

## Morton says B.C.'s salmon "a gift we won't be given again"

**Dan MacLennan**

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Loved or hated by fish farming detractors or supporters, Alexandra Morton's advocacy for the wild Pacific salmon should be the theme to which all can agree.

"The government needs to know that the people of British Columbia want wild salmon," she said two weeks ago from the bank of the Nimpkish River, and last week in Campbell River. "This is a powerful act of democracy. This is an opportunity for people to make themselves visible. If we all stood up, we could be counted."

Morton's Get Out Migration - a march from Sointula to Victoria - wraps up this weekend with rallies in Victoria. It's intended to pressure Ottawa and the industry to move open-net fish farms out of the migration routes of juvenile wild salmon. It's based on the contention that sea lice from fish farms are decimating wild salmon stocks - a contention vehemently denied by the industry.

Beyond that seemingly endless debate is a much more fundamental and ancient truth for the people of BC's coast and rivers - salmon are sacred.

Morton said she thought long and hard before deciding to use that phrase.

"But if you think about the word sacred, it's about life," she said. "This species comes to our door bearing nutrients from the open ocean, carries them up the rivers. Wild salmon feed 200 species, feed 60 per cent of this province. They feed the trees that make the oxygen that we breathe. (They feed) a \$2 billion tourism industry, towns. They are food security.

"They are a gift we won't be given again."

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