

North Pacific Fisheries Commission Report

Michael Brakke

U.S. HOD and Commissioner (Federal) to NPFC

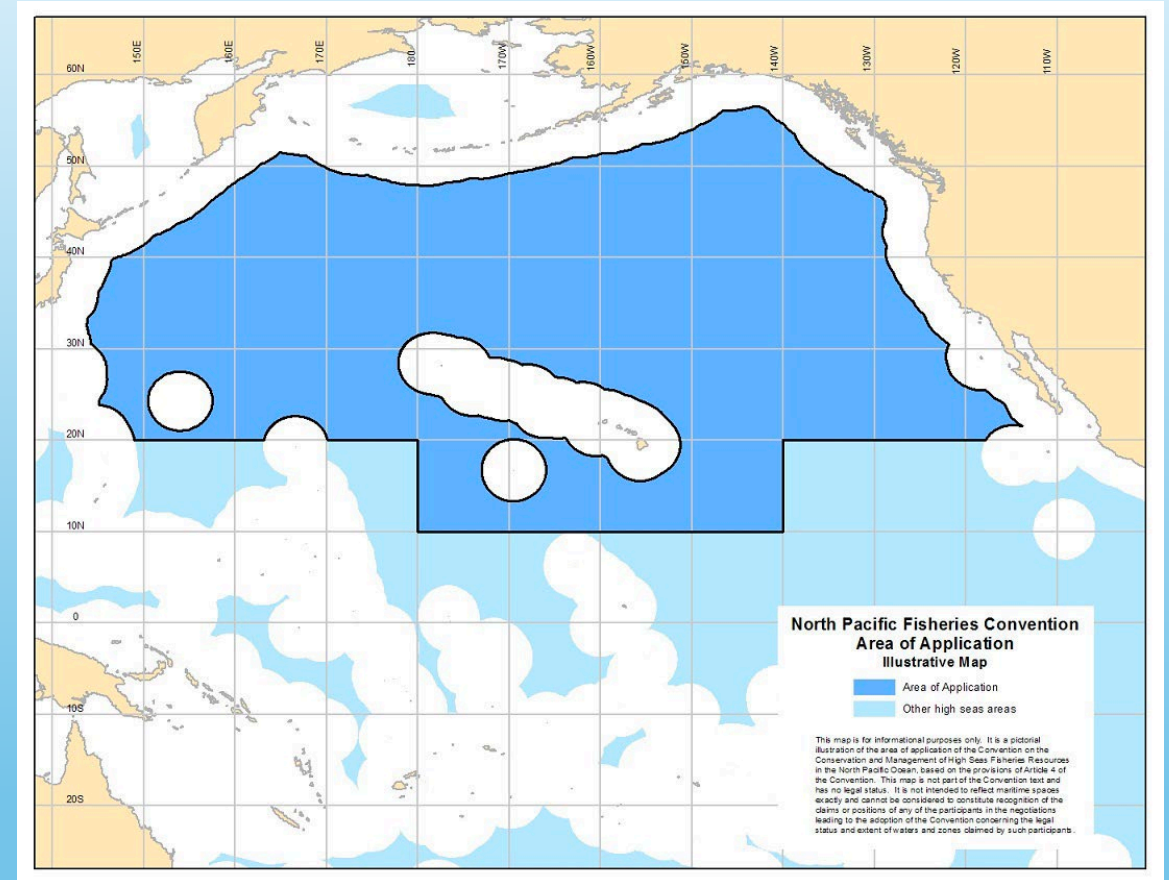
Deputy Director, NOAA Fisheries Office of International Affairs, Trade, and Commerce

Dan Hull, NPFMC Representative

U.S. Alternate Commissioner to NPFC (Non-Federal)

NPFC Background

- Convention area covers high seas in the North Pacific
- Management of fisheries resources other than those covered by other regional fisheries management organizations



