



Sustainability certification of Fraser River salmon fishery moves ahead

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An independent adjudicator has not supported an objection to [certification](#) of the [Fraser River](#) sockeye fishery by the Marine Stewardship Council.

In February, B.C. environmental groups including the David Suzuki Foundation, SkeenaWild Conservation Trust, and Watershed Watch Salmon Society expressed disapproval as part of a formal assessment process.

The Fraser River Panel—a group that includes government, First Nations and other members from both sides of the Canada-U.S. border—manages the fishery, which is expected to receive certification following a final review.

According to a news release this week from the Marine Stewardship Council, attorney **Wylie Spicer**, who acted as independent adjudicator, did not uphold the objections of the three environmental groups.

But the council acknowledged a federal commission of inquiry has been established to examine the declining Fraser River salmon stock.

“For this fishery, there is uncertainty in the scientific community as to the reasons for the low sockeye returns; however, there is general agreement that commercial fishing pressure is not the cause for these declines since breeding stock levels were high in the years that spawned the fish now returning in low numbers (four years previous),” reads the July 12 release.

Under the certification from the Marine Stewardship Council, 17 conditions must be met. These include: planned implementation of “recovery action plans” for sockeye; consultation or negotiation on First Nations issues and treaty rights; and research on how the fishery will affect the ecosystem.

The council also notes the Fraser River is among “four units of certification in the British Columbia (B.C.) sockeye salmon fishery that sought certification to the MSC standard”.

“The other three units—Skeena River, Nass River and Barkley Sound—were not part of this objection procedure and recently successfully completed certification.”

The Marine Stewardship Council provides certification based on sustainable fishing and seafood sustainability benchmarks.

Applicants from the fishing and seafood industries can voluntarily apply for certification from the non-profit organization, which has offices around the world.

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