



## British Columbia

### The problem:

British Columbia does not have wild Atlantic salmon populations, but is an important jurisdiction from a regulatory standpoint. The Province held primary oversight responsibilities for aquaculture until 2009. The British Columbia Supreme Court ruled in the Morton decision<sup>1</sup> that aquaculture in that province is a fishery and therefore within federal authority. Aquaculture is now subject to the Pacific Aquaculture Regulations under the federal Fisheries Act. Any consideration of a national aquaculture Act as proposed by the Senate would certainly be informed by the experience in British Columbia.

### Special Concern

Pacific species of salmon do not find as much to eat in their glacial rivers, and have a life strategy that sees them go to sea as very small smolts. Where it takes eight or more sea lice to kill an Atlantic salmon smolt, it only takes one or two sea lice to kill the smolts of Pacific species.

### Results:

#### Environmental Management

Criterion 2.1 – **AVOID DAMAGE TO SEAFLOOR UNDER CAGES.** BC partly meets goal. No robust modeling system is required to establish an Allowable Zone of Effects (AZE) or equivalent.

Criterion 2.2 – **MAINTAIN WATER QUALITY AROUND SITE.** BC does not meet standard. No requirements for dissolved oxygen monitoring appear in regulations or policy documents.

Criterion 2.4 – **AVOID DAMAGE TO CRITICAL HABITATS AND SENSITIVE SPECIES.** BC meets standard. Sites have been temporarily excluded from High Conservation Value Areas (HCVAs) as a result of the Cohen Commission as a precautionary measure to wild salmon

#### Protecting Wild Stocks

Criterion 3.1 – **PROTECT WILD SALMON AND SEA TROUT.** BC partly meets criterion. There is bay management to break disease cycle, but no maximum sea lice loads. Sea lice testing is frequent, and is reported to the public quarterly.

Criterion 3.3 – **PROHIBIT GENETICALLY MODIFIED SALMON.** Meets standard. No transgenic salmonids approved for use in BC, or elsewhere in Canada.

Criterion 3.4 – **PREVENT ESCAPES.** BC partly meets standard. No maximum number of escapes for loss of license. There is no maximum number of escapes, but all escapes (no threshold) are annually reported to the public. Escape prevention is required for licence including comprehensive system requirements, monitoring, and DFO audits. Compliance issues are reported publicly on an annual basis.

#### Parasite and Disease Management

Criterion 5.1 – **MANAGE FISH HEALTH** – BC partly meets criteria. According to the conditions of licence, operators must develop a fish *Health Management Plan* designed for both the benefit of animals within the aquaculture site and the surrounding ecosystem. This extension of animal health scope to the surrounding ecosystem is unlike any other province, but is akin to Norway's approach

Criterion 5.2 – **DOCUMENTING THERAPEUTANT USE** – BC partly meets criteria. According to the conditions of licence, operators must develop a fish *Health Management Plan* designed for

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**Criterion 5.4 – AVOIDING DISEASE SPREAD TO WILD POPULATIONS** – BC partly meets criteria. As in related criteria, a fish *Health Management Plan* is developed and implemented.

#### **Public Involvement**

**Criterion 7.1 – MEANINGFUL CONSULTATION AND COMPLAINT RESOLUTION** - BC partly meets criteria. There are no provisions for public engagement in the Act, regulations, or provincial legislation. There are no provisions for appeal to the Minister for any decisions, nor is there opportunity to initiate reviews or investigations into public concerns. However this jurisdiction releases the most information via DFO website.

**Criterion 7.2 – ABORIGINAL CONSULTATIONS** – BC meets criteria, with aquaculture-specific protocol agreements for development in First Nations territories.

### **OVERVIEW**

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>BC</b>
<b>Avoid Damage to Sea Floor</b>	Yes
<b>Maintain Water Quality Around Site</b>	No
<b>Avoid Damage to Critical Habitat and Sensitive Species</b>	Yes
<b>Protect Wild Salmon and Sea Trout</b>	Part
<b>Prohibit Genetically Modified Salmon</b>	Yes
<b>Prevent Escapes</b>	Part
<b>Manage Fish Health</b>	Part
<b>Document Therapeutant Use</b>	Yes
<b>Avoiding Disease Spread to Wild Salmon</b>	Part
<b>Meaningful Consultation and Complaint Resolution</b>	Part
<b>Aboriginal Consultations</b>	Part

**British Columbia achieved a score of 68 out of a possible 100.**

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

- British Columbia is second highest rated jurisdiction in achieving the standards associated with the ASC criteria, and the highest in Canada
- See principal backgrounder for recommendations, both general and specific