

Informal Fisheries Consultations Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada

Basic Instrument

None

Authorities

Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act, 16 U.S.C. 1822(a), which authorizes the Secretary of State to negotiate international fisheries agreements, and 16 U.S.C. 1855(d), which authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to promulgate regulations necessary to carry out the Magnuson Act.

Member Nations

United States and Canada

Meetings

Parties meet annually, alternating meetings between the United States and Canada. This meeting generally takes place during the summer.

Description

The United States and Canada have agreed that annual informal consultations on bilateral, multilateral and global fisheries conservation and management issues are of benefit to both Parties. These consultations usually take two days to complete and are designed to provide an informal platform for broad coordination/communication as opposed to negotiation of final agreements.

One day of the meeting is generally dedicated to bilateral and multilateral fisheries management issues of mutual interest. Discussions on bilateral fisheries issues tend to focus on conservation and management of shared stocks (such as Pacific albacore, Pacific hake, and species of mutual concern in the Gulf of Maine). In many cases, separate negotiations are underway on these species, and this meeting allows officials on both sides to discuss avenues for future progress. Discussions on multilateral issues typically focus on issues of mutual interest within the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO), the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), and broader issues associated with tuna RFMOs.

The second meeting day is generally devoted to global fisheries/policy issues. These discussions tend to touch on international fisheries agreements and initiatives (such as on-going FAO work, implementation of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, and development of the annual UN General Assembly Fisheries Resolution). The consultations are used to trade information on the status of implementation of these instruments and initiatives, as well as to discuss ways to encourage their implementation by other countries. In addition, Parties discuss fisheries- and oceans-related developments in economic organizations such as APEC, the OECD Committee on Fisheries and the FAO Subcommittee on Fish trade. Finally, these consultations are used for discussion of species of mutual concern at the global level, such as sea turtles, sea birds and sharks.

Recent Activities

Representatives of the United States and Canada met in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada during 5-6 July 2012, to discuss a range of fisheries and oceans issues of mutual interest. The U.S. Delegation included representatives of the Department of State, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the National Marine Fisheries Service. The Canadian delegation included representatives from the Departments of Fisheries and Oceans and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

The meeting agenda included specific topics within the following categories: national and international developments and priorities; regional issues and regional fisheries management organizations; bilateral issues; United Nations issues; and other fora.

Upcoming Meeting:

The next informal consultation will take place in Silver Spring, Maryland, during July 2013.

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