



COMMUNIQUÉ

Recreational Fishery Has Crucial Conservation Role, Report Reveals

June 29, 2006, Vancouver, BC – The recreational and sport salmon fishery has undergone significant growth in the last century. Sound management and continued maturity of this fishery require both access to the resource and effective conservation measures.

The dual challenge of designing conservation measures and ensuring fishing opportunities for anglers is one of the themes in a new paper issued today by the Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council. Entitled *The Evolution of Recreational Salmon Fisheries in British Columbia*, the background paper was produced by sport fishing authorities Gerry Kristianson and Deane Strongitharm.

The authors explain that the long-term sustainability of both the salmon themselves and the sport fishery are inextricably linked, and effective conservation is an imperative. “The report demonstrates that a high conservation standard to protect wild salmon and a viable recreational salmon fishery are not mutually exclusive,” says Dr. Paul LeBlond, Interim Chair of the Council.

Protecting and rebuilding salmon stocks is necessary to permit predictable and stable fishing opportunities for the chinook and coho salmon that are prized in the recreational fishery, the report says.

Recreational fishing takes only 3% of the overall salmon catch in BC, yet it accounts for more than 40% of the economic contribution of the whole fishing and aquaculture sector. This substantial economic impact is evident in the services and supplies for sport and recreational anglers, including transportation, lodging, guiding and equipment.

At the same time, the recreational fishery takes a significant share of the chinook (40%) and coho (30%) catch, and anglers have an important role to play in ensuring careful management of those stocks.

The report explains how the recreational fishery evolved in British Columbia, and how federal government policies have shifted over the years in order to cope with the competing demands of the sport, First Nations and commercial fishing sectors. The series of royal commissions, enquiries and reviews over the past quarter-century have led to an allocation and regulatory regime that continues to be controversial.

The authors highlight the tension that has developed over the economic costs of fishing restrictions such as those on coho beginning in 1998, when compared with the

conservation benefits of those measures. Since closures can have a devastating economic impact, the authors propose that “the primary management goal should be to shape the fishery to allow for continued opportunity while meeting conservation objectives.”

This report is the third in a series of publications commissioned by the Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council to provide historical context and perspectives on the recreational, First Nations and commercial fishing sectors. The Council is an independent advisory organization providing information and advice on wild Pacific salmon and steelhead and their freshwater and ocean habitats to the federal and provincial governments and to the public.

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