PRESS RELEASE

SAEN Challenges the Aquaculture Industry

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Following the recent release of DFO's latest Atlantic salmon stock assessment, the aquaculture industry in Newfoundland has been quick to claim, yet again, that there is "..no evidence.." that their industry has any negative impacts on wild Atlantic salmon stocks. This is blatantly false. While the Executive Director of the Newfoundland Aquaculture Industry Association (NAIA) cited many of the possible reasons for the widespread overall decline in salmon stocks such as climate change, interceptory fisheries etc. he again dismissed very clear scientific evidence that wherever and whenever salmon farms are placed near rivers with wild salmon stocks, those populations do not decline, they disappear. It has happened in Norway, in Scotland, in the Bay of Fundy and has happened in the Conne and Little River's in Bay d'Espoir. Attached as Appendix A is a small sample of the many peer reviewed scientific publications and documents representing the scientific evidence, clearly indicating, open net pen salmonid aquaculture does indeed negatively impact wild salmon populations.

The Salmonid Association of Eastern Newfoundland (SAEN) does not have a problem with aquaculture as such, just with how it is currently conducted in Newfoundland waters. We note with pleasure and approval the recent availability of land raised Atlantic salmon in a local supermarket chain. But SAEN, along with many other conservation groups, is very concerned about the continued expansion of the open net, pen-based aquaculture in Newfoundland waters and the ever increasing negative impacts on wild Atlantic salmon populations. SAEN is therefore challenging NAIA and its membership to fund baseline and continuing studies on the impacts of fish farms in the currently (but not for long) fish farm free Placentia Bay.

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APPENDIX A

- https://www.vitenskapsradet.no/Portals/vitenskapsradet/Pdf/Status%20of%20wild%20Atlantic%20salmon%20in%20Norway%202020T.pdf This is a Norwegian government stock assessment for Atlantic salmon in Norway in 2020.

  Quote: "*Escaped farmed salmon and salmon lice were identified as the largest threats to wild salmon (figure 5), both to a large extent impacting wild populations negatively. Escaped farmed salmon and salmon lice are regarded as expanding population threats, which means they are affecting populations to the extent that populations may be critically endangered or lost in nature and that have a high likelihood of causing even further reductions*."

- (PDF) Extensive hybridization following a large escape of domesticated Atlantic salmon in the Northwest Atlantic (researchgate.net) A report by DFO scientists on aquaculture escapees breeding in 17 of 18 south coast rivers tested.

  Quote: "*These results link previous observations of escaped salmon in rivers with reports of population genetic change, and demonstrate the potential negative consequences of escapes from net-pen aquaculture on wild populations.*"

- DFO study: (PDF) Beyond hybridization: the genetic impacts of nonreproductive ecological interactions of salmon aquaculture on wild populations (researchgate.net)

Further studies, just a small sample of what is available.

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