



**Clayoquot  
Action.org**

Box 511, Tofino BC V0R 2Z0  
Phone 250-534-9453  
info@clayoquotaction.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## **Salmon lice outbreak could devastate Clayoquot salmon**

Tofino, May 3, 2018—A massive outbreak of salmon lice in the Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve is threatening to wipe out this year's salmon run. Cermaq's documentation on salmon lice for April show that the numbers of salmon lice on seven of their fourteen Clayoquot farm sites are up to ten times higher than the threshold which requires treatment. The regulatory threshold is three motile salmon lice per farm fish.

There are 20 open net-pen salmon farms in Clayoquot Sound, all located on wild salmon migration routes. The salmon lice outbreak is occurring as wild salmon smolts are leaving Clayoquot's rivers to begin their life at sea.

Salmon lice are small parasitic crustaceans that feed on the skin and mucous of fish. Research shows wild salmon populations are at risk from salmon lice coming from farms. Open net-pen farms are crowded with up to half a million salmon, making an ideal breeding ground for disease and parasites such as salmon lice. This drastically increases the number of lice in surrounding waters.

Without salmon farms, wild salmon would not encounter salmon lice until they are adults, big enough to handle them. Juvenile salmon can only carry a load of one louse per gram of body weight—even two lice per smolt is a lethal load.

“This outbreak is an environmental disaster—we are seeing wild juvenile salmon carrying lethal loads of salmon lice”, said Clayoquot Action Campaigns Director Bonny Glambeck. “These fish have been given a death sentence—studies show there is no way these fish will survive to spawn and reproduce”.

Cermaq recently received a controversial permit to use a new pesticide to control salmon lice in Clayoquot Sound. The treatment—Paramove 50—is known to suppress the immune system of the farm fish and trigger outbreaks of viruses such as Piscine Reovirus (PRV).

Salmon lice continue to plague the salmon farming industry globally. The chemical treatments Cermaq plans have not solved the salmon lice problem anywhere in the world. Salmon lice quickly become resistance to new treatment methods.

“This is a band-aid solution for a serious problem that the salmon farming industry is unable to solve. Clearly a new approach is needed, which is why we’re seeing a global shift to land-based salmon farming”, said Ms. Glambeck. “Why are we sacrificing local food security, the wild salmon economy, and the iconic ecosystems of Clayoquot Sound, when the writing is clearly on the wall?”.

The Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve is renowned for its pristine rainforest valleys which provide prime salmon habitat. However, in recent years the salmon of the region have been in drastic decline. For example, the Kennedy River saw no sockeye spawners return last fall.

Clayoquot Action continues to advocate for the removal of open-net pen salmon farms from BC waters.

-30-

Bonny Glambeck, Clayoquot Action Campaigns Director, 250-534-9453 / [bonny@clayoquotaction.org](mailto:bonny@clayoquotaction.org)

High res photos of Clayoquot May 2018 juvenile salmon with lice and Cermaq salmon lice graphs available here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ps-GumjM4j7RmsYT-kVu1GjJR2ojltqz?usp=sharing>

Cermaq’s public reporting webpage:

<https://www.cermaq.com/wps/wcm/connect/cermaq-ca/cermaq-canada/our-promise/public-reporting/>