

ANNOUNCEMENT OF INTENT TO UNDERTAKE EXPEDITED MSC ASSESSMENT (Using FCR V2.0) OF THE PURSE SEINE FISHERY FOR PINK AND CHUM SALMON NEAR ITURUP ISLAND, RUSSIA, VIA EXPANSION OF SCOPE OF THE CURRENTLY CERTIFIED ITURUP PINK AND CHUM STATIONARY TRAP FISHERY

The Iturup Pink and Chum Salmon trap fishery has requested an expansion of scope of the current fishery certificate to include pink and chum salmon harvested by purse seine vessels within the UoA. The scope extension adds a new gear type that will primarily target chum later into the fall season, but may also harvest pink salmon during portions of the year. All other aspects of scope are to remain consistent with the original UoA. The UoA (equivalent to UoC) to be assessed for addition to the currently-certified UoA is as follows:

Unit of Certification	
Species	Chum salmon (<i>O. keta</i>), Pink Salmon (<i>O. gorbuscha</i>)
Geographical Area	Iturup Island, Russian Far East. FAO Major Fishing Area 61 (Northwest Pacific).
Stock	2 stocks, 2 species
Gear Type	Purse seine
Management System	Terminal fishery with escapement goals for individual streams. Managed by Sakhalin-Kuril territorial office of the Russian Federation Far East Fisheries Agency
Client Group	J.S.C. Gidrostroy

2016 will be the first season of fishing for the purse seine vessels proposed for expedited assessment. It is expected that there will be two 58ft seiners (purchased from Alaska) and potentially three smaller 22-30ft vessels, converted to operate with purse seine gear. This season, the purse seine vessels are expected to be used primarily for late fall chum season fishing (October and November), when conditions can become too dangerous for use of the much smaller kungas (boats) that transport salmon caught in stationary traps. The purse seine vessels have the potential to fish outside the onshore fish traps, but are expected to remain nearshore as a targeted terminal fishery. The assessment will consider potential impacts associated with use of seine vessels throughout the fishing season, should this be decided for the 2017, or subsequent seasons, by the Client.

Mr. Ray Beamesderfer and Mrs. Jennifer Humberstone conducted a preliminary gap analysis in order to determine the components held in common, and those that will require original scoring via an expedited audit. Fishing by the purse seine vessels will be governed under generally the same management and information systems as evaluated under the current certificate. Given the harvest strategy focused on in-season management controls, and the known species selectivity characteristics of commercial purse seine salmon fishing, it is expected that outcome indicators will not differ materially for Principles 1 and 2. The detailed results of the gap analysis are provided in Table 1 below.

Based on Table 1 findings, the assessment team has preliminarily determined (below) which Performance Indicators will need to be re-scored from the base fishery (Iturup Pink and Chum Salmon, stationary traps) in the course of the expedited audit:

- Principle 1: 1.2.3
- Principle 2: 2.1.X, 2.2.X, 2.3.X, 2.4.X
- Principle 3: None expected

The same assessment tree ([modified FAM default assessment tree](#)) that was used in the re-assessment of the currently certified base-fishery UoA will be used in this expedited assessment. Conditions applied to PIs that are not re-scored in the scope extension will be applied with the same milestones and timelines as in the currently certified UoA.

Other Performance Indicators may be re-scored as deemed appropriate by the assessment team during the expedited audit process. The assessment team will confirm with the Client that hatchery production will not be changed or extended to later returning chum populations to assure that there will not be increased competition with unique lake-spawning wild populations. In addition, fishery-specific management systems, and PI 3.2.3 in particular, may require re-scoring depending on the extent of differences in regulations governing purse seine practices and where the purse seiners fish, as determined in the course of the expedited assessment.

