

# B.C. Salmon Management

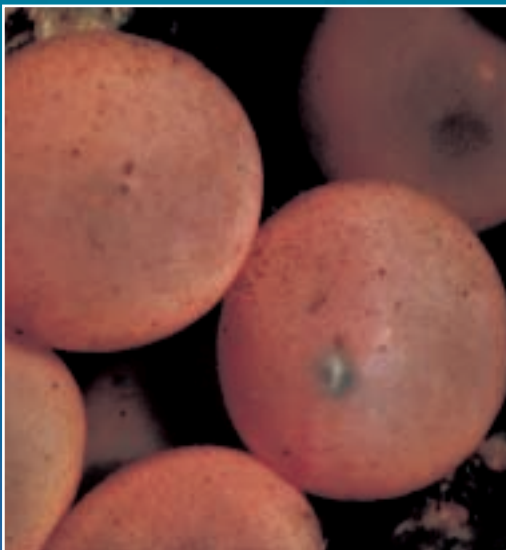
In October 1998, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans presented a vision for the future with the release of "A New Direction for Canada's Pacific Salmon Fisheries." This paper set out a broad policy direction for management of the salmon fisheries that in turn formed the basis of a permanent move to conservation-based fisheries. This new direction has three key components: conservation, sustainable use and improved decision-making.

## The selective fishing program

As part of this new direction, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), the provincial government of British Columbia and fishers in all Pacific salmon harvesting sectors — commercial, First Nations and recreational — are working together to ensure that Pacific salmon fisheries are more selective.

Since 1998, more than 100 experimental pilots have been carried out, including First Nations' projects. These initiatives have focused on modifying existing gear, testing new fishing methods and alternative gear. The selectivity measures implemented in the commercial fisheries since then include:

- the use of revival tanks for the live release of non-target species and stocks;
- monitoring, and observing and reporting programs;
- time and area closures;
- brailing and sorting/standardized brailer design (knotless web);
- net design (mesh size/type, hand ratios);
- maximum soak times for gill nets;
- pool-type fisheries to facilitate improved handling of fish;
- daytime fishing only on some areas; and
- barbless hooks.



*Salmon eggs, British Columbia*

The general commercial fishery harvesting operations are also becoming more selective as a result of minimizing encounters with stocks of concern, experimenting with alternative fishing gear, adopting modifications to existing fishing gear and employing new fishing methods. The commercial fishery has also improved existing fishing gear and practices that reduce fish mortality and injury when releasing commercially caught fish.

In the commercial and recreational fisheries, additional selective fishing gear and methods are being implemented only after these new approaches have been sufficiently proven and documented, and thorough consultation with industry has taken place.

In the last two years, more than 50 First Nations have received financial support to purchase more selective fishing gear for their food, social and ceremonial fisheries. Fish wheels, traps, weirs, beach seines and



On board Salmon Seiner,  
British Columbia

dip-nets have replaced less selective gear such as in-river gill nets.

In January 2001, DFO released *A Policy for Selective Fishing in Canada's Pacific Fisheries*, which outlines five principles and a call for selective fishing standards and action plans for every fishery in the Pacific Region.

## Conserving wild salmon

DFO released a new Wild Salmon Policy as a draft discussion document in March 2000. The policy is built around six principles that provide an explicit framework for conserving genetic diversity in wild Pacific salmon, and protecting their habitat from irreversible depletion.

The primary goals of the Wild Salmon Policy are to ensure the long-term viability of Pacific salmon populations in natural surroundings and maintain fish habitat for all life stages for the sustainable benefit of the people of Canada. These goals are consistent with Canada's international obligations such as the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.