



## COMMUNIQUÉ

### Wild Salmon Resource Requires Increased Protection and Management, Council Says

*Vancouver, 30 June 2006* -- The future of British Columbia's wild salmon and steelhead populations is at risk from urbanization, lost spawning habitat, and conditions affected by climate change, in the view of the Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council.

In their annual report issued today, the Council members point out the challenges, including the changing nature of aquatic and fisheries resources because water temperatures and flow rates have become more variable. Global warming is expected to reduce spawning success in major areas such as the Fraser River, change ocean food supply, and affect survival of salmon.

The Council members note that salmon management capacity is expected to be strengthened with the implementation of the federal government's Wild Salmon Policy; an initiative that is overdue but presents a reason for optimism about the restoration of public trust and credibility in fisheries management. British Columbians have a valid expectation that wild salmon should be given greater priority in resource decisions. The Council points out that Pacific salmon and steelhead are among British Columbia's most revered symbols of nature's bounty.

The Council also emphasizes that for the Wild Salmon Policy to work as it is intended, sound adoption of conservation strategies and independent assessment of the implementation process are needed. To this end the Council has been working in particular on the Wild Salmon Policy's strategies dealing with habitat and ecosystems.

Habitat threats are very real, as the Council's interim deputy chair Mark Angelo explains: "This annual report repeats the message of our 2005 background paper on intensive agriculture that focused on an array of pressures threatening to destroy what little remains of the rich riverside habitat along the Fraser River which salmon and steelhead stocks depend upon for their survival. We point out, however, that there are a number of innovative and cooperative ways to work with farmers and others to make improvements, and it's not too late to protect these vital areas."

Regarding the fishing sector's prospects, the annual report of the Council notes the change towards more conservative and sustainable management. It states: "The suggestion that the fishery is an industry in decline ignores its evolving nature towards high-value recreational fishing and the constrained fishing opportunities that have been necessary to protect at-risk stocks." The entire Pacific fishery is evolving; the commercial and First Nations fisheries are becoming more sustainable in the process.

On the Fraser River, in particular, there is a need to rebuild trust among the groups of harvesters in the salmon fishery. The Council's annual report advocates, among the many

actions necessary, that more comprehensive and reliable catch reporting requirements be applied throughout the fish processing and distribution systems, in order to deter the illegal salmon sales that have created such controversy in the industry.

Also released in conjunction with the Council's annual report is a brochure entitled *Feeling the Heat: Can We Help Salmon Survive Climate Change?* This special report deals with Fraser River sockeye and the impact of changing temperature and water conditions. It explains how fisheries management has been adapting to the unpredictability and unexpected consequences of climate change.

The Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council was created in 1999 to serve as a source of information to the public and advice to governments on wild Pacific salmon and steelhead and their ocean and freshwater habitats.

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