



S.S.C. Photo Centre, Karl Sommerer

The West Coast

The U.S. and Canada have a new salmon conservation treaty, and West Coast catches have stopped declining for the first time in 30 years.

In the 19th century, there was an abundant supply for Indian tribes, the early white settlers and the small offshore fleets.

When the catch began declining in the 20th century, the two countries undertook separate conservation efforts but progress was slow, and by the 1960s, it was clear that the complex problems required a cooperative solution.

Negotiations began and continued for 20 years.

In 1985 the Pacific Salmon Treaty was signed. It established the principle that

fishermen in each region should not catch more fish than the region produces, while respecting existing fishing patterns and taking into account natural yearly fluctuations in salmon stocks. It set up a commission to monitor fisheries and to fix catch limits. Governments in both countries, at all levels, are encouraged to spend money to improve and protect spawning grounds and hatcheries. It is hoped that the catch will eventually be fully restored to its previous high.

The two countries are now negotiating a pact on the salmon catch in the Yukon River, which was not covered by the 1985 treaty. The sixth round of talks is set for this spring.

THE TUNA TREATY

West Coast Canadian and American albacore tuna fishermen share offshore fish and on-shore facilities.

In 1981 the governments agreed that each fishing fleet could take tuna in the other's jurisdictional waters beyond the traditional 12-mile baseline.

Canadian vessels may use the services and facilities of ports in Washington State and American vessels may use those in B.C. ports.

Vessels in foreign ports may land catches for duty-free shipment to their own country or sell them locally on payment of customs.

They may obtain fuel, repairs and equipment at the same rates charged the native vessels.