Pacific Salmon Treaty & Commission

Overview

Pacific salmon migrate through a broad geographic range that includes rivers, streams, and coastal waters in both the United States and Canada (the Parties). The respective federal governments work with First Nations, Indian Tribes, provinces, states, and sport and commercial fishing groups to provide for shared conservation and harvest objectives, working to meet the needs of the parties while eliminating overfishing. These proceedings are guided by the Pacific Salmon Treaty (Treaty).

The Treaty includes two goals:

1. Prevent overfishing; and
2. Provide optimum production and fair sharing of salmon harvest.

To achieve these goals, the Treaty establishes a process for developing, implementing, and monitoring science-based fishery management regimes applicable to the Parties' respective jurisdictions. The fishing regimes are tailored to each of the major geographical regions covered by the Treaty, of limited duration, and renegotiated as the status and condition of the fisheries resource changes. The most recent amendments occurred in 1999 and 2008. Though the 2008 agreement currently is in place, it is set to expire at the end of 2018. The fishing regimes contained in the Treaty and corresponding agreements are not self-executing, meaning they must be implemented through the appropriate regulatory mechanisms in both the United States and Canada.

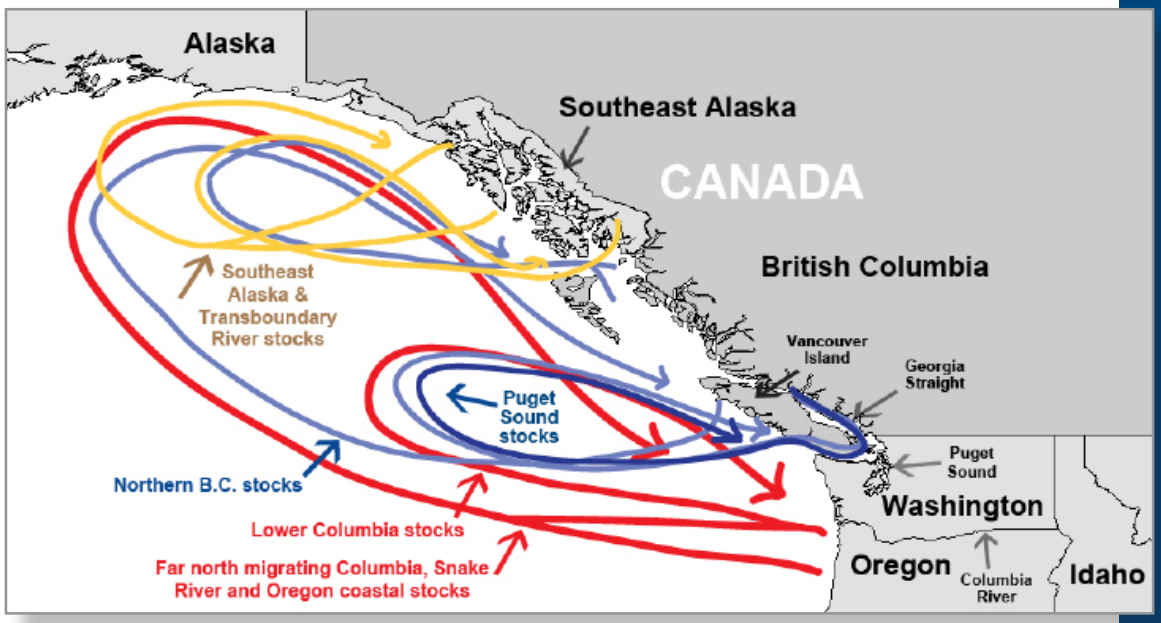
Scope of the treaty

Fisheries governed by the Treaty occur in the ocean and inland marine waters off Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, the Yukon, southeast Alaska, and the rivers flowing into these waters.

The Treaty establishes specific operating procedures and guidance for focusing management efforts, including:

1. Administrative rules, such as the location and frequency of meetings;
2. Fisheries management guidelines and policies;
3. Research recommendations; and
4. Tasks and responsibilities for the Technical Committees and Panels.