NPFC Background

- Treaty-based RFMO with authority to adopt legally binding measures
- Objective is sustainable management of fisheries resources and protection of related marine ecosystems
- Entered into force 2015, USA became party in 2017
- Nine Members: Canada, China, EU, Japan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Taiwan (participates as Chinese Taipei), USA, and Vanuatu
- Members meet annually in a Commission meeting to make decisions
- Subsidiary work occurs intersessionally through Technical and Compliance Committee, Scientific Committee and Finance and Administration Committee

NPFC Priorities

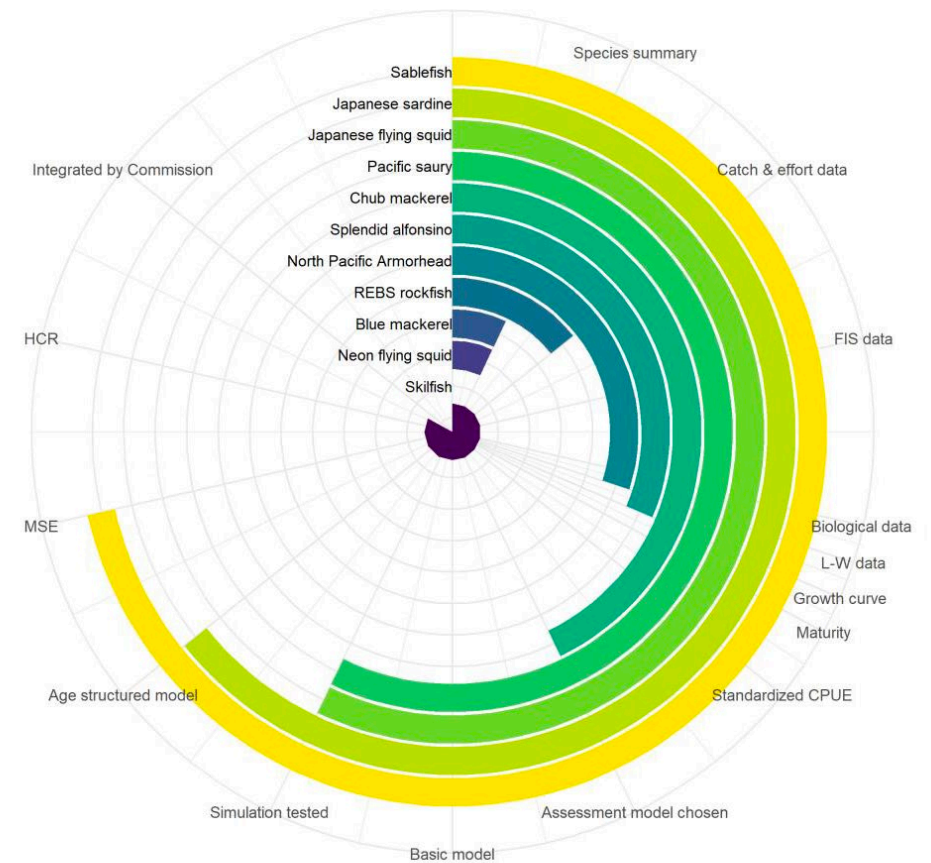
- Management of pelagic species: Pacific saury, chub mackerel, Blue mackerel, spotted mackerel, Japanese sardine, neon flying squid, and Japanese flying squid
- Bottom fisheries (North Pacific armorhead, splendid alfonsino, and skilfish) and prevention of significant and adverse impacts (SAI) on deep-sea vulnerable marine ecosystems
- Development of monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) tools and robust compliance processes to combat IUU fishing
- Improved stock assessments and scientific advice

Progress on Milestones for Stock Assessment

NPFC-2023-SC08-Final Report, Annex V

- Species summary
- Catch at effort data
- Fisheries-independent survey data
- Biological data (e.g. length-weight, growth, maturity...)
- Standardized CPUE
- Assessment model selection
- Basic model
- Simulation tested
- Age-structured model
- MSE
- HCR
- Integrated into Commission's management decision-making