Table 1: MSC FCR V2.0 Table G11 Describing the Outcome of the Gap Analysis

Component	Currently Certified Unit of Assessment: Iturup Pink and Chum Salmon Trap Fishery	Changes to Scope Expected from Proposed Scope Expansion Unit: Iturup Chum Salmon Purse Seine Fishery
Principle 1– Outcome	Pink Pacific salmon (<i>O. gorbuscha</i>) and Chum Pacific salmon (<i>O. keta</i>)	Same. No change expected except that purse seiners will primarily target Chum Salmon during October/November. There is no indication that the stock status is at risk with the addition of the new gear type due to in-season management practices.
Principle 1 – Harvest strategy	Pink Pacific salmon (<i>O. gorbuscha</i>) and Chum Pacific salmon (<i>O. keta</i>) Terminal fishery with escapement goals for individual streams. Managed by	Partial Difference. No change expected in performance of harvest strategy as applied to the fishery. The harvest strategy will be applied in

	<p>Sakhalin-Kuril territorial office of the Russian Federation Far East Fisheries Agency. Fishing effort is regulated by time and area to achieve stream-specific escapement goals determined to produce maximum sustainable yields based on historical stock assessments. Escapement is monitored in-season and fishery operations are modified from day to day based on run size in order to ensure that the available spawning grounds are filled. This is a highly effective fishing strategy in terminal fisheries where the harvest occurs in close proximity to the spawning streams.</p>	<p>the same manner as applied to the certified stationary traps in the UoA. There is potential for higher landings with the addition of purse seine gear and the ability to fish later into the fall; however, harvest levels will still be managed based on in-season escapement monitoring, and there is therefore no expectation that the effectiveness of the harvest strategy will be affected.</p> <p>However, given the purse seine vessels' ability to fish further offshore, there is potential for interception with non-local populations of chum salmon from other areas of Iturup and the Kurile Islands as well as Sakhalin Island. In addition, fishing later in the fall may increase the incidence of late-run wild populations in the harvest (e.g. lake spawning chum). Principle 1.2.3 will therefore be assessed in the expedited audit to ensure fishery information is sufficient to understand the composition of wild, hatchery, and non-local fish.</p>
Principle 1- Enhancement	<p>All pink and chum hatchery operations on Iturup Island were assessed under the UoA. There were a total of eight hatcheries in operation on Iturup Island, but only four within the Gidrostroy (UoA)-leased area. Gidrostroy hatcheries account for over 80% of the production of pink and chum salmon on the island. These hatchery programs operate as "integrated" systems intended to maintain the genetic characteristics of the local natural populations among hatchery fish by minimizing the genetic effects of selection or domestication. The hatchery programs employ a mixture of hatchery and natural-origin fish as broodstock, include large effective population sizes of broodstock, spawn fish over the duration of the run, avoid selective incubation and rearing practices, and minimize the duration of hatchery rearing.</p>	<p>Same.</p> <p>There is no change expected to hatchery operations. The assessment team will confirm that hatchery production will not be extended to later returning chum populations, which might increase competition with unique lake-spawning wild populations.</p>
Principle 2 – Retained species	<p>Outcome: Catch of all non-target species (non-chum and pink) in the UoA are at or below 0.1%. Therefore, there are no main retained species in the fishery.</p> <p>Management: Additional information on harvest significant other retained species (sockeye and char) is also being collected annually by the government due to a 2011 change in fishery regulations. Current regulations require permits by volume for each non-target species that is sold. Current regulations limit harvest of</p>	<p>Different. (Outcome, Management, Information) Purse seine represent a different gear type than the currently certified stationary traps. The gear is functionally different and will operate in different locations. Other MSC assessments of commercial Pacific salmon fishing by purse seine vessels suggest that the gear will function in a highly selective manner. However, as this is a new gear type for the UoA, the assessment team must review 2016 season data to verify that information systems are adequate, assess any nontarget</p>

