

Dear BC Wildlife Federation,

Thank you for your questionnaire. Below you will find more information on how commitments in our 2020 platform will respond to the important issues you raised.

When it comes to determining the exact timelines and other details about how precisely these commitments would be implemented, a re-elected NDP government would work with civil society groups including BC Wildlife Federation, Indigenous people, and others to ensure we make the best decisions.

The commitments we have made in our platform are designed to give your members, and all British Columbians, a clear idea of the choices a re-elected NDP government would make on the important issues you have raised here.

Below you will find the questions included in your questionnaire, and our responses to each.

1. FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

In B.C., we now have endangered steelhead, endangered caribou, record low salmon and moose populations, and in parts of the province, declining sheep and mule deer populations. Dwindling fish and wildlife values mean increased social conflict and a loss of food security and tourism-related jobs, all while leaving today's British Columbians wondering if they will leave this province better than they found it.

Fish and Wildlife Questions: What do you feel is the most critical factor negatively impacting B.C.'s fish and wildlife and their habitats? If you are elected, what legislative changes or initiatives will you commit to in order to reverse the declining trends for B.C.'s fish and wildlife, and how do you envision that change making a positive impact? Please include costing and timeline for your plan.

(Jurisdiction: Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy)

Our platform makes a number of commitments to support fish and wildlife habitats:

- *Increasing the protection of B.C.'s cherished wildlife and habitats: We will work with neighbouring jurisdictions to cooperatively develop and invest in new strategies aimed at better protecting our shared wildlife and habitat corridors.*
- *Protecting more of B.C.'s old-growth forests: In collaboration with Indigenous leaders, labour, industry, and environmental groups, we will implement recommendations of the Old Growth Strategic Review to protect further old-growth stands – in addition to the 353,000 hectares we protected in September.*
- *Planting more trees for a healthy industry and province: With nearly 300 million trees planted in 2020 – more than in any other year in B.C.'s history – we'll*

continue to make significant investments in forest health, wildfire protection, silviculture, and revitalizing our forests.

- *Protecting B.C.'s salmon populations: We'll work with the federal government to develop new strategies that: Protect and revitalize B.C.'s salmon populations by building on the successful Broughton process and supporting innovation in fish hatcheries; step up protection of fish habitat through our biodiversity strategy.*
- *We will develop a new provincial coastal strategy – in partnership with First Nations and federal and local governments – to better protect coastal habitat while growing coastal economies.*

2. HABITAT AND WATER SUSTAINABILITY

The BCWF, in partnership with the Watershed Security Coalition, is calling for increased investment in watershed security in British Columbia. Population growth, increased development and a warming climate are putting pressure on watersheds in every region of B.C. The solution is to invest in wetland and streambank restoration, invasive species removal, Indigenous and local government watershed monitoring programs, and fish and wildlife stewardship. We need to ensure we have sufficient water left in rivers to support salmonids' migration to their spawning grounds in regions most impacted by climate change.

Habitat and Water Sustainability Questions: Will you establish a B.C. Watershed Security Fund to fund local and regionally-led clean water initiatives and create good, sustainable, local jobs for British Columbians of all ages and backgrounds in watershed restoration, monitoring, technology, training and education? Please provide costing and timeline for your water security plan.

(Jurisdiction: MoE, FLNRORD, Ministry of Health)

Yes. We will protect clean water in British Columbia by creating a watershed security strategy to plan, manage and protect local watersheds for the public good. As part of that strategy, we will seek a partnership with the federal government to establish a Watershed Security Fund to fund Indigenous, local, and regionally led clean water initiatives – and create good, sustainable, local jobs for British Columbians in watershed restoration, monitoring, technology, training, and education.

3. PARKS AND PUBLIC ACCESS

The BCWF is calling for the government to increase funding for B.C. parks and to build new campsites with a B.C. resident priority to catch up with the current heavy demand. Additional funding is required to hire more park rangers and conservation officers. Public access to public resources such as fish, wildlife, public roads, and campsites is a growing British Columbia issue.

