



## Invitational Scientists' Think Tank

### Managing for Uncertainty: Pathogens and Diseases in Pacific Salmon

November 30 and December 1, 2011

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THINK TANK CONVENORS

December 7, 2011

British Columbia occupies a privileged and precarious position with regard to wild salmon. We are in the rare situation of having significant wild salmon populations, spread across multiple species, juxtaposed with a significant salmon farm presence. In light of what we learned over the course of our expert think tank 'Managing for Uncertainty: Pathogens and Disease in Pacific salmon', we make the following three recommendations, moving from the most specific to the most general.

1. We need to integrate fish health indicators into wild salmon assessments to better understand the role of disease in wild salmon populations. A first priority is the establishment of a transparent monitoring program of wild and farmed salmon in BC to determine both the presence and prevalence of a broad range of disease organisms and potential disease organisms. Reservoirs and routes of transmission of disease organisms and potential disease organisms need to be identified.
2. We must better incorporate current scientific information into salmon farm policy and regulations. Given that the majority of evidence nationally and internationally indicates that salmon farms have a significant chance of harming wild salmon, from individuals to populations, we must look to explicitly manage fish farms as a disease risk for Pacific salmon. We support as a priority more focus on resolving the economic and ecological viability of a transition to land-based salmon aquaculture. Concomitantly, additional precautionary management strategies for salmon farms located on major migratory routes should be mandated.
3. Canada urgently needs to create a separate entity for facilitating scientific research to provide for better management of our wild fish and their habitat. Possible partial models for such an entity might include the former Fisheries Research Board of Canada, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), Australia's

Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO), and several research organizations focusing on fish and wildlife in the United States. Of prime importance is that this entity is thoroughly separated from initiatives that promote economic activity.

**Convenors**

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Patricia Gallagher, Director, Centre for Coastal Science and Management, SFU  
Arne Mooers, Professor of Biodiversity, Biological Sciences, SFU  
Jonathan Moore, Liber Ero Chair in Coastal Science and Management, SFU  
Craig Orr, Executive Director, Watershed Watch Salmon Society  
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**SPONSORS:**

- Canadian Fisheries, Oceans and Aquaculture Management (C-FOAM)
- Liber Ero Foundation
- Save Our Salmon Foundation
- SFU Faculties of Science and Environment
- Watershed Watch Salmon Society
- Willow Grove Foundation
- Anonymous Donor

For more information about the Speaking for the Salmon Program, please visit our website:

[www.sfu.ca/cstudies/science/salmon.php](http://www.sfu.ca/cstudies/science/salmon.php)

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