

Salmon

- There are a variety of high profile files underway in British Columbia relating to both farmed and wild salmon. Due to a variety of factors, many wild salmon runs are expected to have very low returns this year, including a number of Fraser River species being considered for-listing as species at risk. Five salmon and one anadromous trout species will be undergoing a process to consider whether or not they should be listed under the Species at Risk Act (SARA). Two runs of steelhead, a species managed by BC, are being considered through an emergency process. Because Fisheries and Oceans Canada has the primary authority for both farmed and wild Pacific salmon, it is important for BC and Canada to work collaboratively on these issues.

Key messages:

1) MAACFA

- On April 5th, BC released the final report of the Minister of Agriculture's Advisory Council on Finfish Aquaculture (MAACFA).
- This multi-stakeholder advisory process had conflicting perspectives on salmon farming but was able to reach consensus on six overarching themes with associated strategic recommendations.
- To support these recommendations, the Council identified a complex set of 29 immediate and long term actions, which are currently being reviewed. Many of the recommendations are the responsibility of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO).
- DFO has been engaged in this process, and BC has been pleased to see many of these recommendations gaining traction, such as the National Science Advisor's new initiative on aquaculture science and the new cost-shared Fisheries and Aquaculture Clean Tech Adoption Program. It will be important that our two governments work together to assess and implement these recommendations.

2) Negotiations with Broughton First Nations

- BC is undertaking sensitive negotiations with five First Nations in the Broughton Archipelago. These First Nations have been consistently opposed to salmon farms in their traditional territories.
- Early discussions have been focused on the province's consideration of tenure renewals coming up in June 2018. However, given DFO's responsibility for fish health and the licensing of salmon farms, we will need senior level engagement by the Minister and DFO as these discussions progress.
- Approximately one-third of total salmon farm production in BC is in the Broughton Archipelago, so these discussions with First Nations will have important implications for the industry.

3) International Year of the Salmon – funding for fisheries

- The International Year of the Salmon (IYS) is a project launched by North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission and the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization and other partners. The IYS will be announced in Fall 2018, with its focal year being 2019, and projects and activities continuing into 2020.
- This could be an opportunity for Canada and BC to increase the profile of wild salmon and to prepare for further investments in fisheries as part of the Budget 2019 process.
- BC recognizes the significant recent federal investments in fisheries science and habitat protection.

- There remain outstanding funding gaps, in particular relating to monitoring and stock assessment, that currently limit our ability to effectively manage these fisheries and represent ourselves well in negotiations with the US.

4) Canada-US Pacific Salmon Treaty

- BC is participating in the Canadian negotiating team seeking to reach a new agreement with the US, on expiring conservation and sharing arrangements under the Treaty. It is critical that we reach an agreement with the US but it is also critical that Canada not accept “a bad deal”.
- We are concerned about the risks of not reaching an agreement by May 2018, but see positive signs of progress in that another negotiating round is planned for April.
- Premier Horgan has discussed the importance of this agreement with the Governors of Washington and Oregon. Given the importance of the treaty to BC, the Premier will consider any other diplomatic efforts that align with Canada’s strategy.
- BC is interested in knowing how it can assist with a Team Canada approach to advocacy on this issue with the US.