Parks and Access Questions: Will you increase funding for B.C. parks and Conservation Officer Service and implement resident-priority booking processes? If so, how much will you allocate for these budgets, when and how

many more campsites will be built? Is public access to public resources and activities such as fishing, hunting, camping and hiking important to you? How will you protect British Columbians access to crown land and address attempts to restrict public access to B.C. parks and wild spaces.

(Jurisdiction: MoE)

Yes, public access to public resources and activities such as fishing, hunting, camping and hiking is very important to our party and government. That is why, in our platform we have committed to expanding BC's popular provincial parks by creating new campgrounds, trails, and protected areas while increasing funding to improve infrastructure and protect park ecosystems. Our recent Economic Recovery Strategy also included significant new resources for upgrading provincial parks and clearing invasive species.

4. FISH AND AQUACULTURE

The BCWF joins with other sports fishing and conservation groups to push for full implementation of the Cohen Commission's recommendations. The aquaculture industry needs to be transitioned to closed containment where possible.

BCWF members and partners have been doing salmon enhancement for years. Citizen scientists and Indigenous communities know what needs to be done to help the fish both as smolts and returning adults. We need to engage all parties to work on sensible solutions to issues. The community fishers need to have a place at the table when discussions are held between governments. There are roughly 9,000 jobs created by community fishing service providers.

Fish Management Questions: With the collapse of salmon populations happening across B.C., how do you anticipate the rebuilding of these populations? How will you ensure the recovery of the endangered steelhead? Will you ensure aquaculture moves to closed containment? Please provide the resources you will dedicate and a timeline for all three questions.

(Jurisdiction: Ministry of Agriculture)

Our platform makes the following commitment: We'll work with the federal government to develop new strategies that:

- *Protect and revitalize B.C.'s salmon populations by building on the successful Broughton process and supporting innovation in fish hatcheries.*
- *Step up protection of fish habitat through our biodiversity strategy.*
- *Ensure B.C. processing of B.C.-caught fish.*

We have accomplished much during our time as government to protect wild salmon, but there is much more to do. We have:

- *Won a five-year \$100 million Salmon Renewal and Innovation Fund co-funded with Ottawa to restore runs*
- *Used a consent-based process to move salmon farms out of Broughton areas without job loss to fish farm workers*
- *Led the work to fix the Big Bar slide last year, which devastated Upper Fraser Runs.*
- *Put tens of millions into watershed restoration as part of our Economic Recovery Plan.*

In addition to our platform commitment above, we will:

- *Work with Ottawa and First Nations to deliver on the commitment to move more farms on shore while protecting jobs as we did on Broughton.*
- *Push Ottawa to double funding commitment to Wild Salmon Recovery to \$200 million by extending our Watershed Restoration Initiative*
- *Step up protection of fish habitat through a provincial biodiversity strategy*
- *Insist Ottawa facilitate owner-operator provisions as in the Maritimes to build up small boat fishing in coastal communities*
- *Call on Ottawa to prohibit foreign ownership of fish quotas (all sea cucumber harvest, for example, is allegedly foreign-owned.)*

5. PREDATOR MANAGEMENT

Many mountain caribou populations are at a record low and moose populations are in significant decline in parts of B.C. Science has shown anthropogenic change as the leading cause, as wolf predation has become a major source of mortality.

The growing grizzly bear population has become a major concern in many of the northern rural and First Nations communities recently. There have been close-call bear encounters and attacks including human and livestock losses. While this scenario may not be important to most of the population that lives in the southern part of the province, it is of serious concern to the northern portion.

Question: Do you support predator management as a part of sustainable science-based wildlife management?

The BC NDP strongly believes wildlife management should be guided by science. As part of our approach to protecting vulnerable and endangered species, we support a range of measures, including maternal penning, habitat restoration and predator management.