



Backgrounder

Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative (PSSI)

The Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative (PSSI) aims to curb historic declines in key Pacific salmon stocks and rebuild the species to a sustainable level. The Strategy will be a massive undertaking, unlike any before. It will not be a series of initiatives, but a single, guiding force that will steer investments, policies, and actions, with all levels of government and local organizations, for years to come.

This first-of-its-kind, multi-pronged approach, is built on four key pillars:

- Conservation and stewardship;
- Enhanced hatchery production;
- Harvest transformation, and;
- Integrated management and collaboration.

Conservation and Stewardship: Targeted science and more integrated data to drive effective decision-making around ecosystem planning and habitat restoration

- Work with the Province of BC to double the British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund (BCSRIF) with an additional federal contribution of \$100 million to the current \$142.85M program. BCSRIF is co-funded by DFO and the Province of BC and was established in 2019 to help rebuild salmon habitats through community-level projects.
- Deepen our understanding of salmon ecosystems – the rivers, estuaries, their migrating paths, and interactions – through increased salmon and ecosystem status reporting in order to strengthen decision-making. Investments will support a cross-disciplinary team, that will produce integrated salmon ecosystem data, research, and analysis to support program decisions.
- Further integrate salmon, ecosystem and climate data to identify drivers of salmon survival, and assess their vulnerability to climate change and warming waters.
- Create a new Restoration Centre of Expertise, supported by an arm's length advisory body, to collaborate on and support the work of our partners, which will help ensure that stewardship, rebuilding and habitat restoration projects are integrated and more effective.

Enhanced Hatchery Production: Increasing salmon populations to help stabilize stocks while creating economic harvesting opportunities

- DFO is beginning consultations and planning to build new hatchery facilities where most critical to support Pacific salmon stocks. Salmon hatcheries can support both conservation and harvesting objectives, and play an important role in rebuilding vulnerable populations of Pacific salmon stocks. We will also strategically work with existing hatcheries to enhance their efforts, where needed, and to support economic opportunities for recreational fishers.
- For all enhancement projects, DFO applies a broad suite of guidelines and best practices including genetic management guidelines that are updated as new knowledge becomes available. A variety of strategies that consider hatchery objectives, stock biology and status, and habitat condition of the target salmon populations are applied.
- Consistent with the Wild Salmon Policy, the Salmon Enhancement Program undertakes decisions using a precautionary approach which includes the assessment of biological risks associated with the enhancement of each specific stock.
- Hatcheries are also where fish are 'marked' to support mark selective fisheries. For example, where recreational anglers are permitted to fish marked hatchery fish only, ensuring that wild salmon are not targeted.

Harvest Transformation: Modernize and stabilize salmon fisheries

- DFO will announce new modernized commercial salmon management approaches as part of the upcoming IFMP process.
- First Nations will be consulted regarding potential new fishery management approaches, including potential innovative Food, Social and Ceremonial (FSC) harvesting opportunities, where the conservation risks can be managed.
- DFO will work with recreational harvesters to modernize how recreational salmon fisheries are managed, and work to provide sustainable harvesting opportunities through marked selective fisheries.

Integrated Management and Collaboration: Strong partnerships for better outcomes

- DFO recognizes the value and importance of partnerships with Indigenous peoples, provincial/territorial governments, harvesters, stewardship partners, academia, environmentalists, and other stakeholders, to work together towards the common goal of effectively stemming Pacific salmon declines. New ongoing engagement and consultation mechanisms will be explored and implemented so that, working together, we can realize better outcomes for Pacific salmon – including salmon habitat and ecosystems.

Given the complex and lengthy (4-5 year average) reproductive cycle of Pacific salmon, addressing the declines will involve a series of flexible, integrated measures that will be monitored and adjusted over the next five years and beyond. Work under each pillar will be advanced in collaboration with the wide range of Indigenous partners, harvesting groups, stakeholders and communities who depend on Pacific salmon, and who have been calling for dramatic change.

In the coming weeks, the Government of Canada will be engaging with these partners, leaning on the vast knowledge that exists to help determine how best to bring about these changes and make the greatest positive impact on Pacific salmon.

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