



PRESS RELEASE
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Federation Welcomes Inquiry

Vancouver, BC - "The 35,000 members of the B.C. Wildlife Federation are pleased that Prime Minister Stephen Harper has kept his promise and authorized a Judicial Inquiry into B.C. fisheries." said Ken Franzen, Chair of the BCWF Tidal Waters Fisheries Committee.

"While we wish that the scope of this Inquiry went beyond Fraser River Sockeye", Franzen continued, "we accept this as a good beginning. As the oldest and largest conservation organization representing anglers in British Columbia it is our intention to participate fully in this process."

"As the most valuable fishery in the province the recreational sector deserves to have their concerns heard and also be able to question DFO's management policies and practices." Franzen concluded.

It is the opinion of the BCWF that despite the constraints placed on this Inquiry restricting it to Fraser River Sockeye, the Terms of Reference are broad enough to allow a serious examination of almost all of DFO's management and operating procedures.

While the BCWF welcomes this Inquiry it is also the sincere hope of our organization that the reality of the Inquiry will not delay immediately required actions. Actions that are required to be put into place by this spring so that we can begin to understand some of the problems associated with Fraser Sockeye.

It is imperative that the government put into place, prior to the smolts leaving their natal streams this coming spring, a system to track the movement of Fraser Sockeye smolts from those streams to the mouth of the Fraser River and provide some estimate of the survival rate.

This should be immediately followed by a program to monitor and assess the numbers of Sockeye smolts that are present in the Strait of Georgia and the numbers that leave the Strait for the open ocean.

To delay these needed monitoring actions until after May 2011 could very well see the final report of the Inquiry simply lamenting the loss of the Fraser River Sockeye and the fisheries associated with them.

However, putting these much needed monitoring programs in place for the spring of 2010 would aid greatly the Honourable Justice Bruce Cohen in his quest to identify problems and find solutions for his final report.

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For further information contact Patti MacAhonic, Executive Director of the BCWF at 604-291-9990 extension 230 or at patti@bcwf.bc.ca. The BCWF is a province-wide voluntary conservation organization representing over 35,000 British Columbian members whose aims are to protect, enhance and promote the wise use of the environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

The B.C. Wildlife Federation was incorporated under the B.C. Societies Act in 1951 and it became a registered charity in 1969. The Federation is British Columbia's largest and oldest conservation organization.