

Wild salmon restoration fund unveiled by B.C., federal governments

B.C. Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund to be open to conservation, Indigenous and research groups.

DIRK MEISSNER, THE CANADIAN PRESS ([HTTPS://VANCOUVERSUN.COM/AUTHOR/DPRESS](https://vancouver.sun.com/author/dpress)) Updated: March 15, 2019



VICTORIA — The federal and B.C. governments are preparing to cast a net to find new ways of protecting wild salmon habitat and restoring stocks.

The federal fisheries minister, Jonathan Wilkinson, and Premier John Horgan said Friday the two governments will provide \$142.8 million towards a five-year wild salmon restoration program, with the federal government spending \$100 million of the total amount.

The B.C. Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund will be open to conservation, Indigenous and research groups for projects aimed at protecting and restoring wild salmon stocks.

Wilkinson said working together with the province, First Nations, conservation groups, scientists, and the recreational and commercial fishing sectors on biodiversity improvements and innovations can protect and enhance wild salmon stocks.

“Our goal is to manage Pacific salmon stocks in a way that conserves and rebuilds those populations to protect biodiversity while concurrently enabling fishing opportunities for First Nations, commercial and recreational harvesters,” he said. “We all have a responsibility to ensure resources are managed sustainably and protected wisely.”

Wilkinson and Horgan made the announcement at Fisherman’s Wharf in Victoria, home to fishing boats, float homes and passing passenger ferries.

Wilkinson said the fund is seeking proposals that focus on innovation, infrastructure or science projects that support the protection and restoration of stocks and examine products or technologies to support sustainable fishing.



Federal Minister of Fisheries Jonathan Wilkinson (left) and B.C. Premier John Horgan announce the Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund during a press conference at Fisherman's Wharf in Victoria on Friday, March 15, 2019. *CHAD HIPOLITO / THE CANADIAN PRESS*

Horgan said all levels of government and industry, Indigenous, conservation and community groups must work together to improve the survival rates of wild salmon.

“When it comes to our wild salmon stocks, there is no better indicator of the challenges we face than rising water temperatures, low snow pack, rivers that aren't full with enough water to sustain our salmon, and that's where we need to intervene,” he said.

Horgan said co-operation agreements with the federal government on wild salmon protection and recent talks with Washington state Gov. Jay Inslee about salmon and the threatened southern resident orca population are building necessary support to protect Pacific salmon.

“The salmon don't know boundaries,” said Horgan. “The orca don't know boundaries. They don't know jurisdictions, one order of government over another. All they know is that humans have been interfering in their life cycles and it's time for humans to get in the game and make a better choice and better decisions and help the salmon survive.”

Horgan and Wilkinson said wild salmon are deeply woven into B.C.'s cultural, social and economic fabric.

On the impact of the proposed Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project on wild salmon and orca populations, Wilkinson said the federal cabinet has yet to make its decision on proceeding with it, but strict salmon protection measures are in place along the proposed route.

Horgan said the B.C. government remains opposed to increased oil tanker traffic in B.C. waters, but the joint federal-provincial salmon fund signals the start of much needed co-operation on wild salmon.

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No point putting money into saving wild salmon, unless you get rid of the fish farms.

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Remember the Cohen Commission folks? If both governments couldn't follow the recommendations on that, will they actually succeed with the big money agenda of this announcement? Ask the Honourable Minister why he is dragging his feet on pushing for greater discovery on diseased Atlantic penned salmon that should never have placed in the Pacific in the first place.

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Jugnu Baba What the F#@!

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Sandra Currie

They give a little with one hand and take away more with the other. It's a trick to keep the uninformed satisfied that they are doing good things. The fact is that we are facing extinction, and all their little incremental actions are not going to prevent it. This is the time for radical, bold action. And for governments to tell the truth about the dire situation we're in.

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