

# Fisheries minister must stop new fishery that will harm endangered Chinook salmon and killer whales

## New fishery targets Chinook within critical Southern Resident killer whale habitat

**VANCOUVER | TRADITIONAL, UNCEDED TERRITORIES OF THE xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (MUSQUEAM), Skwxwú7mesh (SQUAMISH) AND səlilwətaʔ (TSLEIL-WAUTUTH) FIRST NATIONS** (March 2, 2023) — The new Chinook salmon fishery that Fisheries and Oceans Canada has proposed opening in April will kill endangered Fraser River Chinook salmon as they migrate through the feeding grounds of the equally endangered southern resident killer whales, according to conservation groups and First Nations.

The fishery — which would target hatchery salmon that have had their adipose fin clipped off for identification (“mark-selective”) — will increase noise and disturbance from angling boats where endangered killer whales feed. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans’ proposal reflects a serious disregard for the critical state of the whales and their endangered prey.

“To ensure Fraser Chinook numbers have a chance of recovering, all of these fish must reach their spawning grounds during this migration period,” said Misty MacDuffee, Raincoast Conservation Foundation Wild Salmon Program Director. “The proposed fishery is for the sole benefit of recreational fishers, not for the benefit of either Chinook salmon or southern resident killer whales.”

There are concerns that charter sport fishing industry members pushed DFO to open this fishery on an expedited timeline without proper assessment, process, consultation and monitoring. There is high uncertainty about, or outright absence of, information used to open the fishery.

“First Nations throughout Vancouver Island have expressed their opposition to this fishery, which are proposed without proper data or evaluation frameworks for assessment and monitoring,” said Nick Chowdhury, president of the Island Marine Aquatic Working Group. “In addition to conservation and management concerns, consultation by Fisheries and Oceans with First Nations has not been adequate.”

The Government of Canada has deemed itself a global leader in conservation and has committed to halting and reversing biodiversity loss. This fishery contradicts that commitment.

## Quotes

“DFO fisheries managers are trying to introduce new recreational quota fisheries for marked hatchery Chinook that would discard and harm endangered wild Chinook. These fisheries lack any of the monitoring, validation, verification or safeguards required in other commercial salmon fisheries.”

**Greg Taylor, fisheries adviser with the Watershed Watch Salmon Society.**

“This fishery would come at a cost to Chinook salmon, southern resident killer whales and First Nations. The minister of fisheries and oceans must stop this fishery from proceeding.”

**Jeffery Young, senior science and policy analyst with the David Suzuki Foundation.**

## Backgrounder

[Access the backgrounder here.](#)

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## About

The [David Suzuki Foundation](#) is a leading Canadian environmental non-profit organization, founded in 1990. We operate in English and French, with offices in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. We collaborate with all people in Canada, including First Nations leadership and communities, governments, businesses and individuals to find solutions to create a sustainable Canada through scientific research, traditional ecological knowledge, communications and public engagement, and innovative policy and

legal solutions. Our mission is to protect nature's diversity and the well-being of all life, now and for the future.

[The Island Marine Aquatic Working Group](#) (IMAWG) is made up of 15 member First Nations, representing the three language areas on Vancouver Island: Coast Salish, Nuu-chah-nulth and Kwakwaka'wakw. These areas encompass First Nations on Vancouver Island, and the adjacent mainland.

[Raincoast Conservation Foundation](#) is a team of conservationists and scientists empowered by our research to protect the lands, waters and wildlife of coastal British Columbia. We use rigorous, peer-reviewed science and community engagement to further our conservation objectives. We call this approach "informed advocacy." As a charitable, non-profit conservation science organization that operates a land trust, restoration programming, research lab, research field station and a research/sailing vessel, we are unique in Canada.

[Watershed Watch Salmon Society](#) is a science-based charity working to defend and rebuild B.C.'s wild salmon. Our work confronts policy decisions at the federal and provincial levels. It offers scientific expertise to policy-makers and highlights threats ranging from fish farms to fisheries to climate change. We tackle the complex issues facing wild salmon through collaboration and advocacy.