

Salmon Management

Though I am reluctant to respond to the discussions around the unavailability of access to our diminishing salmon resource, I just can't help myself. The DEVEL IS IN THE DETAIL statement on fishnet is in my opinion, the problem that will eventually equate to the demise of all fisheries unless we deal with the real problem. WHERE ARE THE FISH? There was a large fleet of commercial fishers in all gear types that made their living from our salmon resources. This included access to First Nations food fish and a strong participation of First Nations in the commercial fishery. The governments approach to reducing access to these fisheries has resulted in a continuing decline of both fish and commercial fishers. If this access and a conservative approach to harvesting has not produced positive results, then I believe we have to look elsewhere for the problems, and the solutions.

Accountability seems to constantly rear it's head when it comes to the commercial fisheries, no end of costs and responsibility to industry is too high, but this same accountability is ignored in every other aspect of fisheries management.

Though it has been pointed out the commercial fishery is held to a percentage of West Coast Vancouver Island spring salmon, the commercial sport fleet does not have the same requirements. I use this as an example and it is not my intention to point fingers at any particular group, other than those that hold the power to make management decisions, and those responsible for protection of fisheries resources and encouragement of fisheries. So I ask some questions and they may lack detail, but the devil is in DFO's accountability.

1. What is the harvest rate of Canadian bound salmon in the Alaska fishery and what is the process of accountability?
2. What is the effect of flooding in our river systems as a result of pine beetle logging and the loss of rain retention forestation and what is being done to correct this situation?
3. How does this flooding effect the survival of salmon spawning recruitment and how is this being assessed?
4. Why are salmon that pass the counting station on the Frazer River not reaching the spawning grounds?
5. Why has the once lucrative River's and Smith's Inlet runs not returned to historical level with little or no Commercial harvest.
6. What has been done to asses and improve coastal areas spawning grounds, from poor historical logging practices?
7. What is being done to protect river flow rates and silting as a result of urban and industrial development?
8. Why does economic growth and development take priority over sustainable resources?
9. Why does the provincial government continue and the federal government allow, the issue of open pen fish farms and continue to issue licenses to foreign

- investors, when independent scientific research has assessed these farms as devastating to wild fish stocks?
10. Why does the provincial government continue to support employment in the fish farm industry at the expense of the employment in the commercial fishery?
 11. Why are there no accountability, or appropriate assessment on the sport fishery activities and removals in ocean and river fisheries?
 12. Why does the government continue to focus on accumulation of fisheries access to less and less fish rather than focusing on rehabilitation?

I can't help but wonder how many fishers actually make their living from the present fishery and how many have been forced into other businesses, or work at other jobs. I also wonder how many fishers live from the investments from revenue from the past and perhaps apply this investment in accumulating fishing access. Are investors the primary participants in the departments lobbying advisory process?

This industry and its dependents need to get together to set policy and agenda criteria, in regards to fisheries renewal.

The recent Multi-Interest Technical Workshop in Vancouver had 4 program elements for discussions.

1. Co-Management
2. Enhanced fisheries accountability measures
3. Acquiring access
4. Delivering/distributing access and capacity building.

What does all this mean to you and me?

Co management-means that commercial and First Nations fishers pay to initiate government policies, and take responsibility for these policies that have resulted in failure in the past.

Enhanced fisheries accountability measures-means that the First Nation and commercial fishers will continue to be accountable and responsible for the continued decline of our salmon resources with no mechanism for developing policy that requires accountability in either government, or any other industry or developing sector.

Acquiring access means that government will provide a vehicle for transferring uneconomic fishing enterprises and diminishing resources from the commercial sector to First Nations.

Delivering/distributing access and capacity building-means, or implies, that the distribution of the resource from the commercial sector to First Nations, be somehow equitable. The economics of \$178 million worth of distribution capacity to all First Nations communities, will be of little economic benefit and will likely result in dissention

and conflict between these many First Nations Communities as they each lobby government for more access.

Until WE ALL sit down together and devise a management strategy and a management body that removes the frustration of unsuccessful lobbying, and in the absence of DFO's and their political agenda, we will continue to fall victim to government policy that continues to be unaccountable for successful resource management.

The Devil is not in the detail; it's in the Hell of both provincial and federal government management policy.

**Gerald Dalum
Fishing For Freedom**