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6:00 AM PST, OCT. 04, 2019

## **Fisheries and Oceans Canada is failing British Columbia's salmon**

*Canada's Pacific salmon fishery is forced to withdraw from a renowned eco-certification to avoid failing its upcoming audit.*

VANCOUVER —Canada's Pacific salmon fishery is losing its coveted Marine Stewardship Council eco-certification because Fisheries and Oceans Canada, despite repeated commitments, failed to address issues identified with outstanding conditions in independent fishery audits. The industry has chosen to pre-emptively withdraw from the international certification to avoid failing its upcoming audit and having its certification removed.

MSC recertified B.C.'s commercial salmon fishery in 2017, subject to DFO addressing outstanding conditions where the fishery does not meet the MSC standard. These conditions required improvements to fishery monitoring, better stock assessments and reducing impacts on wild salmon populations from harvesting hatchery-raised salmon. An independent 2018 audit reported 40 per cent of these conditions were behind target.

"MSC sets a very low bar for wild salmon sustainability," says Watershed Watch Salmon Society executive director Aaron Hill.

"MSC only certifies whether the management system provides for a sustained harvest," says Raincoast Conservation Foundation wild salmon program director Misty MacDuffee. "It does not certify whether the fishery meets the needs of ecosystems, bears, whales and other wildlife, or whether it is sustainable in the face of climate change."

"The inability to meet even minimum standards for sustainability is an indictment of Ottawa's management of B.C.'s salmon," says Greg Taylor, a fisheries consultant and former industry executive. "The loss of MSC certification will be particularly noted in major European markets where many retailers require it. It will also mean programs like Ocean Wise, SeaChoice and Seafood Watch will no longer be able to recommend B.C. as a sustainable source of wild-caught salmon."

"We can't fish responsibly if we don't know how many fish are making it back to their streams to spawn," says Greg Knox from SkeenaWild Conservation Trust, highlighting the erosion of monitoring of B.C.'s salmon populations over the past decade — a key problem identified by the MSC. "The only real surprise is it took MSC this long to determine DFO's management system did not meet its requirements for a sustainable fishery."

"A benefit of the MSC certification is that it requires the fishery to address key gaps, including lack of monitoring, dealing with the risks of hatcheries and protecting salmon biodiversity," says David Suzuki Foundation senior science and policy analyst Jeffery Young. "Despite having close to a decade to act, the government has failed to deliver on its promises to help the B.C. fishery meet certification requirements."

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