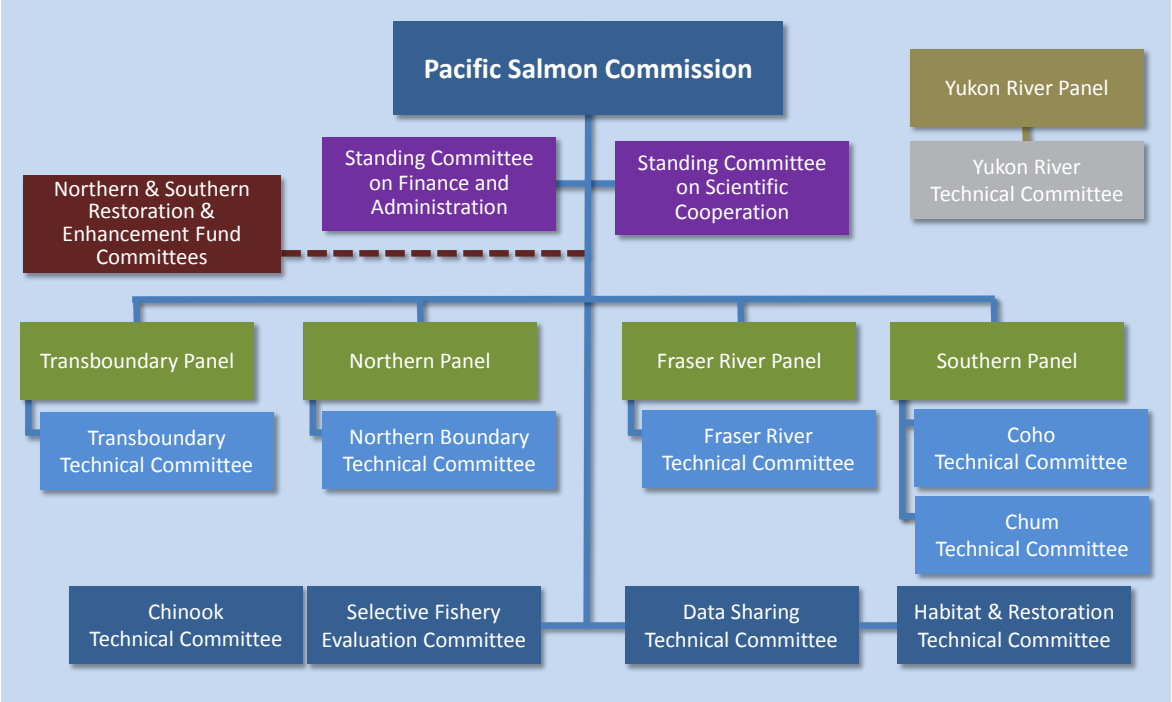
Each country retains management authority over their fisheries, but ensures management is consistent with the Treaty.



The Pacific Salmon Treaty covers fisheries occurring across more than a thousand miles of coastline, ranging from central Oregon through southeast Alaska. These fisheries are the cornerstone of many coastal communities, providing jobs for fishermen and supporting centuries-old traditions of First Nations and Indian Tribes.

Pacific Salmon Treaty Area

General migratory patterns of major Chinook salmon stock groups



Pacific Salmon Commission

The Treaty establishes the Pacific Salmon Commission (Commission) to oversee its implementation. The Commission does not regulate salmon fisheries, but provides regulatory recommendations and a forum through which the two countries are able to reach mutually beneficial agreements.

The Commission includes four Commissioners from each country (plus four Alternate Commissioners), but each country retains a single vote. Therefore each national section must express its position in a single vote, and all bilateral agreements require agreement between the two national sections.

Secretariat

The Pacific Salmon Commission is administered through a Secretariat in Vancouver, British Columbia. The 26 Secretariat staff members include administrative and scientific professionals who facilitate meetings, provide scientific assessments, run field programs, and maintain extensive archives dating back to the early 20th Century. These employees are international civil servants, working for both countries simultaneously. Staff and other operational costs are financed with annual dues paid by each national government (currently $1.9 CDN million per country). The Secretariat is not able to act without consensus between countries.

The Pacific Salmon Treaty is a bilateral agreement between the United States and Canada adopted in 1985 to manage salmon fisheries of mutual interest to both countries. Congress passed the Pacific Salmon Treaty Act of 1985, legislation enabling U.S. support.

Treaty Implementation

U.S. obligations under the Pacific Salmon Treaty are a federal commitment. Federal funding is provided to state, tribal and federal agencies responsible for Treaty implementation. Funding is provided annually through three departments:

- Commerce Department: Provides funding through NOAA Fisheries to support grants to the states of Alaska, Washington, Oregon and Idaho; and the agency's regional offices and science centers.
- Interior Department: Provides funding through the Bureau of Indian Affairs for the Treaty Indian tribes of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, and the Metlakatla Indian Community of Alaska.
- State Department: Provides funding for the U.S. portion of the Commission Secretariat (shared equally with Canada); travel of U.S. section members to official meetings; stipends for the non-governmental personnel appointed to the Commission and panels while performing official duties; and a three person staff to support U.S. Section.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Pacific Salmon Treaty: www.psc.org/publications_psctreaty.htm

Pacific Salmon Commission: http://www.psc.org/

Current Pacific Salmon Commissioners: www.psc.org/membership_commissioners.htm

Pacific Salmon Commission Meeting Schedules: www.psc.org/meetings_schedule.htm

Pacific Salmon Commission Forward Looking Agenda: www.psc.org/meetings_agenda.htm