



rising tide

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SPRING 2012

BOTTOM TRAWLERS: On Road to Sustainability

B.C. bottom trawlers on the road to sustainability with innovative measures to protect critical deep sea habitat

For decades, environmentalists in British Columbia have clashed with the province's groundfish bottom trawlers over the damage that the industry has caused ocean habitats. Recently, both sides have come together to forge ahead on this issue, and fragile ocean ecosystems are the big winner.

Living Oceans Society and the David Suzuki Foundation have developed innovative management measures in a collaborative effort with the B.C. bottom trawl fleet. These measures conserve corals and sponges, and reduce the fishery's impact on the deep-sea terrain that supports so much life. Both sides agree that these unique measures represent a significant

step forward along the road to sustainability for this fishery.

"The new measures are a major step forward leading to real and immediate change," said John Driscoll, Sustainable Fisheries Campaign Manager for Living Oceans Society. "The B.C. groundfish bottom trawl fishery has fundamentally changed for one basic reason: Every time they set their gear, one of the most pressing concerns for the skipper will be to avoid corals and sponges."

One of the keys to getting this deal done was the economic pressure put on the industry by shoppers who demanded ocean friendly seafood. In other

words, those SeaChoice wallet cards that you've been using are working.

The management changes include:

- defined boundaries that freeze the fishery's footprint to areas already trawled
- individual limits on each vessel's amount of coral and sponge bycatch
- a system to alert the entire fleet to the location of any single trawl tow that catches more than 20 kg of coral or sponge so others can avoid the area
- a joint habitat committee composed of representatives from industry, environmental groups and DFO to evaluate the measures at the end of each fishing season

"Each one of these measures is an important and exciting change", said John. "It's the first time anywhere that individual bycatch limits have been used to manage habitat impacts, and we think that these limits are a significant change to the way the fishery operates. We've long asked for the trawl footprint to be frozen, and now it is. And finally, the development of the habitat committee is a major step forward by itself. When you view these changes that are being put into place as a result of this effort, it's clear that this fishery is changing for the better in some very real ways."

The new management measures are being implemented by DFO in the Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for Groundfish ■

Deep sea corals form vast forests far below the surface of Canada's Pacific Ocean where juvenile fish hide from predators and many organisms feed.





Letter from the Executive Director

I knew I was taking on the leadership of Living Oceans at a critical time in our history, what with the pipelines and tanker traffic proposed for the coast, but even I was not prepared for how truly cynical the Harper government can be.

Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver recently revealed a little of what they have in mind when they talk about 'streamlining' environmental processes. They're closing down Environment Canada's local oil spill response offices, centralizing them in Quebec. This sounds like simple cost-cutting and reorganization until you begin to unpack what that really means for the B.C. coast, if the Enbridge pipeline is approved.

A 2010 audit of our emergency preparedness found it to be poor and uncoordinated. More resources were needed to safeguard the health of our oceans and coastal communities. The recommended work was just getting underway when Minister Oliver pulled the plug on fully half of the team.

When the first spill happens, from one of the 220 tankers per year expected to carry tarsands crude to China, it would have been the job of the Vancouver

oil spill response team to co-ordinate and advise the cleanup operators, mobilizing a carefully assembled team of regional response experts who were trained to know what important local resources to focus on protecting. The staff remaining after these cuts will simply not be able to recruit, train, track, drill and facilitate Regional Environmental Emergency Response teams throughout the country.

What is lost here is any hope of protecting valued local resources from an oil spill. Cleanups will be directed by the companies that made the mess, undertaken by private contractors whose obligation is to the company, not the environment or the communities most affected.

Perhaps this is the Harper government's way of acknowledging that a spill of tarsands crude in these waters simply couldn't be cleaned up, no matter how many resources you throw at it.

Karen Wristen
Executive Director



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Living Oceans Society is working to ensure the long-term health of the ocean and coastal communities on the Pacific Coast of Canada. We believe that people are part of the environment and that we can build sustainable communities by protecting coastal ecosystems today.

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LAYOUT AND DESIGN: Beyond Expectations Communication & Design Solutions. **COPYRIGHT:** Living Oceans Society, 2012. Rising Tides is published twice annually.

Printed on paper made with 100% PC recycled fiber content using non-polluting wind-generated energy. Certified by SmartWood for FSC standards. Green Seal Certified.



Oil tanker risk compounded by lack of clean up capability

Photo courtesy of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council

Spill response crews at Prince William Sound hose down the shoreline with after the Exxon Valdez spill. Despite the extensive cleanup attempts, less than 10 percent of the oil was recovered.

