



## Watershed/Fisheries

- 1. There has been an inadequate federal investment in BC's fish resources, as evidenced by a large number of species recommended for SARA listing. What actions will you take to ensure the conservation of population and habitat take priority over commercial fishing and habitat degradation?***

For the first time ever, new provisions in the Fisheries Act will require rebuilding plans to keep our fish stocks healthy and sustainable and to have a plan to recover stocks in trouble. Our government is investing an initial \$107 million to implement these historic changes. The former Conservative government gutted the Fisheries Act in 2012 in an omnibus bill, and changes under Harper shifted the focus away from ecological, science-based values resulting in weakened protections for fish and fish habitats. The Conservatives' short-sighted cuts resulted in front-line operations and resources that directly protect fish habitat. We know it is no longer enough to prevent more habitat loss, we need to start reversing the damage left from years of inaction and oversight to bring back much of our important fish habitats across the country.

To keep Canada's oceans healthy, a re-elected Liberal government will move forward with more investments in marine science and fighting invasive species, and will work with coastal communities, Indigenous communities, and others to better protect fish stocks and marine habitats from changes resulting from climate change. This will include introducing Canada's first-ever Aquaculture Act.

To ensure that Canada is better prepared to protect and manage our fresh water in a changing climate, we will also move forward with a new Canada Water Agency. The Agency will work together with the provinces and territories, Indigenous communities, local authorities, scientists, and others to find the best ways to keep our water safe, clean, and well-managed.

- 2. How is the federal government going to implement strategies to ensure the abundance and diversity of salmon and other fish stocks?***

The Harper Conservatives made deep cuts to DFO's Habitat Management Program - jeopardizing the department's ability to recover wild Pacific salmon. Through the BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund, our Government has invested up to \$142 million to support BC's fish and seafood sector, and to ensure the sustainability of wild Pacific salmon and other BC fish stocks. The fund will support protection and restoration activities for priority wild fish stocks, including salmon, as well as projects that will ensure the fish and seafood sector in BC is positioned for long-term environmental and economic sustainability. Through the Coastal Restoration Fund our Government has also provided \$75 million over 5 years to support projects that help to restore coastal aquatic habitats. Since 2016, we have also hired almost 300 new science staff and invested over \$197 million in Budget 2016 to Fisheries and Oceans Canada's science program--the largest investment in aquatic science in over a generation. Our modernized

*Fisheries Act* will also increase enforcement capacity by increasing the number of front-line fishery officers and boots on the ground.

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**3. *Bill C-68 Fisheries Act Amendments received Royal Assent in June 2019. Will you support the early implementation of the ecologically significant area provisions in the act?***

The new *Fisheries Act* includes clearer, stronger and easier rules to establish and manage Ecologically Significant Areas, to provide for more robust protections for sensitive, unique, or otherwise important fish habitats. This includes provisions to consider restoration priorities as part of decision-making, including within Ecologically Significant Areas. Our government is fully committed to the implementation of these crucial provisions.

**4. *Do you support the rapid and orderly transition from open-net pen fisheries to land based farm systems for the fin-fish aquaculture industry?***

Our government continues to ensure responsible aquaculture. We have already announced a number of measures to further enhance aquaculture sustainability:

- A study on alternative technologies for aquaculture (including land and sea-based closed containment)
- Moving towards an area-based approach
- Creating a single comprehensive set of regulations – the General Aquaculture Regulations to bring more clarity to industry and Canadians.

We have also released for consultation:

- An interim Framework for Aquaculture Risk Management (FARM) and;
- an interim Framework on the Transfer of Live Fish.

In British Columbia, a re-elected Liberal government will work with the province to develop a responsible plan to transition from open net pen salmon farming in coastal waters to closed containment systems by 2025.

Our government is taking strong leadership on aquaculture to help ensure fish farming in Canada is both economically successful and environmentally sustainable.

**5. *What plans do you have for a national watershed sustainability initiatives and what level of investment will you support?***

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Our government is committed to conserving and protecting Canada's biodiversity, wildlife, and habitat. Following a decade of lost time under the Harper Conservatives, we've taken action to protect nature. That is why we have invested a historic \$1.3 Billion in Budget 2018 to protect Canada's wildlife and wilderness. We are also doubling the amount of protected lands and oceans. Our goal is to protect 2.3 million km<sup>2</sup> by 2020. Since 2015, we have protected an additional 530,000 km<sup>2</sup> of our land and oceans – an area a little bigger than Spain. We will continue to work with provinces, territories, Indigenous communities and scientists to protect, sustain, and restore our species in their natural habitat.

Building upon this progress, a re-elected Liberal government will conserve and protect 25 per cent of Canada's lands and 25 per cent of Canada's oceans by 2025, working towards 30 per cent in each by 2030.