Sea and to accomplish the other objectives of the Convention. However, we acknowledge the financial concerns of Parties. We believe that we can still hold Annual Conferences using the technology available today without meeting face-to-face every year and keep the Convention viable. To that end, we circulated a simple proposal for the conduct of meetings via telecommunications. We are looking forward to discussion on the proposal and hope we can reach consensus on how to proceed with future Annual Conferences.

A testimony to the popularity of this locale is the large U.S. delegation here for this meeting. I would like to introduce them to you and ask them to identify themselves as I read their names...

Japan's Opening Remarks:

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

First of all, on behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to express my gratitude to the Government of the United States of America for sincere effort devoted to hosting this 14th Annual Conference of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of the Pollock Resources in the Central Bering Sea and reaffirm the basic position of Japan concerning the Convention.

As we all know, it has already passed for 16 years since the moratorium on commercial fishing had been adopted as the strictest measure of conservation of pollock resources in the Central Bering Sea, where once harvested more than 1.4 million tons of pollock at its best season. However, it is regrettable that we have not found any sign of recovery of the pollock resources in the area yet.

The objective of the Convention is to establish an international regime for conservation, management and optimum utilization of pollock resources in the Convention Area. However, there is no change of the situation in which pollock resources has not recovered and the objective of the Convention is not achieved with indistinct reason.

In such circumstances, it is not too much to say that fishermen in Japan, which suffered from exorbitant price of fuel in the last year and suffer from the depression of fish market in this year, should have lost their concern of the Convention and given up to support the Convention. I think the same situation would happen in the other fishing countries.

Now, doubting the significance of the Convention because of no achievement of recovery of pollock resources and also no support by fishermen, I should reaffirm the three points as follows:

Firstly, as Japan insisted in the past, the member countries should agree to adopt the AHL, whether it is so small, but on rational scientific basis, in order to get back to the objective of the Convention and keep the support by fishermen in the member fishing countries.

Therefore, it is required to take necessary procedures to resume fishing promptly in case of recognizing recovery of pollock resources.

Thirdly, in circumstances of recognizing no recovery of pollock resources, the member countries should adopt the proposal by U.S. concerning "teleconference" with a view to saving cost of holding the Annual Meeting and exchanging information efficiently. It is so hard in Japan to get understanding to take cost of holding the Annual Meeting. Therefore, Japan doesn't get ready to be a host of the next Annual Meeting in this circumstances.

Lastly, I would really like to express my respect for scientists in all the member countries, who have been making their effort to provide precious scientific information for recovery of pollock resources.

Thank you for attention.

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31 August-01 September 2009
Skamania Lodge, Stevenson, Washington, USA

DELEGATIONS

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**14TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO
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31 August-01 September 2009, in Stevenson, Washington, USA

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Conference
2. Welcome Addresses and Opening Statements of the Delegates
3. Elections (Chair, Vice-Chair, Chair of Scientific & Technical Committee, and Rapporteur)
4. Adoption of the Agenda
5. Report of the Scientific & Technical Committee
6. Action Items
 - 6.1 Review of scientific data and conservation measures of the Coastal States related to pollock fishing in the Bering Sea
 - 6.2 Establishment of a Plan of Work for the Scientific and Technical Committee
 - 6.3 Establishment of the Allowable Harvest Level
 - 6.4 Establishment of Individual National Quotas
 - 6.5 Adoption of appropriate conservation and management measures based upon the advice of the Scientific and Technical Committee
 - 6.6 Establishment of the Terms and Conditions for Trial Fishing in 2010
 - 6.7 Trial Fishing Plans in 2010
 - 6.8 Measures taken to investigate and penalize violations of the Convention
 - 6.9 Consideration of matters related to the conservation and management of living marines resources other than Pollock in the Convention Area
 - 6.10 Meeting observers
7. Future Annual Conferences
 - 7.1 Consideration of virtual meetings.
 - 7.2 15th Annual Conference
 - 7.3 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair
8. Other Issues
9. Closing Statements

Annex III

Convention on the Conservation and Management of Pollock Resources in the Central Bering Sea

Annual Conference Rules of Procedure

Rule 1. Each Party participating in the Annual conference shall designate one representative to act on its behalf at the Conference and shall notify the other Parties promptly of any changes in that designation. Representatives may be accompanied by alternate representatives and advisers.

