

Photo: Rolf Hicker www.vancouverislandtours.info

WILD SALMON DON'T HAVE TIME TO WAIT



The backbone of life on the coast is threatened by PRV

In Alaska—where open-net pen salmon farms have never been permitted—salmon harvests are some of the largest on record this year.

Meanwhile, just over the border in BC, wild salmon numbers are crashing. Shocking images of emaciated grizzly bears are making waves in international news media. Bears depend on wild salmon to fatten up for winter.

Yellow-tinged wild salmon are showing up across the BC coast. Pacific salmon infected with the Piscine orthoreovirus (PRV) are known to turn yellow, and PRV is widespread in farmed salmon.

On October 4th, during the federal election when there was no sitting Minister of Fisheries, the Department of Fisheries (DFO) made a decision around testing for PRV in response to two court rulings to revise their PRV policy. The Department of Fisheries is deeply divided on the issue of PRV. Some of their scientists believe that PRV is endemic to BC, and harmless.

Others at DFO can see the evidence that PRV is from the Atlantic Ocean, and has now become ubiquitous in BC farmed salmon. A study published in 2018 reported that PRV behaves differently in Pacific Chinook salmon than Atlantic salmon—it causes their red blood cells to explode, leading to liver failure and jaundice!

The outcome? The Department decided to test only for the 'BC strain' of PRV. DFO scientists disagree whether a BC strain of PRV exists. PRV comes from Norway, and Clayoquot Action's testing of salmon farms in Clayoquot Sound is showing that the PRV present on Clayoquot fish farms is the Atlantic PRV1a sequence variant.

In 2018 the state of Washington, immediately to the south of

BC, banned open-net pen salmon farms from their waters by 2025. In the interim period, they are not allowing salmon infected with PRV to be put into the water. They have ordered that 1.8 million farm fish be destroyed rather than put their wild salmon at risk...

There are two important reasons why we should not allow PRV-infected salmon into BC open-net pens:

- 1) crowded salmon farms amplify viruses and broadcast them to the surrounding environment;
- 2) salmon farms allow the virus to breed, mutate, and become more virulent—as happened in Norway.

Wild salmon are in crisis in British Columbia, and it is past time for all levels of government to act. In Canada, three of the four major political parties are calling for salmon farms to be removed from coastal waters. The charge was led by the federal New Democrat Party (NDP), followed by the Green Party. During the recent federal election, the Liberal Party promised "to develop a responsible plan to transition from open-net pen salmon farming in coastal waters to closed containment systems by 2025."

With two major sea lice epidemics in Clayoquot Sound in the last two years, time is running out for wild salmon. Pesticide use, uncontrollable sea lice numbers, and viral outbreaks are a fatal brew which wild salmon clearly will not survive.

Now more than ever is the time to rally for wild salmon. Do whatever you can, from talking about the crisis with your friends and family, to signing petitions and taking political actions, to supporting conservation groups like Clayoquot Action. The time for watching from the sidelines is past. Take action today at SalmonPeople.ca.



Photo: Sea Shepherd

CSI FIELD REPORT

The flag flapped lightly in the breeze, the sun peeking through low hazy clouds as our volunteers waited on the dock expectantly, stoked to embark on another CSI mission.

Clayoquot Salmon Investigation (CSI) is Clayoquot Action's salmon farm watchdog program. What happens on fish farms happens in remote locations and underwater—out of sight, out of mind. The purpose of CSI is to expose the harms being caused by fish farms in the Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Region.

The focus this year has been on *Going Viral*, a project to sample every active fish farm in Clayoquot Sound for the deadly Norwegian Piscine orthoreovirus (PRV). Because BC salmon farms are open-net pens; particles of flesh, fat and feces flow freely out of the pens, making it possible to collect samples for lab testing.

As we go to press almost every farm has been tested. Full report available soon.

Citizen scientists collect data to monitor for deadly PRV



Last summer Clayoquot Action launched Get Wild!—the first-of-its-kind wild salmon recommendation program.

Tofino restaurants responded enthusiastically—a total of 24 restaurants and vendors have pledged to Get Wild!

Colin Miller, manager at the Dockside Smoked Fish Store writes "In light of our dedication to the sourcing of our salmon and the deep values we hold in protecting wild salmon stocks, it was a natural partnership to participate in the GetWild! program".

Get Wild! celebrates the wild salmon culture and cuisine of Clayoquot Sound. It's about recognizing the incredible gift that wild salmon offer not just to humans, but to over a hundred other species as well. Not to mention providing nitrogen which fertilizes the monumental cedars for which Clayoquot Sound is famous.

You might wonder "how can we save wild salmon by eating them?" Get Wild! is about promoting the idea that wild salmon is a seasonal food to be celebrated and savoured with respect. The mission of Get Wild! is not to encourage endless consumption of precious wild salmon. Rather, this program aims to open up a dialogue around the challenges posed to wild salmon by open-net pen salmon farming.

Randal Frank is proud to serve wild only