



**For Immediate Release**

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## **East Coast Salmon Farmers Committed to Conservation of Wild Stocks - Industry Responds to Recent Study -**

**St. George, NB** --The New Brunswick Salmon Growers' Association (NBSGA) and the salmon farming industry on Canada's east coast acknowledge the concerns outlined in a study published in the Public Library of Science journal — however, caution that the findings of this meta-analysis are over-simplified, and do not examine the widely accepted factors contributing to the decline in wild salmon stocks.

Salmon farmers recognize that wild salmon populations are a significant part of the ecosystems they share and work to protect. The industry has placed a significant focus on understanding the potential interactions of farmed and wild salmon, has developed farming methods to respond to these concerns, and is part of the conservation effort.

“Our industry works diligently to ensure our farms co-exist with our environment,” says Dr. Jamey Smith, Executive Director, NBSGA. “It is unfortunate that the recent study by researchers at Dalhousie University did not look at our farms today, and instead took an over-simplistic look at a very complex problem.”

Dr. Smith cautions that the study is a mathematical correlation based on flawed assumptions, and lacks consideration of the many additional factors that scientists are studying today: from survival at sea to industrial activity in local rivers.

### **Key areas of concern include:**

- ◆ The assumption that all rivers in a large geographic area are identical except for the presence or absence of local salmon farms. This is not true, and in fact rivers in the Gulf of St. Lawrence are very different than those in the Bay of Fundy because they have not been disrupted by dams and barriers as well as other factors;
- ◆ The fact that survival of wild salmon in the open ocean is known to be a major threat and requires further research;
- ◆ The dismissal of the fact that wild salmon populations have been declining for many years, much longer than the presence and recent development of salmon farms.

“Salmon farmers on Canada's east coast participate in scientific research to better understand interactions with wild populations, as well as in wild salmon conservation efforts,” says Dr. Smith.

Unlike the mathematical model of the Dalhousie study, research has been conducted directly in the Bay of Fundy to look at potential causes and effects. “Unfortunately studies like this take the focus away from joint efforts to truly understand what is causing the decline of wild populations,” Dr. Smith adds.

Recent studies in the Bay of Fundy have examined the role of potential interbreeding, fish health, movement of released fish, migration of wild fish, and monitoring of local rivers.

### **Partnering to protect wild salmon populations**

The industry provides funding and facilities to support stocking programs, and works with conservation groups such as the **Atlantic Salmon Federation**, the **Inner Bay of Fundy Salmon Recovery Team**, and the **North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO)** to address wild salmon protection.

East coast salmon farmers are highly regulated and operate according to an innovative Bay Management Area system. This system is based on scientific research and monitoring and, with stringent farming practices, allows farms to meet high standards of environmental quality and fish health and welfare.

Further, salmon farmers adhere to a code of containment that was developed in accordance with the International Guidelines for Containment set by the International Salmon Farmers Association and NASCO and details rigorous guidelines to ensure farmed salmon remain on site. Site selection and subsequent site developments ensure containment and fish health management. Salmon farmers in the Bay of Fundy only use local genetic strains for production, significantly reducing the concern should farmed fish interbreed with wild fish.

“Aquaculture is a thriving, sustainable multi-million dollar industry in our region and in our entire country,” said Dr. Smith. “Salmon farming is providing thousands of skilled jobs that keep our best young workers in the province.”

The New Brunswick Salmon Growers’ Association was formed in 1987. The Association works on behalf of the entire sector to promote a sustainable salmon farming industry in the province, responsible management practices, safe food, a safe environment and global competitiveness.