



DFO Response Misleads Public: Bows to corporations

For immediate Release

Vancouver (August 16, 2013): The three conservation groups that publicly revealed the blatant waste of valuable salmon expected some "push back" from DFO but did not expect them to purposefully mislead the public. Yesterday, Watershed Watch Salmon Society, SkeenaWild Conservation Trust and Raincoast Conservation Foundation produced video evidence of fishermen discarding salmon in a manner that returned thousands of dead salmon to the water, contravening their Conditions of License (see link below).

Larry Paike, Director of DFO's Conservation and Protection Branch, said there was 20% observer coverage in this 2013 fishery. Aaron Hill, fisheries ecologist with Watershed Watch Salmon Society who took the video, said this is totally false. "They had 5% coverage, and not a single enforcement officer on the grounds. They had a contractor patrolman who has no enforcement powers -similar to a security guard - present for the largest salmon fishery in Canada this year."

Mr. Paike said yesterday that 'reports of 24,000 prohibited species being landed in Prince Rupert doesn't jibe with what we've observed, but he would follow up with the processing companies to determine if those records are in fact true.'

"This number comes from DFO's own publicly available statistics! How can DFO's head of enforcement for the entire west coast not know this?" asked Hill.

Greg Taylor, a former fishing company executive and advisor to SkeenaWild said "Paike doesn't have to check with the Pattison Group or any other companies unloading these fish. DFO's resource managers provide the information weekly. We used the same information Mr. Paike has access to. DFO requires 20% of the landings to be randomly sampled by independent dockside validators. DFO managers use this information to estimate total landings from a fishery. Dockside validators are required to submit 'irregularity reports' to Mr. Paike's Branch."

Mr. Paike is reported to have stated in the media yesterday that 'it concerns him when they receive information significantly after the fact,' noting that 'effective enforcement requires they receive information in a timely manner;' implying they could have addressed this issue if they received a report.

"We reported these infractions to the contract patrolman on the same day we shot the video," said Hill, "and asked him to report the date, time, and vessel names to DFO. He said he would. They're either not telling the truth, or they're completely out of touch with what is happening on the fishing grounds."

"We've been telling DFO resource managers about these problems every week since this fishery opened in July, as well as in previous years the fishery operated," said Misty MacDuffee of Raincoast. "They can't pretend they didn't know this was happening."



DFO's responses, as reflected by Mr. Paike, make it clear why this situation continues. "DFO does not take the waste of tens of thousands of salmon from depleted populations seriously. They are more interested in defending corporations like the Pattison Group than ensuring the conservation of depleted salmon populations. The solutions are simple: 100% observer coverage like most other fleets in BC have, and consequences for law-breakers. They need to stop denying the obvious, stop making excuses, do their jobs, and fix the problem," concluded Mr. Taylor.

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Video footage can be seen at:

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

Contacts:

Aaron Hill, Watershed Watch Salmon Society
250-818-0054

Greg Taylor, SkeenaWild Conservation Trust & Fish First Consulting
604-970-0277

Misty MacDuffee, Raincoast Conservation Foundation
250-818-2136

Greg Knox, Skeena Wild Conservation Trust
250-615-1990