	<p>non-target species to no more than 49% of the total. This replaces a historical limitation of 2% which was difficult to monitor and enforce. This change has proven to be popular with the fishers because they are now allowed to legally sell non-target species as long as they obtain the proper permits. The accuracy of catch reporting has been reported to have improved substantially as a result of the new regulation.</p> <p>Information: Records of all non-target species are available from the processing plants where fish are offloaded. Limited sorting of species takes place prior to delivery due to the volume of the catch and the fishing method that involves crowding of fish from the fish traps into the kungas (net-bottomed boats) used to deliver fish to the plants. Detailed records are maintained at the plants of the volume of significant non-target species such as char and sockeye that are retained, processed, and sold. Harvest of these species is incidental to harvest of target pink and chum salmon.</p> <p>An assessment of all non-target and bycatch species was conducted in 2009 and 2010 (Smirnov and Tochilina 2011). The study also compared bycatch with total allowable catch limits identified by the government for a number of commercially valuable species. This assessment was implemented to meet imposed Conditions from the original certification. Results of bycatch assessments in the pink salmon fishery period confirm that non-target species comprise a very low percentage of the total landings (Table 10). Similarly low bycatch levels are reported for the chum salmon period (Smirnov and Tochilina 2011).</p>	species outcomes (including ETP), and evaluate the adequacy of management systems in place.
Principle 2 – Bycatch species	Catch of all non-target species (non-chum and pink) are at or below 0.1%. Therefore, there are no main bycatch species in the fishery. (See above for detail on management and information systems.)	Different. See Principle 2- Retained Species
Principle 2 – ETP	<p>Outcome: There have been no ETP species noted with regular interactions with the fishery due to the passive and coastal nature of the UoA gear type. Taimen (<i>H. taimen</i>) are identified as the ETP species with highest probability of impact, but there are no reported interactions from Iturup fishers.</p> <p>Management: National legislation provides for protection of ETP species identified in the Russian Federation Red Data Book, also known simply as the Red Book. The</p>	<p>Different. See Principle 2- Retained Species.</p> <p>Note: Taimen would not be considered at higher risk of impact by purse seiners given their typical habitat preference of near-shore marine waters, low gradient coastal rivers, estuaries, and large brackish estuarine lakes or lagoons.</p>

	<p>Red Book is based largely on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which formally designates protected species subject to enhanced regulatory protection. The Red Book also contains species for which the population status is not well understood as a precautionary measure.</p> <p>Information: Information on ETP interactions are expected to be reported to the Gidrostroy processing plant. There is additional information from SakNIRO and the Gidrostroy 2009/2010 bycatch survey (referenced under Principle 2- Retained Species).</p>	
Principle 2 – Habitat	<p>Salmon habitat extends from rearing natal stream areas and bays to the open ocean. The set nets themselves are seasonally installed. Anchors, sandbags or moors have very little impact as they are localized, stationary, and are set on substrate not considered vulnerable (i.e. on dynamic sand, gravel and mud flats; not on any coralline structures). Hatchery construction on the river systems may have had some impacts during construction, but operational impacts are currently small. Small non-salmon bearing tributaries were diverted from their natural course to supply the hatcheries with a water source, but there is still plenty of water volume to support natural spawning and ecosystem function. The water from these tributaries is filtered through a natural gravel seep before entering the hatchery. Water quality and temperature is tested regularly before being released into the stream systems again. Small weirs may be installed, which may impede upstream movement of returning salmon, but these are on the banks and not considered to be negatively impacting the habitat in any permanent way.</p>	<p>Different.</p> <p>Purse seine gear represents a different gear type than the currently certified stationary traps. The gear is operationally distinct and will operate in different locations. Other MSC assessments of commercial Pacific salmon fishing by purse seine vessels suggest that that adverse impacts are negligible because the gear does not regularly come in contact with benthic habitat by design, but this must be evaluated in a site-specific manner.</p>
Principle 2 – Ecosystem	<p>The salmon life cycle encompasses a vast ecosystem including natal rivers and lakes, the nearshore ocean, and the high seas of the North Pacific Ocean. Upon their return, pink and chum salmon spawn in their natal streams and do not return to sea.</p> <p>Salmon carcasses provide important marine-derived nutrients to the fresh water system. Influx of nutrients can be substantial (Gende et al, 2002). Returning salmon can also be prey items for terrestrial megafauna including bears. Marine-derived nutrients from salmon carcasses can have a significant impact on freshwater communities as well as those communities in the</p>	<p>Same.</p> <p>Purse seine gear is not expected to alter the ecosystem in a meaningfully different manner. The gear is highly selective and does not regularly encounter benthic habitat. Any trophic interactions or other impacts resulting from salmon fishing are reflected in the full assessment of the currently certified UoA (trap fishery).</p>

