

For Whales' Sake
By Jackie Hildering

Save Our Salmon

Imagine beautiful British Columbia without its icons like killer whales and bears. If Atlantic salmon fish farms are not moved off the migration routes of BC's juvenile salmon, this is what we are flirting with.

There may still be readers who wince at this topic being "so controversial"; who will argue that Atlantic salmon aquaculture helps wild salmon; and who take this stand personally as they are good people feeding their families as a result of fish farming.

Controversy? The industry itself has admitted that the presence of Atlantic salmon farms plays a role in the transmission of sea lice to wild salmon smolts. Most smolts in the area of fish farms have lice. Very few smolts distant from salmon farms have lice.

Agreed - aquaculture, "fish farming" in its many varieties, may well be the way of the future. However, how Atlantic fish farming is currently conducted is not acceptable. We **can** have both wild and farmed salmon but placing farms on the migration routes of juvenile chum and pink salmon is laying out a mine field for the life's blood of BC's ecosystem. These species of salmon emerge from streams without the protective layer of scales and "humanity" lays a source of parasites in their path.

Take away even what is perceived as the lowly pink salmon and you remove the food for Coho and Chinook salmon, the food for eagles, bears, whales and trees.

Yes, fish farms feed families. However, wild salmon feed fishers' families and the families of those working in wildlife tourism. This grosses the greater revenue. If threatening BC's wildlife is not enough, we're threatening BC's economy and our coastal lifestyles as well.

The government would like us to keep the fish farm issue personal and controversial. This serves as a great distracter from their accountability. They serve but 4-year terms. The loss of salmon is forever.

On November 9th a full-page ad was put in the *Globe and Mail* by a collective of wilderness tourism operators, fishers and concerned citizens. Band together with them in insisting that **government** be held accountable for the future of BC's wild salmon before it really is . . . too late.

Sign the petition at <http://www.savebcsalmon.ca/> .

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