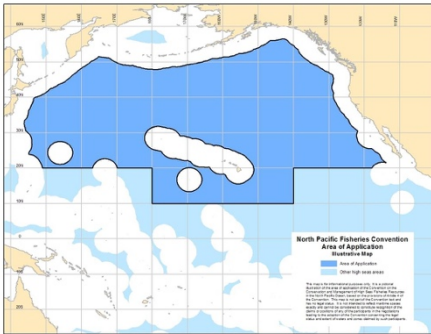


North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) Annual Activity Status Report to PFMC Rich Lincoln, November 2021

Federal legislation ([16 USC Ch. 96](#)) authorizes US involvement in the Convention on the Conservation and Management of the High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean, which was adopted in February 2012. The legislation specifies that the Chair of PFMC (or the Chair's designee) serves as one of five US Commissioners to the Convention, the multilateral implementation of which is facilitated through a Regional Fishery Management Organization (RFMO) named the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) and established in 2015. The Convention's objective is to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fisheries resources in the Convention Area (see figure below) while protecting the marine ecosystems of the North Pacific Ocean in which these resources occur.



Fisheries resources covered by the Convention include fish, mollusks, crustaceans and other marine species caught within the Convention Area, excluding: (i) sedentary species subject to the sovereign rights of coastal States; certain indicator species of vulnerable marine ecosystems; (ii) catadromous species; (iii) marine mammals, marine reptiles and seabirds; and (iv) other marine species already covered by other established international fisheries management instruments.

NPFC member countries presently include Canada, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Chinese Taipei, the United States of America, and Vanuatu, with Panama being a Cooperating Non-contracting Party. The US currently has no active fisheries in the Convention area for covered species, but has played a strong role in helping establish the initial fishery management system, protocols, and conservation and management measures (CMMs). The US also plays an instrumental role in on-water fishery compliance activities in the Convention area.

The activities of the Commission to date have focused extensively on establishing systems to facilitate conduct of basic management functions such as information requirements for vessel registration, establishing a list of vessels presumed to have carried out IUU fishing activities, high seas boarding and inspection procedures, a vessel monitoring system, and a compliance monitoring scheme. In addition also there have been adoption of some CMMs for basic species and habitat conservation needs (e.g., Pacific saury, chub mackerel, sablefish, and protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) and associated bottom fisheries.

The 6th annual NPFC Meeting was held virtually on 23 to 25 February 2021. It was the first such meeting held by video conference (Fig. 1) and was logistically challenging, partly related to the lack of simultaneous interpretation from English to other country languages to ensure full understanding and optimum communication, but also due to the gap created by pandemic disruption of the normal 2020 meeting schedule.

Highlights of topics and actions can be summarized as follows (source: [NPFC](#)):

- Adopted 2021 NPFC IUU vessel list
- Adopted final Compliance Monitoring Report

- Revised Conservation and Management Measures (CMM) for Vessel Registration, Bottom fisheries and protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems in the Northwestern Pacific Ocean, chub mackerel, Pacific saury, High Seas Boarding and Inspection Procedures, Japanese sardine, neon flying squid, Japanese flying squid, and Vessel Monitoring System
- The European Union was accepted as a new Member to NPFC upon deposit of its ratification instrument
- Panama was granted CNCP status for one year effective 26 February 2021

Since the February annual meeting, Commission work groups have been framing a number of measures for future Commission consideration, for which the US Delegation is providing ongoing input. This currently includes a draft Conservation and Management Measure on Transshipment aimed at establishing the necessary rules and procedures to monitor, report, and verify transshipments to support monitoring, control, and surveillance activities, enhance science and compliance efforts. Discussions surrounding a transparency measure to improve open engagement in the Commission process are also ongoing. The Commission also launched its regional vessel monitoring system in August 2021.

An active recruitment is in progress for the Commission's Executive Secretary position – the incumbent announce his planned departure earlier this year. The next annual dates for the Commission's annual meeting and associated 'run up' meetings have been scheduled for the March 23-30, with in-person or virtual not decided and if former, no location set. they are likely to occur in early 2022 (before mid-year).



Figure 1. Partial screen shot of Feb. 2021 virtual North Pacific Fisheries Commission annual meeting.