

Opening Remarks

It is my pleasure to welcome you today to the NPAFC Workshop on Application of Stock Identification in Defining Marine Distribution and Migration of Salmon.

On behalf of the other Representatives, I want to thank the Organizing Committee and the staff for all their hard work in preparing for this workshop. I also want to thank all of the scientists who have contributed papers and posters and presentations. By doing so you are providing us all the opportunity to advance our understanding of the complicated ecosystems and the precious resources of the North Pacific.

The focus of the NPAFC has been the conservation of anadromous fish and related species in the North Pacific. The treaty which created the Commission specifies two main missions: the enforcement of the ban of high seas fishing of salmon and the coordination of data, information and research.

The NPAFC has made extraordinary progress in both missions and I want to thank the Representatives, advisors, staff, participants and others who have invested time and money to improve our work and assure success.

Today is a result of the increased levels of cooperation among the parties. Scientists have worked together effectively to expand research and information availability to all who are concerned about the future of this region and its resources. There are many examples of this cooperation, but I believe the best one is the BASIS program which is now in its second year of work. You will hear more about it this afternoon, so I will not go into any detail now, but I do want to express my personal appreciation to those who have worked so hard to find creative ways to make this collaborative research effort a reality. I am hopeful that we will be able to obtain additional resources to support this international research project, because it is an excellent model for what must happen in other regions. No one country owns the North Pacific Ocean. Only when all the countries which have a stake in the health of the ocean and the ecosystems work together through joint research efforts will we obtain the kind of information and understanding that we need to achieve sustainable management policies and practices.

As this is my last meeting with you as a Representative, I want to make one request to each of you. Please take time to explain the work that you do and the science that you know so well to someone who is not familiar with the importance of integrating science and public policy. Adopt a legislator or mayor or reporter this week when you return home to your country, and help them understand what happened here at this workshop and why they should care about the work of the NPAFC. So many of the important decisions regarding the management of fisheries and other resources could be improved if key decisionmakers had a better understanding of the science and the implications of alternative actions. Very few of the key decisionmakers, either elected or appointed, have science backgrounds, at least in my country. At a time when the world is changing very rapidly and the cumulative impacts of decisions can have large and lasting consequences, it is more important than ever before that scientists talk to policy makers and vice versa. I hope you will help make that happen. You have much to contribute.

Thank you.

Fran Ulmer
Representative of the U.S.A. to the NPAFC