

OUR LAND IS OUR FUTURE

UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA INDIAN CHIEFS

FOUNDING HEAD OFFICE
209 - 345 Chief Alex Thomas Way
Kamloops, B.C. V2H 1H1
Tel: 250-828-9746
Fax: 250-828-0319



VANCOUVER OFFICE
401 - 312 Main Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6A 2T2
Tel: 604-684-0231
Fax: 604-684-5726
1-800-793-9701
Email: ubcic@ubcic.bc.ca
Web: www.ubcic.bc.ca

UNION OF B.C. INDIAN CHIEFS
CHIEFS COUNCIL

FEBRUARY 26TH-27TH, 2020

MUSQUEAM COMMUNITY CENTRE, X^WMƏƏK^WƏY^ƏM (MUSQUEAM TERRITORY)

Resolution no. 2020-15

RE: Call to Action on Historic Low Salmon Returns

WHEREAS wild Pacific salmon are integral to the culture, economy, and livelihood of First Nations throughout BC;

WHEREAS the steady decline of healthy and abundant wild salmon stocks has reached a crisis point, with 2019 yielding the lowest wild salmon returns in Canada's history;

WHEREAS the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which the government of Canada has adopted without qualification, and has, alongside the government of BC committed to implement, affirms:

Article 26: Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired;

Article 29: Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources;

WHEREAS the Wild Salmon Initiative has called for the identification of the primary migration bottlenecks experienced by salmon, and investigation into the relative contributions of pollution, low water, high temperature, starvation, or other impediments;

WHEREAS the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) is appropriately positioned and resourced to undertake the identification of bottlenecks and use the information to provide strategic relief to wild salmon;

WHEREAS an appropriate mobilization of First Nations' knowledge and rights is essential to effectively undertaking this work, and a dedicated position is essential to guide and inform the DFO's approach to wild salmon recovery;

WHEREAS the Wild Salmon Initiative has proposed creating the position of Director of Wild Salmon, Pacific Region, a role which could steer the DFO and coordinate research to identify the cause(s) of or factors contributing to salmon run collapses in partnership with First Nations and municipal, provincial, and federal levels of governments;

WHEREAS First Nations people have specialized knowledge that would be an asset to the role as Director of Wild Salmon, Pacific Region. We are aware of the issues and are very knowledgeable of the salmon depletion concerns;

WHEREAS UBCIC Resolutions 2008-19, 2009-35 and 2009-36 confirm UBCIC's commitment to work in solidarity with like-minded organizations and BC First Nations with respect to fisheries and aquaculture issues;

WHEREAS UBCIC Resolutions 2012-19, 2012-36, 2012-65, 2016-40 call for the UBCIC Chiefs Council to work with First Nations to conserve wild salmon stocks and advocate for and support the recovery and restoration of wild salmon stocks; and

WHEREAS intervention by the DFO and other parties is time-sensitive and urgent due to the limited window for salmon recovery and study permitted by spawning seasons.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council demands that the Minister of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) make immediate intervention to investigate the historically low wild salmon returns in Canada in 2019, in alignment with DFO's mandate to prioritize rebuilding fish populations and in recognition of the importance of sustaining and protecting wild salmon; and

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED the UBCIC Chiefs Council calls on the DFO to create a Director of Wild Salmon, Pacific Region, who is a qualified First Nations individual, chosen in partnership with First Nations, who could steer the DFO and coordinate research to identify the cause(s) of or factors contributing to wild salmon run collapses in partnership with First Nations, marine biologists and municipal, provincial, and federal levels of governments.

Moved: Chief Don Svanvik, 'Namgis First Nation
Seconded: Ruby Manilla, Da'naxda'xw/Awaetlala Nation (Proxy)
Disposition: Carried
Date: February 27, 2020