

NEWS RELEASE --- For Immediate Release

New evidence shows thousands of unwanted salmon are needlessly killed when no one is watching the fishermen: Groups want oversight

Vancouver (August 15, 2013) --- Shocking video evidence released today shows that tens of thousands of wild salmon from depleted populations are being needlessly killed because the federal government has let commercial fisheries get out of control on Canada's northwest coast. Conservationists are calling on the Fisheries Minister to enforce the rules put in place by her own department to protect these endangered salmon.

Fisheries targeting abundant pink salmon runs on BC's north coast must release chum, sockeye, and other salmon because of concerns for their low abundance in the Nass, Skeena, and dozens of other BC rivers. In the two previous fishing seasons, Watershed Watch Salmon Society, SkeenaWild Conservation Trust, and Raincoast Conservation Foundation have complained about hundreds of tons of salmon being thrown back into the water dead or nearly dead.

The groups now have video evidence from recent fisheries in Area 6, southwest of Kitimat, that prove this shocking and irresponsible waste is occurring, and is likely widespread. The footage can be seen at:

<http://www.watershed-watch.org/resources/north-coast-chum-discards/>

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) has ample evidence that when boats have on-board monitors to watch over fishery practices, fishermen follow the rules, and non-target salmon species are discarded in ways that greatly improve their chance of survival.

"Clearly, the answer to keeping thousands of endangered and at-risk fish alive long enough to spawn successfully is to have observers on board all of these boats, and fisheries enforcement present on the fishing grounds," said Raincoast's Misty MacDuffee.

Greg Taylor, a former fishing company executive, and now Fisheries Advisor with SkeenaWild, said that these controversial fisheries should not be allowed to proceed without addressing this problem. "Other BC fisheries have addressed this problem either with cameras or with on-board observers. Without this oversight, most discarded fish won't survive to spawn," concluded Taylor.

"It's the wild west out there right now," said Aaron Hill of Watershed Watch. "They've discarded around 167,000 chum, sockeye, and other salmon from depleted and endangered populations, with almost zero oversight. The Prime Minister, the Fisheries Minister, and the Pattison Group, which controls most of the seine fleet, need to bring these salmon fisheries into the 21st century."



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