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B.C. sustainable salmon certification disputed

By CBC News
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Sockeye salmon harvested from the Skeena and Nass rivers, and from Barkley Sound, will now bear the council's eco-label in fish markets worldwide.

But Watershed Watch Salmon Society ecologist Aaron Hill alleges the three fisheries routinely over-harvest threatened and endangered salmon stocks.

Hill says while eco-certification can be a powerful incentive for improving fisheries management, it becomes meaningless when the bar is set too low.

B.C. fisheries are sustainable, says MSC

The Marine Stewardship Council used an independent organization, Moody Marine Ltd, to assess the B.C. fisheries, which concluded the three B.C. sockeye salmon fisheries met its standards for sustainably managed fisheries.

The international non-profit organization said its certification and eco-labelling program for sustainable seafood allows consumers around the world to select environmentally sustainable seafood when they shop.

A second, separate study is being conducted to evaluate the Fraser River sockeye fishery, which has had disastrously low returns of spawning salmon in recent years, prompting the federal government to launch an inquiry into the apparent disappearance of 10 million salmon during the 2009 run.

B.C. sockeye salmon are primarily exported as frozen or canned products, and approximately 10 per cent is sold fresh, according to MSC.

Japan is the largest consumer of frozen B.C. sockeye, importing more than 90 per cent of the frozen product. The U.K. is the largest consumer of canned sockeye, importing more than 80 per cent of that product type.



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