Rule 2. The Parties shall elect as Chairperson a nominee of the Party hosting the next Annual conference. The Parties shall elect the Vice-Chairperson if necessary. The Parties shall also elect a Chairperson of the Scientific and Technical Committee. A vacancy shall be filled by a nominee of the same Party, subject to the approval of the other Parties.

Rule 3. The Chairperson and, in the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson, shall preside over the Annual Conference and facilitate the carrying out of its functions.

Rule 4. The Party that hosts the Annual Conference shall distribute to the other Parties and maintain the record of the Conference.

Rule 5. Each Annual Conference shall prepare a preliminary agenda for the next Annual Conference. Each Party shall submit any comments and amendments to the Chairperson at least 90 days before the beginning of the next Annual Conference. The Chairperson shall circulate a draft agenda reflecting comments received not later than 60 days before the beginning of the next Annual Conference. The final agenda shall be approved by the Annual Conference.

Rule 6. The Annual Conference shall elect the Chair and the Vice-Chairperson of the Scientific and Technical Committee.

Rule 6bis. The Annual Conference may be held in person or remotely via telephone, videoconference or any other similar communication system. The Party that hosts the Annual Conference shall be responsible for making necessary technical arrangements to host the Annual Conference remotely in those years in which it is so held.

Rule 6ter. In exercising its vote on issues of procedure at the Annual Conference pursuant to Article V of the Convention, a Party may either exercise its vote during the Annual Conference, or if a Party will be unable to participate in the Annual Conference that Party may submit its vote to the Chair in advance of the Annual Conference.

Rule 6quat. For the 2010, 2011, and 2012 Annual Conferences, the Parties intend to conduct the Annual Conference via remote communications systems, unless:

- a. The Scientific and Technical Committee reports pollock biomass in the Convention Area at the level needed to trigger the establishment of an AHL, as determined by the Annex of the Convention, Part 1, Section b-d, in which case the Annual Conference will be in-person as soon as practicable; or
- b. A Party to the Convention requests an in-person meeting during the preceding Annual Conference, in which case that Party shall host the next Annual Conference.

During the 2012 Annual Conference, the Parties will review the effectiveness of conducting meetings via remote communications technology, and decide whether to continue holding the Annual Conference via remote communications technology for an additional three years.

Rule 7. Any proposal to amend the rules of procedure of the Annual Conference or the Scientific and Technical Committee shall be considered by the Parties at the Annual Conference in accordance with Articles III and V of the Convention.

Annex IV
Scientific and Technical Committee Rules of Procedure

Rule 1. Each Party shall designate its representatives to the Scientific and Technical Committee, one of whom shall act as the chief representative of the Party.

Rule 2. The Scientific and Technical Committee shall hold meetings in accordance with Article IX of the Convention, allowing sufficient time to prepare its report for presentation to the Annual Conference. The Scientific and Technical Committee meeting may be held in person or remotely via telephone, videoconference or any other similar communication system. The Party that hosts the Annual Conference shall be responsible for making necessary technical arrangements to host the Scientific and Technical Committee meeting remotely in those years in which it is so held.

Rule 3. Additional meetings of the Scientific and Technical Committee may be held as agreed by the representatives to the Committee and approved by the Parties.

Rule 4. The Scientific and Technical Committee shall make a recommendation to the Annual Conference as to the site of the Committee's next annual meeting.

Rule 5. The Chair shall distribute and maintain a record of the annual meeting, and any additional meetings, of the Scientific and Technical Committee. The Chair shall report the results of the Scientific and Technical Committee to the Annual Conference.

Rule 6. Each annual meeting of the Scientific and Technical Committee shall prepare a preliminary agenda for the next annual meeting. The Chair shall prepare and circulate a draft agenda reflecting comments and amendments received from the Parties prior to the annual meeting. The final agenda shall be approved by the annual meeting.