

Role of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Mitigating Threats to Salmon and Their Marine Environment

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The Kamchatka Peninsula and Sakhalin Island harbour one third of the world's Pacific salmon. The level of intra-specific diversity of the Far Eastern salmon species is unlike anywhere else in the world. As salmon biodiversity in many regions is being lost, partially due to global warming in the north-eastern Pacific, and also due to other reasons (construction of dams, deforestation of river basins, poaching, salmon farming and associated diseases, etc.), freshwater and marine habitats of salmon in the Far East become increasingly important to preserve. At the same time the well-being of salmon and their marine environment in the Russian Far East is threatened by various factors including on-going oil and gas drilling development, inefficient management of salmon stocks, and illegal fishing and trade. Therefore the following salmon biodiversity conservation efforts are urgent: switching to and improving practices of sustainable fishery management, development of adaptive management, monitoring of salmon stocks, assessments of threats, pollution prevention, and research on salmon migrations and life history. Examples of ways that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) could participate in and promote the conservation and wise use of Pacific salmon in Russia include improvement of interagency communication to protect and manage salmon, creation of special marine protective fishery zones in areas important for salmon growth and survival, and independent environmental assessment of mineral resources development projects. In 2006 a new three-year project of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) named "Conservation of Kamchatka Wild Salmon in Their Marine Environment" began that is aimed at accomplishing some of those things by establishing a dialogue and facilitating cooperation between government groups, the scientific community, NGOs, and fishermen. The WWF invites experts on salmon ecology to join this undertaking to provide the scientific basis behind efforts to change government policies and industry practices to help protect and maintain the diverse and healthy salmon populations in Russia's Far East.