

Okha Comprehensive FIP Workplan – Action 7: Demonstrate that the management strategy to protect ETP (protected) species is effective.

PIs: 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.3

In addition to the adopted in 2018 multi-year Plan (for 2018-2022 period), additional action plan was developed including policies and procedures for logging each kaluga catch and release event, internal “Okha, LLC” and “Rybnovskii Losos” employee awareness-building, as well as consultations with specialists of various organizations on kaluga status in the Sakhalin region. During the current calendar year, the following activities have taken place:

1. To educate the fishermen and other company staff members on the kaluga life cycle, measures required for conservation of the species, as well as the statutory acts that regulate its conservation, a study guide was developed and distributed to the foremen of the fishing crews. In turn, every foreman made sure to pass the information to all fishermen in his crew. The study guide dedicates special attention to information regarding juvenile kaluga migrations in the Amur liman for feeding where they are known to enter nets in pursuit of prey – pink and chum salmon. Another emphasized topic is the importance of kaluga release without taking any out of the natural environment. The manual provides information on the environmental laws of the Russian Federation and the penalties for listed species poaching (the penalty fee for one individual kaluga (regardless of weight and size) is currently set at 269,250 rubles (USD\$4,255), while for taimen it is 10,635 rubles (USD\$168)).

2. A consultation with the representative of the biodiversity task group of the Sakhalin region Ministry of Natural Resources Sergey S. Makeev was held on the status of kaluga in our region.

Makeev in turn consulted the author of the section on fishes in “RF Red Book” Nikolai Ivanovich Shilin (Severtsov Institute, Moscow). Shilin explained that in the Sakhalin region, kaluga is listed only in the regional Red book and if the fishermen release this species into the wild at the catch location, no violation takes place.

We also held consultations with representatives of the following agencies:

- Sakhalin-Kuril Territorial Administration – with the head of the city of Okha office Elena P. Kirchenko;
- Sakhalinrybvod – with Director Galina S. Rudakova and Deputy Director Pyotr S. Sukhonos;
- border guard detachment of the Sakhalin Region Federal Security Service – with the director of the law enforcement intelligence operations in Okha S.N. Kasamanov;
- SakhNIRO – with a department manager, A.A. Antonov, PhD;
- Sakhalin Fishing Companies Association (ARSO) – with president Maxim G. Kozlov and vice-president Pavel S. Kolotushkin

All representatives confirmed that “by-catch” results from the process of fishing, in other words, when the bioresource is taken out of its natural habitat, stored and processed. Since in the case of “Okha, LLC” and “Rybnovski Losos” the act of removing kaluga from its natural habitat does not take place, then for us kaluga is not considered “by-catch”. What happens is an accidental entry of kaluga into the nets during feeding migrations.

3. For the first time in the history of observations, data collection on the instances of kaluga entry into nets and their subsequent release was implemented.

According to Item 2 of the Supplemental Activities Plan, a procedure for recording the facts of captured kaluga release was developed.

The procedure includes 3 steps:

1 –trapnet inspection and immediate release of kaluga without its removal from natural habitat;

2 – recording of information into the foreman’s journal including the date of kaluga release, the fishery parcel numeric code where the kaluga was found, and the number of kaluga individuals - to be logged in by the fishing crew;

3 – the final report by the fishing crew foreman at the end of the fishing season to the company administration and the eco-certification consultant.

During the 2019 fishing season, data collection on kaluga entry into trapnets was initiated for the first time. The procedure developed for collection of this information was tested. Kaluga entry was observed at two different fishery parcels: № 65-06-37 and № 65-06-38 (Figure 1).

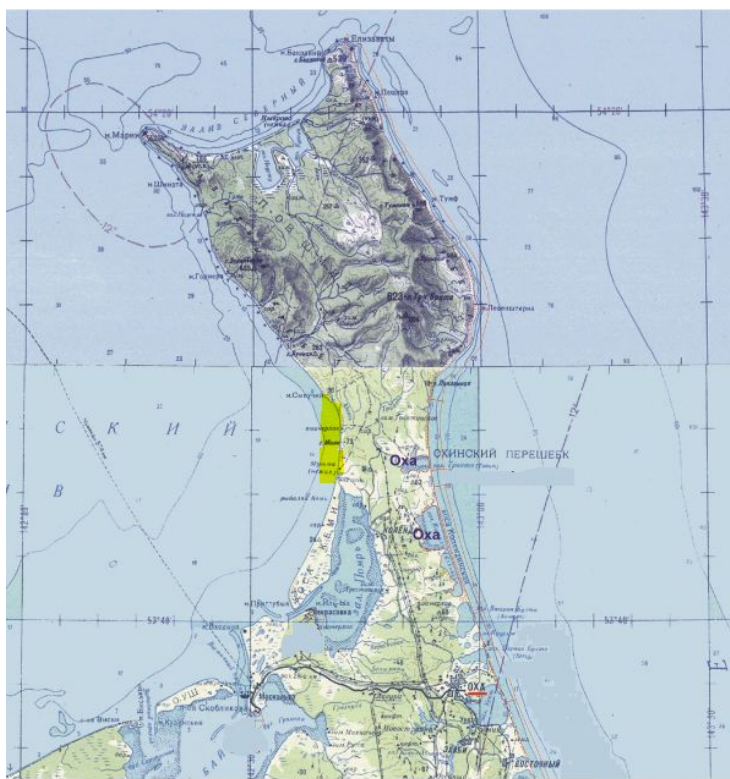


Figure 1. Location (highlighted area) of fishery parcels where kaluga entry into fishing nets was monitored, 2019.

Recommendations

1. Continue and expand the kaluga logbook program to cover most (preferably all) the Clients fishing parcels in Northwest and Northeast Sakhalin in 2020
2. Include any incidental captures of Sakhalin taimen.