

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Governments Sea Lice Plan Fails Broughton Archipelago Pink Salmon Infected**

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**Sointula** - The young pink salmon of the Broughton Archipelago began their journey to sea this week only to become heavily infected with sea lice again according biologist Alexandra Morton. Results from preliminary research conducted on the weekend found that at least 50% of the young pink salmon she examined were infected with enough sea lice to kill them. The samples were gathered in the region that the federal and provincial governments proclaimed a "safe migration route".

"My initial research shows that young pink salmon are infected with lethal numbers of sea lice in the area now designated as "safe". The chum salmon are also infected," says Morton. "As long as there are fish farms here, there is no safe place in the Broughton Archipelago for wild salmon. I tried to warn them of this, but they would not listen, adopting a farm-friendly plan instead."

In February the federal and provincial governments announced an action plan that includes a combination of fallow farms and heavy pesticide treatment on fish farms experiencing high levels of sea lice. But the plan came under criticism from environmentalists, First Nations, and local residents as they called for all farms to be fallowed immediately with the ultimate goal of removing all open net cage salmon farms from the Broughton Archipelago.

"It just keeps getting worse,says Jennifer Lash of the Living Oceans Society. "They must remove those farms immediately. Any action plan should focus on saving the wild salmon, not salvaging the fish farm industry."

The federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans is conducting research in the region and according to Ms. Morton they are also finding high lice levels.

"It is good to finally see DFO here, using effective methods to catch juvenile salmon, but their results confirm my own. They can no longer deny this problem," says Morton. "I looked at a bucket of pink and chum salmon caught by DFO scientists and they were infected with lethal levels of lice. It's game over for those fish."

Last weeks Science Forum on Sea Lice offered clues on why this is happening, despite fallowing of some farms. DFO researched showed larvae can travel 10km on one Broughton tide. Since adult farm salmon were in place at either end of the "safe corridor" the entire route is now loaded with parasites.

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