

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

CULTUS AND SAKINAW LAKE SOCKEYE SALMON EMERGENCY LISTING DECISION

What kind of measures generally are you putting in place to protect these fish and what are they intended to accomplish?

- Substantial measures will be taken by DFO to deal with the fishing pressures on the Cultus and Sakinaw Lake populations, along with other initiatives such as habitat protection measures, predator control, fish passage improvements and monitoring of fish passage into the lakes.
- These measures aim at substantially reducing the possibility of incidental fishing on these populations and at improving their chances for survival in their lakes through habitat protection and other measures.
- The fishing measures will limit the harvest rate on Fraser River sockeye to a maximum of 10 to 12 per cent, when the Cultus and Sakinaw populations are present in marine waters and the Fraser River. If successful, these measures will constitute an important step toward the eventual recovery of these populations.
- It is also important to note that the salmon subcommittee of the Pacific Scientific Advice Review Committee (PSARC) has concluded that there are opportunities for recovery of these populations because of increases in the number of successful spawning fish in the Cultus population over the past three years, and potentially good rebuilding years in 2004 and 2005 for the Sakinaw sockeye.

Can you be more specific about the actual fishing measures you will put in place in order to provide additional protection for these two populations?

- These measures are being discussed with First Nations, commercial and recreational fishers. Generally, they will involve time and area closures for the commercial fleet, some restrictions on gear, and

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possibly limitations on First Nations' fisheries for food, social and ceremonial purposes. As well, recreational fisheries will be managed to avoid impact on these two populations.

What guarantees do we have that the additional measures you're putting in place will remove the imminent threat of extinction?

- There are no guarantees. Although there are some pressures on these populations that we can influence, such as fishing and habitat degradation, there are others that we have no control over, such as non-fishing mortality when these sockeye are at sea or in freshwater.
- We are confident that the new measures we are contemplating will provide significant additional protection for these populations and set the stage for recovery. As well, habitat protection measures, non-lethal predator control, fish passage improvements and monitoring of fish passage into the lakes will play highly important roles in helping to strengthen these populations and position them for eventual recovery.

Wouldn't banning fishing on these stocks provide an even better chance for recovery?

- The fishing restrictions DFO is contemplating are, in fact, among the most severe ever for this fishery.
- Eliminating any possibility of incidental fishing on these two populations would require shutting down large parts of the southern BC sockeye salmon fishing industry, including restrictions on First Nations' food, social and ceremonial fisheries for sockeye in marine areas. Such an action would only provide marginal benefits for these two populations.
- These marginal benefits would have to be weighed against the serious impact on fishing interests and their communities.
- The Government believes that a more reasonable and balanced approach is to provide strong protective measures for the Cultus and Sakinaw populations that include both fishery restrictions, as well as habitat and other measures, to encourage their recovery while

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maintaining a Fraser River sockeye fishery, albeit a significantly reduced one.

Aren't you causing severe economic damage to the fishing industry and disruptions to others such as landowners and the forestry industry when, in fact, these populations are so far gone that there is little chance of saving them?

- These measures are being undertaken because we **do** have an opportunity to help these populations recover. In fact, recent DFO scientific work has concluded that there are real rebuilding opportunities for these two populations.
- There is no doubt that real economic sacrifices will be required by the commercial sockeye fishing industry and possibly other fishing interests such as First Nations to protect the Cultus and Sakinaw sockeye salmon populations. It is also clear that in the case of Cultus and Sakinaw Lake sockeye that measures will have to be put in place for an extended period to give these populations an opportunity to rebuild.
- But it is also important to note that DFO is asking that other interests, such as provincial and municipal governments, landowners, recreational users of the lakes and the forestry industry, make significant contributions to the rebuilding of these populations by reducing the impact of human activities on them.
- DFO is working with fishing and other interests to find the most effective ways to achieve protection of these two populations while being as sensitive to their needs as circumstances allow.

Have you calculated the income loss for fishers of the conservation measures you are adopting for the Cultus and Sakinaw populations?

- It is premature to address this question because we are currently in discussions with fishing interests to determine what specific steps will be needed to achieve the maximum harvest rate on Fraser River sockeye of 10 to 12 per cent.

- DFO will work with fishing interests to assess these impacts.

How can the southern BC commercial sockeye fishing industry survive under these fishing restrictions? Are we looking at bankruptcies in both the fishing and processing industries?

- It is entirely premature to begin predicting such impacts when we are just in the process of consulting on what specific measures will be needed to protect these two sockeye populations. DFO will work with fishing interests to deal with the impacts while ensuring strong protective measures are in place for the Cultus and Sakinaw populations.

Will any fishing limits you decide on fishing infringe upon First Nations' fishing rights?

- In order to provide additional conservation measures for the Cultus and Sakinaw populations, limitations **may** be placed on First Nations' food, social and ceremonial (FSC) fisheries. Reductions may be necessary to remove the imminent threat of extinction of these populations and to provide for their recovery.
- Consistent with DFO's policy of giving priority to Aboriginal FSC fisheries, the impact on FSC fisheries will be mitigated to the greatest extent possible. DFO officials will work closely with First Nations to develop approaches to lessen the impact on groups negatively affected.

Should BC fishing interests expect these kinds of problems with other salmon populations? Will SARA drive the BC salmon fishing industry to extinction?

- Over time, other small salmon populations may be identified as needing protection under the *Species at Risk Act*.
- However, DFO is committed to meeting the requirements of the *Species at Risk Act* by working with commercial and recreational fishers, First Nations and others through consultative mechanisms under the *Act* and through recovery groups that will create long term recovery plans for these populations.

- It is also clear that we need longer term, multi-year approaches that anticipate and address challenges facing salmon management, including those involving the *Species at Risk Act*. To meet this need, the department is developing a Wild Salmon Policy to define how it will meet its responsibilities for the conservation and sustainable management of wild salmon, while ensuring effective consultation and input from First Nations and stakeholders.
- The framework provided by the Wild Salmon Policy will also help ensure the department meets its responsibilities under the *Species at Risk Act*.