

United States-People's Republic of China Bilateral Fisheries Consultations

Basic Instrument

There is no formal instrument.

Implementing Legislation

None.

Member Nations

The United States and the People's Republic of China (China).

Meetings

The countries meet periodically in the United States or China. The venue is decided prior to each meeting.

U.S. Representation

Delegations consist of one representative from each Government, as well as support staff and advisors. The current U.S. Representative is Ambassador David Balton, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and Fisheries, Department of State.

Description

From 1995 to 2004, the United States and China maintained a bilateral fisheries relationship under terms of a Governing International Fisheries Agreement (GIFA). Although the GIFA expired in July 2004, the two countries have continued to collaborate on fisheries and other marine science programs through a bilateral science and technology agreement, and on high seas driftnet fisheries enforcement via a *Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Effective Cooperation and Implementation of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/215 of December 20, 1991*, known more generally as the U.S.-PRC Shiprider Agreement.

Recent Activities

Bilateral Fisheries Meeting: Representatives of the U.S. and Chinese Governments last met in Beijing on May 8-10, 2002, for a comprehensive discussion of fisheries issues of mutual concern. The U.S. delegation was led by Ambassador Mary Beth West, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oceans and Fisheries, U.S. Department of State. Representatives from NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Coast Guard were included on the delegation. The Chinese delegation was headed by Li Jianhua, Deputy Director General of the Bureau of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, led the Chinese delegation. In opening comments, both sides noted the importance of continuing already productive bilateral cooperation on fisheries.

The two sides discussed reducing fishing capacity; China's ratification of the United Nations (UN) Fish Stocks and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Compliance Agreements; implementation of the FAO International Plans of Action on capacity, shark finning, seabird by-catch, and illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing; issues of mutual concern, including stock management, compliance, and non-member fishing, in the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna; cooperation on negotiations for the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention; effective implementation of the UN General Assembly Resolution 46/215 (high seas driftnet moratorium) in the North Pacific Ocean pursuant to the terms of the U.S.-PRC Shiprider Agreement; cooperation on the Central Bering Sea Pollock Convention; support for U.S. oceans and fisheries initiatives at the World Summit on Sustainable Development; and China's full membership in the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Living Marine Resources.

U.S.-PRC Shiprider Agreement: The United States and China continued to work together in 2007 to ensure effective implementation of the United Nations global moratorium on large-scale high seas driftnet fishing in the North Pacific Ocean pursuant to the terms of the U.S.-PRC Shiprider Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU established boarding procedures for law enforcement officials of either country to board and inspect U.S. or Chinese flagged vessels suspected of large-scale high seas driftnet fishing. It also established a shiprider program, which allows Chinese Fisheries Law Enforcement Command (FLEC) officials to embark on U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) resources during each driftnet fishing season. Pursuant to this provision, China has provided a total of 46 enforcement officials to the USCG since 1994. As a bilateral enforcement agreement, the MOU facilitates/expedites investigations of suspicious vessels when they are encountered on the high seas. The MOU will expire on 31 December 2009.

Pursuant to the provisions of the MOU, China's FLEC continued to participate in high seas fisheries enforcement in 2007. As in past years, this participation was financially supported by NOAA, which facilitated logistics and travel needs of Chinese officials. In May 2007, the USCG hosted familiarization visits for FLEC enforcement officers, as well as an operational planning meeting for the 2007 enforcement season. Two FLEC officers rotated through the North Pacific Regional Fishery Training Center in Kodiak, Alaska, from April-August 2007. In addition, two FLEC shipriders were deployed on the USCG Cutter *BOUTWELL* during its illegal, unreported and unregulated fisheries (IUU) patrol. The FLEC officials in Kodiak passed up-to-date operational information to their colleagues on board the Coast Guard cutter at sea. These officials were instrumental in facilitating communications between the USCG and China's FLEC and effectively expanded the jurisdictional reach of both enforcement agencies allowing for the largest number of high seas driftnet vessel seizures in the North Pacific since the implementation of the MOU. The USCG hopes to host a similar number of Chinese officials during the 2008 fishing season.

Next Meeting: The two countries have not yet scheduled the next comprehensive fisheries consultation.

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