

## **Media Release**

### **First Nations, Conservation Groups, and Salmon Farming Industry Monitor Sea Lice on Broughton Salmon Farms**

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***ALERT BAY, SOINTULA, ECHO BAY, PRINCE RUPERT, TOFINO, NANAIMO, VICTORIA and VANCOUVER*** – The first collaborative venture involving the salmon farming industry, conservationists, and First Nations has begun in the Broughton Archipelago, a collection of islands between the northeastern end of Vancouver Island and the mainland coast of British Columbia.

In a recently-signed “dialogue framework,” Marine Harvest Canada (MHC) and the Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform (CAAR) agreed to joint counting of sea lice on Atlantic salmon at Sargeaunts Pass and Humphrey Rock farms.

High levels of lice have infested wild juveniles in the Broughton since 2001, prompting conservation concerns, and the actions described in this release. The CAAR-MHC agreement calls for the joint monitoring of lice, more frequent monitoring, and other actions to control lice. The monitoring will be conducted every Friday for 18 weeks, between March 3 and June 30—the season for the outward migration of the Broughton’s wild juvenile salmon.

Robert Mountain, the Aquaculture Outreach Coordinator for Alert Bay’s Musgamagw Tsawataineuk Tribal Council, said the MTTC “has made its opposition to open net-cage farming and sea lice problems known to government and industry,” and that the MTTC “believes that increasing the number of counts that we do together is a positive step, but an incomplete solution.”

The MTTC is one of the nine member groups of CAAR. Other CAAR members echo the MTTC’s concerns, but also acknowledge Marine Harvest for providing access to its farms, and logistical support.

Dr. Craig Orr, the CAAR’s science team chair, said that “scientists and citizens concerned about lice outbreaks on wild salmon have highlighted the necessity for accurate and transparent data on farm-source lice,” and that “so far, Marine Harvest is the only member of the salmon farming industry to share its lice counts. The additional step will improve our understanding of, and our ability to reduce, sea-lice parasitism.”

Marine Harvest is reducing lice in the Broughton by moving salmon from one farm, and by using the commonly-applied pesticide Slice (emamectin benzoate) at the Humphrey and Sargeaunts farms. Lice have been found on about half of all wild juvenile salmon recently examined by Alexandra Morton, a biologist with the CAAR member group

Raincoast Research, and it is hoped these actions will limit such infections. But while Slice is an effective louse biocide, CAAR does not support its regular use as a sustainable solution.

The CAAR also urges government to copy Europe in legally obliging salmon farms to make their lice counts public, and to make the CAAR-MHC model of enhanced environmental monitoring the standard in BC, not the exception.

**For information, photos, video:**

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