

2009 North Pacific Synthesis Workshop

by Skip McKinnell and Michael Dagg

They came from all “corners” of the North Pacific, some still with luggage in hand, to the welcome reception at the Pineapple Room for an enticing seafood feast. Some delightful conversations and a warm relaxing climate established a great collegial stage for the four days of presentations, discussion, debate, understanding, and work that followed. This international team of scientists that is leading the development and compilation of the upcoming PICES report on status and trends of the North Pacific met from December 1–4, 2009, in Honolulu, U.S.A., to review the regional chapters, to compare and contrast regional variability, and to develop thematic summaries of how, why, and where the North Pacific is changing. The objective of the workshop was to produce a first draft of a cross-cutting synthesis of what had occurred in each region from 2003–2008. It was a daunting task for a short meeting with no part of it written in advance. Perhaps it was the great venue at the East–West Center, perhaps it was the encouragement of the sun and surf to have a sunny perspective, but everyone rose to the challenge, and we left with a first draft of what will become the synthesis chapter.

In the summer of 2008, nine Lead Authors were invited by the editors, Drs. Skip McKinnell and Michael Dagg, to develop comprehensive summaries of ecosystem variability for the marginal seas of the North Pacific: Yellow/East

China Sea, Tsushima-Liman region, Okhotsk Sea, and Bering Sea; for the boundary current regions: Kuroshio, Oyashio, California, and Alaska; and one chapter for the large basin around which they are distributed. Each lead author was invited to assemble their own team to report on everything from weather and climate to seabirds and whales, and everything in between. As it had been 5 years since the first overview was developed, the focus period for this exercise was 2003–2008. By the time we met, several chapters were complete and several were undergoing final edits. Only one chapter has yet to make an appearance but it is anticipated before the final cutoff, December 31, 2009.

The approach taken by Drs. McKinnell and Dagg in developing this report was to focus on the integration of the regional results. A synthesis team was developed, comprised of the Lead Authors of the regional chapters, representatives of the PICES Technical Committee on Monitoring (MONITOR) and Disciplinary Advisors drawn from the PICES Scientific Committees, with a few invitees to fill disciplinary/thematic gaps. The project was sufficiently interesting to Frank Whitney, for example, to draw him back from semi-retirement to synthesize the nutrient/chemistry theme, and he undertook a new analysis as part of his contribution.



Workshop participants: (front) Akihiko Yatsu, **Sanae Chiba**, Jennifer Boldt, Nicholas Bond, **Sonia Batten**, Young Jae Ro, **Sinjae Yoo**; (middle) James Irvine, Frank Whitney, **Hiroya Sugisaki**, David Mackas, Michael Foreman, **George Hunt**, **Steven Bograd**; (back) Skip McKinnell, Michael Dagg, **Vyacheslav Lobanov**, Oleg Katugin. Absent: **Phillip Mundy**, Ian Perry, **Vladimir Radchenko**, John Stein, Sun Song. Locals missing: Jeff Polovina, Michael Seki, Phoebe Woodworth. Names in bold are Lead Authors of the regional chapters.



Fisheries contingent: Jennifer Boldt, James Irvine and Akihiko Yatsu.



Fish (Jennifer Boldt and James Irvine) – physics (Vyacheslav Lobanov) interaction.



Day's end: Nicholas Bond, Michael Foreman, Steven Bograd and George Hunt.

Where to go from here? As you read this in early 2010, the editors are preparing the final text and figures of the regional chapters for printing. The synthesis will be sufficiently developed by the end of January 2010 to be sent for external review. The production schedule calls for final text, graphics, and photographs for all regional chapters and the synthesis to be sent for print formatting on March 31, 2010, with the report sent to the printer by June 1, 2010. The book, containing the 10 chapters, will be published as PICES Special Publication No. 4 titled “North Pacific Marine Ecosystem Status and Trends, 2003–2008”,

and should be available a few weeks later. The Special Publication will be accompanied by a brochure that will summarize the key findings of the report for the public.

A remarkable part of the effort to produce this report is the number of volunteers who were willing to make written contributions, to lead, organize, and write chapters, to include previously unpublished results, and to grapple with the challenges of synthesizing key messages from across regions to make sense of our changing world. For that, the editors are especially pleased. The Governing Council had called for PICES scientists to make incremental improvements over the pilot project that was PICES Special Publication No. 1 (2004), but they are getting much more from this team.

We thank Dr. James Irvine (Pacific Biological Station, Canada) who is Chairman of the Stock Assessment Working Group of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission and who was invited to represent that organization at the workshop and to participate in the synthesis. Special thanks is also given to Dr. Oleg Katugin (TINRO-Centre, Russia), a member of the Advisory Panel on *Status, Outlooks, Forecasts, and Engagement* (SOFE) of the FUTURE Science Program of PICES that is responsible for the future of ecosystem status reporting in PICES, who agreed to present the Okhotsk Sea results on short notice, and who provided a nice collection of photographs from the workshop. In addition to being part of the fisheries synthesis, Jennifer Boldt (Pacific Biological Station, Canada) acted as rapporteur for the workshop and for that, the editors are very grateful.

We are also grateful to Drs. Michael Seki and Jeff Polovina from NOAA’s Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center in Honolulu for their help with projectors. Christina Chiu at the PICES Secretariat was responsible for the seamless logistical arrangements made for the workshop and its participants.



Editors of the North Pacific Ecosystem Status Report: (left) Dr. Stewart (Skip) McKinnell (mckinnell@pices.int) has lost track of what he is, but he works for PICES; (right) Dr. Michael Dagg is Professor at the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (mdagg@lumcon.edu) and Chairman of the PICES Biological Oceanography Committee (BIO), and he uses a Mac.