

[wildsalmonpeople] Fraser Sockeye hang in the balance

[Alex Morton via wildsalmonpeople list](#)<wildsalmonpeople@npogroups.org>
9:16 AM

To [Alexandra Morton](#)

Hello, I hope all of you are doing OK with the pandemic we find ourselves in.

I am writing because the Minister of Fisheries has a critical decision that will influence the future of the Fraser River sockeye and all species of BC wild salmon. The 2020 Fraser sockeye forecast return is much lower than last year, which was the lowest in the history of Canada. We are watching extinction in play.

I spent the past five months examining sea lice on hundreds of juvenile salmon throughout southern BC. This was an unexpected effort triggered by observations of high lice levels on young salmon in the Discovery Islands. I diverted funds from virus research to fund my incredible team to sample and photograph young salmon from Campbell River to Port Hardy and with the approval of the Nations, also in Nootka Sound. What we found was that the salmon farming industry has lost control of its sea lice to the point that wild salmon were in severe distress everywhere we looked, except the Broughton Archipelago where First Nations won the authority to remove several salmon farms every year and the positive impact on young salmon was unmistakable.

Last winter I sat on the Minister's Fish Health Committee where we discussed how DFO should handle rising drug resistance in sea lice in salmon farms. On March 1, DFO issued the industry new Conditions of Licence and the option they chose was never voiced at the committee meetings or in the First Nation consultations that several nations asked me to sit in on.

DFO removed the limit on farm lice completely for 42 days during the time period that young wild salmon migrate to sea. I believe they did this because the only way they could bring the three companies into compliance was to grant them permission to have as many lice as they wanted. I resigned from the DFO committee to make sure my name was not used to endorse this, and I have stopped asking DFO to protect wild salmon, I have turned to the powerful First Nation leadership throughout BC who have a strong mandate to protect wild salmon.

The impact of the lice was heart-breaking, so much suffering and waste. I am grateful to the Nations of the Broughton Archipelago. As a result of their efforts I saw beautiful, sparkly, energetic little salmon - as they should have been everywhere.

I launched this video last night to let people know that on September 30 the Minister Fisheries has to decide whether to enact or ignore Justice Bruce Cohen's recommendation #19 - if we want Fraser River sockeye the salmon farms in the Discovery Islands (off Campbell River) must be removed if they are having greater than minimal impact. I have

included the Minister's phone numbers so you can let her know that you will be watching whether she finds the salmon of the Fraser River worth saving.

<https://vimeo.com/452851661>

In my opinion, the minister cannot look at the young salmon migrating through the Discovery Islands and honestly say the risk of the salmon farms to them is "minimal." I believe DFO has been captured by the Norwegin interests operating farms on this coast and what we are seeing is a scandal that will change this coast forever if we don't let her know that we are watching how she responds to Cohen recommendation #19.

Funding for my work has become critical as I continue to do the research and outreach to make people aware that there is nothing we can do for wild salmon if they are not reaching the open ocean. Thank you to all of you who have become monthly donors, even the smallest amounts are helpful because there is no overhead here... just the work.

<https://www.alexandramorton.ca/donate/>

Please consider sharing this video and/or going to my facebook page and sharing it from there. I welcome all your thoughts on what else we can do to remove salmon farms from the Fraser River sockeye migration route.

Thank you all,

Alexandra Morton