



Indefinite Suspension Announced

An indefinite suspension on the issuance of new licences for salmon farms along British Columbia's North Coast was announced March 27th by Pat Bell, B.C. Minister of Agriculture and Lands. The Province will suspend the issuance of licenses for finfish aquaculture in North Coast waters 150 km from the mouth of the Skeena River. The announcement comes almost a year after the Special Committee on Sustainable Aquaculture presented 44 recommendations to the Province of B.C including: no new salmon farm sites north of Cape Caution; effective fallowing regimes during out-migration to protect juvenile salmon populations; and no new salmon farm sites until a transition is made to closed containment technology. While we are pleased to see the B.C. Government taking some action, the suspension is not binding and the South and Central Coasts continue to be threatened by existing and new open net-cage salmon farms. In the period following the Committee's report, there have been six new salmon farming licences announced for the South and Central Coasts.

B.C. is not the only place feeling the devastating effects of sea lice from salmon farms. In Scotland, the Fisheries Research Services found "strong evidence that sea lice from caged salmon contaminate wild fish -- and the problem seems to be getting worse." A recent article in the New York Times (for a link to the full article, visit our website at www.saveoursalmon.ca) discussed the recent disease outbreak in open net-cage salmon farms in Chile. A virus called infectious salmon anemia or ISA is killing millions of salmon destined for markets in the U.S., Japan and Europe. The New York Times reports that the infected salmon are being treated with antibiotics that are not permitted for use on animals in the U.S. Yet these salmon are still permitted to be exported, and may end up on Canadian dinner tables. Not only are these salmon farms killing the wild salmon and polluting the marine environment, we may soon find they are causing health issues among humans. Moving to closed containment will alleviate many of the threats posed by open net-cage salmon farms.

SOS Fundraising Events

On behalf of the Save Our Salmon Initiative, Eric Hobson hosted four events in March and April. In Calgary, Eric hosted a reception and a luncheon at the Bow Valley Club. In late March, we visited keen anglers in Alamo, California, and most recently a luncheon was held in Vancouver. Special thanks go out to Dick Huisman of the Bow Valley Club for his sponsorship of the April 2 luncheon, and to Hazel Clegg for her generous hospitality in Alamo. Our thanks also go to the presenters at these events, including research biologist Alexandra Morton, Dr. John Volpe from the University of Victoria, Chief Robert Chamberlin of the Kwicksutaineuk/Ah-Kwa-Mish First Nations, and of course, Eric Hobson. Plans are also being finalized for a day trip to the Broughton Archipelago to visit Alex Morton's research station and witness the impact of sea lice on juvenile salmon as they migrate past areas with open net-cage salmon farms. We will be heading to Toronto and Durango, Colorado in June. Many of the people who have attended an SOS Initiative event have offered to help. We are very encouraged by the support we have received. If you would like further information any of the upcoming events, to learn more about the issues, or to donate to the Save Our Salmon Initiative, visit our website at www.saveoursalmon.ca or contact Renée at renee@saveoursalmon.ca.

New Science Published

Researchers Alexandra Morton, R. D. Routledge, and Martin Krkosek have published a new report on the effects of sea lice on wild salmon. While previous reports have been restricted to pink and chum salmon from the Broughton Archipelago area of B.C., their new report is a culmination of 2 years of sea louse field surveys of wild juvenile pink and chum salmon, as well as wild Fraser River sockeye and Georgia Strait herring in the Discovery Islands region of B.C. The study found that exposure to open net-cage salmon farms was the only consistently significant predictor of sea lice abundance. These results suggest that the association of salmon farms with sea lice infestations of wild juvenile fish in Pacific Canada now extends beyond juvenile pink and chum salmon in the Broughton Archipelago. Canada's most abundant and economically valuable salmon populations migrate through the Discovery Islands. The sea lice transmission from farm to wild fish in this area may have important economic and ecological implications.

To read more on this new science, visit www.saveoursalmon.ca for the link to the [North American Journal of Fisheries Management](http://www.northamericanjournaloffisheriesmanagement.com).

Constitutional Challenge Filed

On Tuesday, May 6, research biologist Alexandra Morton joined forces with the B.C. Wilderness Tourism Association and commercial fishing organizations in filing a petition that seeks to strike down all the aquaculture regulations B.C. has put in place. Ms. Morton said if the petition succeeds, and the authority of the province is struck down, the groups would then consider legal action against the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) for failing to act to protect wild salmon. The petition claims DFO did not have the constitutional authority to delegate the management of salmon in sea pens to the province. The petition, which is expected to be heard in court in several months, also seeks to prohibit the B.C. government from renewing several fish-farm licences.

Prior to filing this claim, SOS's B.C. legal counsel discussed the petition in detail with legal counsel for the constitutional challenge and advised us that there are no legal issues that will conflict with the claim we have formulated.