	<p>freshwater to terrestrial interface (Wilson et al. 1998). The flux of salmon biomass entering fresh water from the ocean can be massive (Gende et al. 2002). Removal of salmon that would otherwise die naturally in the river can affect food and productivity of freshwater ecosystems either directly by reducing prey availability to species like bears and eagles, or indirectly by reducing delivery of marine derived nutrients that feed the food chain.</p> <p>Salmon may also exert top down effects on their prey. Extensive research has been conducted by the Russian Scientific Institutes on (1) Juvenile Anadromous Stocks in Ocean Ecosystems; (2) Anadromous Stocks in the Bering Sea Ecosystem (BASIS); and (3) Anadromous Stocks in the Western Subarctic Gyre and Gulf of Alaska Ecosystems (Temnykh et al. 2010. This work also involved substantial monitoring and research of related ecosystem components including food web composition, production and dynamics. Based on this work, the Russian management system has generally concluded that there is no capacity limitation based on oceanographic data which indicates that pink salmon utilize only 20% of the plankton in the ocean (Shuntov and Temnykh 2004; Shuntov et al. 2010).</p> <p>Enhancement of Pacific salmon across the Pacific Rim since the 1970s has resulted in very large abundance in the North Pacific Ocean (Mahnken et al. 1998; Irvine et al. 2009; Ruggerone et al. 2010). There is some evidence that high salmon abundances in the ocean might adversely affect wild salmon through competition (Peterman 1991). Ocean growth of pink salmon is inversely correlated to their own abundance, and survival of chum, Such impacts from the UoA are assessed under Pls 1.3.X.</p>	
Principle 3 – Governance and policy	Sakhalin Island is the subject of the Russian Federation under the direction and control of the Government of the Russian Federation. Fisheries of the Russian Federation are managed and controlled by Fisheries Agency of the Russian Federation, which is located in Moscow and also represented by a local office on Sakhalin Island. Operational management of all activities on the island is performed by the Governor of the Sakhalin Region.	Same. The geographic region and governance jurisdictions are consistent between the current and expanded scope UoAs.
Principle 3 – Fishery Specific management system	<p>The UoA is managed by SakNIRO, Russian Federation Far East Fisheries Agency and J.S.C. Gidrostory (client company).</p> <p>The Sakhalin Fisheries Agency (SFA) is responsible for establishing the Commission on the Regulation of harvesting (catch) Anadromous Fishes (AFC) and providing information on the fishery (such as catch and</p>	<p>TBD</p> <p>There may be minor differences specific permitting processes for the purse seine fleet, as well as in at-sea enforcement. The assessment team will evaluate any potential changes to fishery specific management for the purse seine fleet, but at this time</p>

	<p>escapement data collected by SakhNIRO and SakhRybvod). The AFC has responsibility for the distribution of expected yearly catch of salmon among users in Sakhalin-Kuril region and identifying areas of commercial fishery, recreational fishing, and traditional fishery of the indigenous population. The AFC was established by regional authorities in 2008 to implement management changes identified in new federal regulation. The AFC is chaired by the regional governor and consists of government, industry and interested stakeholders.</p> <p>Upon the request of companies, the AFCs distribute the annual quotas among the users. The total amount of the quotas is authorized by FAR and accounts for the number of salmon required for filling in the spawning areas and broodstock hatcheries, as well as quotas for sport fishing and harvest by the indigenous population. The AFC meets regularly and makes in season fishery management decisions. Based on the reports about filling of the spawning grounds (prepared and submitted by SakhNIRO and SakhRybvod), the AFC makes operational decisions on the time and duration of fishing by either closing fishing in spawning grounds in case of insufficient filling or by increasing the quotas in order to harvest excessive spawners from the mouths of rivers to avoid overflow of spawning grounds. The AFCs' decisions are made through discussions and consultations with stakeholders. All meetings are open to the public. All decisions of AFC on fisheries management are subject to final approval by Territorial Administrations of FAR. Meeting minutes and decisions are posted on the Territorial Administration website.</p>	<p>has no reason to believe that any such differences will be material to Principle 3 scoring.</p>
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SCS Global Services plans to conduct the on-site for the expedited audit in conjunction with the 1st annual surveillance, to be held in Sakhalin, Russia, September 14-16, 2016. SCS invites all stakeholders to meet with the team and bring forth any issues or concerns about the certification of this fishery. The announcement of the Expedited Audit will be posted separately and will feature further detail regarding the assessment and opportunities for participation.

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