

EARLY NUMBERS SHOW ANOTHER PINK SALMON COLLAPSE IN THE MAKING

Safe Migration Route Through Salmon Farms Essential

September 28, Vancouver – Environmental groups, independent scientists, First Nations, tourism operators and commercial fishermen today called for the provincial government to empty fish farms in order to provide a safe migration route for the wild salmon of the Broughton Archipelago after preliminary numbers of pink salmon returns show another stock collapse in the making. The groups also called for a coast-wide moratorium on new fish farms and a transfer to closed containment farms as the long-term solution.

“The returns of pink salmon are dismally low and scientific research has proven that sea lice from the fish farms is the root of this problem,” said biologist Alexandra Morton, representing the Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform (CAAR). “Two rivers, the Wakeman and Kingcome, have less than one hundred fish and others are well below critical levels required for the continued survival of the stock.”

Fish farm companies say there is no need for concern, but even the most abundant run, the Glendale River at 140,000 fish, is nowhere near the million fish that returned in 2001.

“Many of our businesses and operations completely depend on healthy wild salmon stocks,” said Brian Gunn, president of the BC Wilderness Tourism Association (WTA) representing more than 100 nature-based tourism operators and sector associations. “We want government to mandate a fallow and they must act now before all the farms on the route are fully stocked.”

The Kwicksutaineuk-Ah-Kwa-Mish, the Namgis and the Tsawataineuk nations live in the heart of the Broughton, their traditional territory, and are witnessing the devastation from fish farms.

“Open net fish farms continue to undermine to our wild salmon, marine ecosystems and traditional way of life,” says Chief Bill Cranmer of the Namgis First Nation. “We need to stop the fish farm industry from eradicating the lifeblood of the coast, the wild salmon.”

Instead of taking the necessary steps to protect the wild salmon from the fish farms, the BC government is intent on expanding open net pens in the Broughton (five applications) and northward, where new two applications have been approved near the mouth of the Skeena River.

“Salmon farms have brought disaster to the Broughton and fishermen are worried their livelihoods are at risk should this industry expand,” said Joy Thorkelson, North Coast Representative for the United Fishermen and Allied Workers’ Union – CAW. “The federal and provincial governments should be fixing this problem, not permitting farms into new areas such as the North Coast.”

For analysis & maps of the proposed fallow route visit

www.farmedanddangerous.org and for more interviews please contact:

Alexandra Morton, Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform (CAAR) at (250) 949-1664
Brian Gunn, President of the Wilderness Tourism Association (250) 203-3045 or (250) 286-4080
Chief Bill Cranmer, Namgis First Nation at (250) 974-8460

Joy Thorkelson, the United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union Wed only (250) 741-4006 and
Thurs on at (250) 624-6048