Current Assessment Status



Recent NPFC developments

- Shingo Ota, Japan, began serving as Chair of the Commission (replaced Russia)
- Increase in U.S. scientific engagement in NPFC SC and SSC bodies from the U.S. delegation with additional scientists from the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center
- Continued presence from the U.S. delegation in subsidiary body leadership roles: Alisha Falberg from NOAA (TCC Chair), Dan Hull (FAC Chair), Megan Willmann from USCG (Co-Chair of TCC SWG on Operations)
- Increase in NPFC engagement with other organizations: WCPFC, SPRFMO, NPAFC, ISC, FAO, IMCS Network
- Increase in Observer engagement in the NPFC process: Pew, Ocean Foundation, DSCC, WWF, Greenpeace International

April 2024 Annual Meeting Highlights

- The U.S. delegation successfully advanced major U.S. priorities in the negotiations through strong collaboration with likeminded members
- Bottom Fishing and VMEs: Adopted U.S.-proposed measures to increase protection of deep-sea vulnerable marine ecosystems in the Emperor Seamount Chain and push for improved management of North Pacific armorhead and Splendid Alfonsino, including by extending the seasonal closure, clearly defining binding catch limits, and reducing the encounter threshold for VME indicator species
- Salmon bycatch CMM: Adopted measures (U.S. co-sponsored proposal led by Canada) to prohibit directed fishing of anadromous species, ban the retention of incidentally caught anadromous fish, and require reporting of incidental of anadromous fish
- Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMS) CMM: Adopted revisions to make the Compliance Monitoring Review process more robust and to enable adequate discussion and assessment of Members' compliance to ensure accountability with the obligations under NPFC CMMs.

April 2024 Annual Meeting Highlights – cont.

- Adopted a U.S.-proposed resolution for Core Principles on Labor Standards that encourages Members to establish and strengthen labor standards in the fisheries sector, ensure a safe working environment, and promote fair terms of employment for fishers
- Adopted U.S.-proposed revisions to the IUU Vessel List CMM that improve the intersessional process for updating vessel information on the IUU Vessel List (vessel name, flag state, owner, call sign or IMO number) to assist in surveillance and enforcement
- Adopted an interim HCR for Pacific saury that reduces the 2024 TAC by 10% and sets up automatic changes in catch limits to address concerns about the stock status
- Adopted revisions to the chub mackerel CMM to include reporting requirements and catch limits by vessel type, establish the first binding TAC of 100,000mt, and address entry to the fishery by the EU. The measure also bans super trawlers (>10,000 gross tons) from fishing for chub mackerel in the Convention Area

April 2024 Annual Meeting Highlights – cont.

- Improved the transparency of NPFC operations by allowing public access to meeting documents in advance of meetings, and ensuring TCC meetings would be open to Observers as a default
- Received the first year of reporting from the SC on incorporating climate change in their work, including impacts on chub mackerel and Pacific Saury; support for development and implementation of Basin-scale Events to Coastal Impacts (BECI) project; working with the FAO's DSF Project on climate change related work; and reviewing Members' climate change related work

U.S. Interests and Priorities

- Improve NPFC MCS tools (e.g., HSBI, development of Observer Program, VMS, port inspections, controls on transshipment), compliance, and enforcement in the North Pacific to combat IUU fishing and also to support broader maritime security interests
- Contribute to growth in NPFC scientific capacities to support science-based management
- Improve capacity of the NPFC to receive and analyze data collected from MCS systems (VMS, HSBI, transshipments, Observer Program, IUU fishing) and to coordinate and share data as appropriate with other organizations to tackle shared challenges
- Continue to strengthen management of bottom fisheries and protect VMEs, including considering additional area closures on Emperor Seamounts and promote compatibility with measures in the U.S. EEZ
- Further improve transparency and effective governance of NPFC

Thank you

Michael Brakke (in absentia)

Dan Hull