



Interview Opportunity

B.C. Premier deserves applause after release of classified salmon farm disease data, says Alexandra Morton

(Vancouver, August 30, 2011) Yesterday, in a historic moment for the coast of British Columbia, the lawyer representing the Province of B.C. at the Cohen Commission retracted her objection to the release of salmon farm disease data and the data became public. Alexandra Morton can speak to the importance of this once classified data being released through the Cohen Commission, and why she thinks salmon farms have become the gatekeeper to the Fraser sockeye survival.

Key findings:

- Symptoms of the mystery virus in sockeye salmon has been diagnosed 587 times since 2006 primarily in Chinook salmon farms
- There are 2,234 reports of two classic lesions associated with the lethal salmon virus infectious salmon anemia which has spread globally in Atlantic salmon farms

What we know:

- Fraser sockeye began declining in 1992
- The same year salmon farms were sited on their migration route
- Only the Fraser stocks that migrate past salmon farms have declined
- The Harrison sockeye migrate via a southern route and have increased
- Marine Anemia is a mystery virus infecting Chinook salmon farms in the narrowest portion of the sockeye migration route off Campbell River
- Dr. Kristi Miller's research strongly suggests the same virus is killing and weakening the majority of Fraser sockeye
- In July 2007, the industry removed all Chinook farms from the sockeye migration route
- Fraser sockeye rebounded for the 2010 and 2011 runs

“Salmon farms create a dangerous environment that can stimulate disease,” says Alexandra Morton, “whether it is by amplifying endemic disease or by introducing exotic disease. Despite the evidence, government and industry say Infectious Salmon Anemia is not here. Scientists on the stand at Cohen have backed away from Marine Anemia even though they published on it in cancer journals and reported that it causes brain tumors in salmon. I don't think the DFO has a mechanism to deal with this other than trying to hide it and the Province of B.C. has remained silent on this data, even as Marine Anemia became the top candidate cause for the 2009 Fraser sockeye collapse.”

Morton continued, “The province of B.C., by releasing the data, has made a huge contribution with this first step. Now they must reconsider the practice of leasing the seafloor of the sockeye migration route to the aquaculture industry.

For details see: <http://alexandramorton.typepad.com/>.

Peaceful Wild Salmon Warrior Rally outside the Cohen Inquiry today at the Vancouver Art Gallery: www.salmonaresacred.org.

For more information, contact: Alexandra Morton, (250) 974-7086

You can contact Dr. Morton during the hours of 8-10 a.m., 12:30 – 2:00 p.m., and after 4:00 p.m. (as she is a participant in the Inquiry)