Japan-Soviet Fishery Treaty Curtails Japanese Salmon Fishing

The Japanese salmon fishery in the northwest Pacific has been dealt a serious blow by the various new restrictions introduced in the 5-year Japan-Soviet Bilateral Fishery Cooperation Agreement which was signed in Moscow on 21 April 1978 between Soviet Fisheries Minister Alexander A. Ishkov and Japanese Agriculture and Forestry Minister Ichiro Nakagawa.

In the protocol to the Agreement governing Japanese catching of salmon in the northwest Pacific outside the Soviet 200-mile fishing zone, Japanese fishermen are allowed to catch a total of 42,500 t or 32.8 million fish in 1978, whichever is fulfilled first. The new salmon quota represents a drastic 31.5 percent cut from the 1977 quota of 62,000 t and a reduction of as much as 46.9 percent from the 80,000 t caught 2 years ago prior to the 200-mile zone declaration by the Soviet Union.

Of this total quota for 1978, catches allowed in open seas outside the Japanese and U.S. 200-mile zones adjacent to the Soviet 200-mile boundaries are limited to 28,000 t or 19.8 million fish. Species limitations are set to 4.3 million fish for chum salmon and 1.6 million fish for red salmon, with a 10 percent allowance each.

The recent Agreement has closed for salmon fishing a traditional fishing ground for Japanese motherships and middle-sized drift gillnet vessels in an area bounded by lat. 44°N, long. 170°E, and the Soviet and U.S. 200-mile zone boundaries. The fishing season for 1978 was set for a 3-month period from 1 May through 3 July, as compared to from 30 April through 10 August last year. The Agreement was to come into force following parliamentary ratification to replace the existing treaty which expired on 29 April this year. The agreements on salmon fishing as proclaimed in the protocol will remain in force until 31 December 1978.

The Soviet Union first proposed a total ban on salmon fishing in the international waters on the grounds of preserving river-born salmon resources in the northwest Pacific over which she claims parent-stream jurisdictional control. The Soviet Union later retracted this stand to propose that regulations governing salmon fishing be renegotiated on the basis of annual bilateral consultations. This proposal was accepted by Japan. In return for the fishing provilege, Japan has agreed to make a payment in goods into a "fishery cooperation fund" which in 1978 would total approximately ¥ 1,760 million (US$8 million at ¥220 = US$1).

The severe quota reduction in the new Japan-Soviet Bilateral Fishery Cooperation Agreement was expected to require a curtailment of Japanese salmon vessels by about 30 percent, which, occurring in the wake of a 20 percent curtailment last year, would bring the Japanese salmon fishing fleet to half of its strength only 2 years ago. The amount of compensation needed for this curtailment plan will total ¥50-78 billion, on the basis of the government contribution at ¥300-400 million/vessel plus contributions from the surviving vessel owners at ¥100 million/vessel. (Source: FFIR[1] 78-6.)

Mediterranean Bluefin Tuna Airlifted to Japan

This year's extremely strong demand for fresh high-grade tuna in Japan has revived a once-abandoned airlift of fresh bluefin tuna from the Mediterranean. Two earlier shipments which had arrived in Japan were quoted at the Tokyo Central Wholesale Market at prices ranging from a high of ¥4,400/kg (US$8.77/pound at ¥228=US$1) to a low of ¥3,900/kg (US$7.75/pound).

The ex-vessel prices of fresh bluefin tuna at the landing ports in the Mediterranean are said to be around Fr. 10/pound (US$2.13/pound).

The cost of shipping from the Mediterranean is higher than from the east coasts of the United States and Canada, since the fish are transported first to Paris before being placed on a flight to Tokyo. The profitable threshold price of airlifted Mediterranean bluefin tuna is reported to be around ¥3,000/kg (US$5.98/pound). (Source: FFIR 78-7.)

North Korea Sets 7-Year Fishery Production Goals

North Korea (People's Republic of Korea) reportedly aims at increasing annual fishery production to 3.5 million metric tons by 1984, the ending year of the second 7-year economic development plan which it is launching this year. These are considered to be scaled down from the previously reported production goal of 5 million tons in the face of limited opportunities for fish landing in the foreign coastal waters.

Chief among the goals in the new economic plan are construction of 20,000-ton factory ship(s), refrigerated

[1]Foreign Fishery Information Releases are compiled by Sunee C. Sonu, Foreign Reporting Branch, Fishery Development Division, Southwest Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA, Terminal Island, CA 90731.

carrier vessel(s), and a series of 3,750-ton class trawlers equipped with modern gear, and development of fishery centers, refrigeration facilities, and processing plants capable of increasing the output of frozen products by 1.8 times, canned products by 3.1 times, and dried products by 1.7 times. Following the previous economic development plan between 1971 and 1975, North Korea's fishery production totaled 1.6 million metric tons in 1976. (Source: FFIR 78-4.)

