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News Release

For Immediate Release

Historic Signing of Trilateral Salmon Accord Addresses Declining Wild Pacific Salmon Populations

Government of Canada, Province of British Columbia and the First Nations Fisheries Council of BC sign landmark trilateral agreement to protect wild Pacific salmon

June 21, 2024, Vancouver, B.C. | Unceded traditional territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), S^kwx^wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations |

The Government of Canada, the Province of British Columbia and the First Nations Fisheries Council of B.C. have signed a trilateral accord to urgently address the decline of wild Pacific Salmon.

Signed on National Indigenous Peoples Day, this agreement represents a historic joint commitment between the Federal Government, Province of B.C. and the First Nations Fisheries Council of B.C. to take urgent action to safeguard the species for future generations.

The timing of the signing event is notable, given that wild Pacific salmon holds great cultural significance for First Nations across B.C., conserving and rebuilding wild Pacific salmon populations is crucial to preserving these significant cultural practices.

Wild Pacific salmon are facing historically low population levels as climate change, habitat loss, pollution, and fishing pressures impact the species. Wild Pacific salmon migrate from their natal freshwater streams and rivers to coastal ecosystems before reaching the open ocean. Due to this migration through the province's river systems and across the north Pacific Ocean, the Government of Canada, Province of B.C., and First Nations Fisheries Council of B.C. must act together to address the decline in salmon populations. Only through joint commitment and coordinated effort can wild Pacific salmon be saved.

The Trilateral Accord and Declaration to Address the Decline of Wild Pacific Salmon between the three parties establishes a collaborative process to align and coordinate work on shared wild Pacific salmon recovery priorities. This represents a transformative step that will help the signing partners develop long-term, comprehensive strategies and share resources to address the decline of wild Pacific salmon in a coordinated matter. Jointly developed priority areas of focus include

climate adaptation, ecosystem monitoring, habitat restoration, recovery plans and watershed security.

The accord was signed by the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard, the Honourable Diane Lebovillier, the British Columbia Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture, Kelly Greene, and John Henderson, Vice-President of the First Nations Fisheries Council of B.C.

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Quotes

“Protecting and rebuilding wild Pacific salmon stocks is a priority for our Government, and one that requires bold and immediate action. That said, we can’t do this alone. Today, Canada, the Province of British Columbia, and First Nation leaders are committing to addressing the decline of Pacific salmon in a coordinated manner. I look forward to listening and learning from BC First Nations and developing concerted approaches with all partners involved to restore healthy populations of these emblematic fish, which for generations are so tightly woven into the cultures and economy of the region.”

The Honourable Diane Lebovillier, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

“British Columbia’s wild Pacific salmon are integral to the lives of all who call this province home. This iconic fish is critical for food security, healthy ecosystems and our economy. Working together with First Nations and the federal government, we can support wild salmon recovery and address the significant challenges facing this species.”

Hon. Kelly Greene, Parliamentary Secretary for Fisheries and Aquaculture.

“Working together as one is imperative because the health of our salmon affects us all. Our environment, communities, culture, and wellbeing rely on salmon. We need to work together and build the relationships necessary to ensure that we have salmon for generations to come. The Trilateral Accord is a massive step forward to achieving that goal.”

John Henderson, Vice-President, First Nations Fisheries Council of B.C.

Quick facts

- The populations of wild Pacific salmon have been declining for decades. The population of wild Pacific salmon have decreased by over 90% since the 1970s.
- Recent polling conducted by the First Nations Fisheries Council of BC found that 93% of Canadians are concerned with the decline of Pacific salmon populations and 83% believe that Pacific salmon are important to the Canadian economy.
- There are currently 39 populations of chinook, coho, sockeye salmon, and steelhead classified as at risk (i.e., Special Concern, Threatened or Endangered) by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) in BC.
- The Trilateral Accord for wild Pacific salmon describes how the three parties will work together to align and coordinate actions that address the decline of Pacific salmon while respecting jurisdictional authorities.
- Canada, the Province of British Columbia, and British Columbia First Nations share the common goal of stemming historic Pacific salmon declines. With the signing of this historic Accord, these partners are turning shared goals into concrete action that will benefit generations to come.
- A steering committee, operating under defined Terms of Reference, will be established to develop performance indicators and support the implementation of the Accord.

For more information

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