Canada's Fishery Product Sales to Japan Increase

Canada's fishery product exports to Japan gained significantly in 1977 thanks largely to its 200-mile zone jurisdiction and the stability of its dollar, according to a dispatch from the JETRO (Japan External Trade Organization) office in Montreal. During the first 9 months of 1977, Canada's overall exports to Japan rose to $29,040,000, 4.7 times greater than the comparable 1976 period. During the same period in 1977, the exports from five eastern provinces, consisting mainly of squid, smelt, frozen tuna, and herring roe, totaled $6,690,000, 8.8 times greater than the 1976 period. (Source: FFIR 78-4.)

Geothermal Energy Runs Hokkaido Eel Facility

An eel farm utilizing geothermal heat from a hot spring to control the water temperature in a culture pond during the cold winter in Hokkaido, Japan, has reportedly succeeded in raising the elvers from an average size of 4 cm in length and 0.2 g in weight to an average 7 cm and 0.8 g over a period of 1 month. The farm is reportedly capable of maintaining the water temperature in the 400-m^2 culture pond at as high as 24°C (75.2°F) and the indoor humidity surrounding the pond at 80 percent during the coldest part of the winter, utilizing the heat from a nearby hot spring measuring about 50°C.

In March this year, approximately 60,000 elvers weighing about 10 kg in all were introduced in the pond at a water temperature of 12°C. The temperature was then raised 2°C each day until it reached 23°C, when the elvers were fed the first meal consisting of thread earthworm. The meal was changed later to a diet of proportioned nutrition and especially prepared ingredients. The loss by death by the end of the first month was only about 1 percent of the initial stock. About 500 kg of immature eels averaging about 30 cm in length and 50 g in weight were also reportedly undergoing a healthy growth in the geothermally heated pond. (Source: FFIR 78-6.)

Canada and Japan Settle on Herring Roe Prices

Canadian herring roe processors and Japanese trading firms reached an agreement earlier this year on herring roe prices for export to Japan in 1978. The prices settled for the roe extracted from fresh herring by brine curing were C$6.00/pound for No. 1 grade, C$5.00/pound for No. 2 grade, C$4.20/pound for No. 3 grade, C$2.30/pound for No. 4 grade, and C$1.30/pound for immature roe, FOB Canada. These prices are conditional depending upon the prices for the roe extracted from frozen herring by thawing, which are to be settled in a bidding in about a month. Should the bidding prices exceed the prices for the roe from fresh herring, these prices will be adjusted upward by adding 50 percent of the excesses. Last year's export prices, after adjustment, ended with C$5.42/pound for No. 1 grade. The delivery of Canadian herring roe to Japan was expected to begin in May.

Japan reportedly will import an estimated 12,500 metric tons (t) of herring roe in 1978. This includes about 10,800 t or about 86 percent from Canada, about 600 t or about 5 percent from the United States, about 400 t each from Mainland China and South Korea, and about 300 t from other countries.

The wholesale prices of herring roe at the Tokyo Central Wholesale Market as of 27 February were reported to be ¥5,400 to 5,500/kg (US$10.44-10.63/pound at ¥235=US$1) for extra large size, ¥5,300 to 5,400/kg (US$10.25-10.44/pound) for large size, ¥5,000 to 5,200/kg (US$9.67-10.05/pound) for medium size, and ¥4,500 to 4,700/kg (US$8.70-9.09/pound) for small size, up approximately 20 percent from the same period last year. The current domestic holdings are estimated to be between 300 and 500 t of roe and about 500 t of frozen herring at the processors level. (Source: FFIR 78-4.)

Soviet 1977 Coastal Salmon Catch Double 1976 Record

The 1977 coastal salmon catch by the Soviet Union totaled 139,364 metric tons (t), practically double the 69,723 t it caught in 1976, according to the data revealed by the Soviet delegation to the Japanese-Soviet fishery talks in Moscow on 13 March. This figure surpassed for the first time Japan's high-seas salmon catch for any single year. The Japanese Fishery Agency spokesman expressed surprise at the Soviet figure, and attributed the increased Soviet catch in 1977 to the rebounding fish resources and the drastic reduction in Japan's high-seas salmon quota in 1977. (Source: FFIR 78-5.)

U.S.S.R. salmon catch by species, 1971-77.

Year	Catch (t)				
	Red	Chum	Pink	Others	Total
1971	2,249	10,546	58,445	6,355	77,595
1972	952	5,112	20,428	4,121	30,613
1973	1,713	4,345	66,449	4,351	76,858
1974	1,103	7,058	31,981	5,718	45,860
1975	1,474	6,726	68,994	5,722	82,917
1976	1,128	9,789	53,272	5,534	69,723
1977	1,884	16,212	114,270	6,998	139,364