Living Oceans Society's research into Canada's spill response capability has us questioning some of the claims of Enbridge's marine plan. Last year we found that Canadian taxpayers will be on the hook for billions of dollars in clean up and compensation costs when the Big One happens. This year we took a close look at the level of preparedness.

While the Harper government downplays the dangers of super tankers on the North Coast, it has also slashed funding to Environment Canada's emergency oil spill response program and shut down its regional offices—including Vancouver.

"When we have an oil spill on our coasts, the government should be there to respond and protect the public from harm," said Katie Terhune, Energy Campaigner. "Instead they're doing the exact opposite by shutting down emergency response centres."

We also found out that the spill response solutions that Enbridge would deploy, such as containment booms and chemical dispersants, are often rendered useless by the notoriously bad weather and sea conditions on our coast.

Conventional oil spill booms do not work in waters with currents over one knot. All but a few current readings taken from nautical charts of B.C.'s North Coast are more than one knot. Currents along Enbridge's proposed tanker routes reach up to six knots. Nonetheless, Enbridge intends to rely heavily on oil spill booms when there is a spill despite the fact they will not work.

Dispersants are chemicals that are applied to spilled oil in order to "disperse" it into tiny droplets rather than actually get rid of it. There is immense concern regarding their toxicity and efficacy. In any event, dispersants can only be successfully applied for half of the year due to the wild weather along the proposed tanker routes.

If history shows us anything, it's that accidents happen. If Enbridge's controversial Northern Gateway tanker and pipeline project proceeds it's not a question of if there will be an oil spill but when. And when super tankers are involved, the real question becomes: how many barrels of crude would it take to destroy coastal ecosystems, economies and cultures for generations? ■

Significant wildlife casualties expected



The Exxon Valdez spill killed 250,000 seabirds.
(Photo courtesy of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council.)

Working with our friends at the Oiled Wildlife Trust, we investigated responders' ability to deal with oiled wildlife. The prospects don't look good. British Columbia lacks the infrastructure, equipment, personnel and funding necessary to effectively clean and rehabilitate oiled wildlife.

Living Oceans Society reports

www.livingoceans.org/media/reports-publications

Take *action!* on Oil Tankers

Tell Christy Clark to take a stand and keep our coast tanker-free!

The Harper Government has made it clear that it intends to push through the Northern Gateway pipeline and tanker project no matter the outcome of the environmental review. If you are as outraged as we are about this, please take a moment to send the enclosed postcard to Premier Clark and tell her that B.C. must take back its right to make its own decisions about Northern Gateway.

For more info go to www.livingoceans.org/initiatives/tankers/action

Bureaucratic loopholes benefit salmon farms

Marine Harvest Canada using bureaucratic loopholes to secretly boost production at salmon farms on Fraser River salmon migration route



Marine Harvest Canada plans to significantly increase production at its Shelter Bay and Marsh Bay open net-cage farms which lie on an important migratory corridor for many species of birds, marine mammals and fish including Fraser River sockeye.

Marine Harvest submitted an application to Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to increase production at its Shelter Bay site by as much as 35 percent. There are plans to do the same at their Marsh Bay site where they have already made changes to the open net-cages and the size of the tenure.

These two open net-cage farms lie directly in the path of out-migrating Cultus Lake sockeye salmon – a stock of Fraser River sockeye that has been recommended for emergency listing as an endangered population by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). In a submission to the Cohen Commission of Inquiry into the Decline of Fraser River Sockeye Salmon, the Kintama Research Services group pointed to their findings that this population is particularly vulnerable in these northern waters.

The planned expansion will threaten the wild juvenile sockeye with increased risk from exposure to both sea lice and disease.

“Adding more farmed salmon to these sites is contrary to DFO’s commitment to withhold decisions on new applications pending the Cohen Inquiry report,” said Will Soltau, Salmon Farming Campaign Manager. “We’re demanding that DFO deny B.C. salmon farmers any amendments that allow for increased production levels at open net-cage farms.”

Marine Harvest has applied to transfer licensed tonnage to the two farms from sites that have not been operational for many years. DFO has no way to assess all the environmental impacts from consolidating production in open net-cage farms on wild salmon migration routes.

DFO also lacks any mechanism to hold public consultation on the proposed amendments, in spite of the fact that a majority of British Columbians support transitioning the industry toward closed containment and away from open net-cages that take such a deadly toll on the environment ■

welcome



Karen Wristen

Karen Wristen, joined us as the new Executive Director in April. She has been an advocate for oceans and fisheries issues for over 17 years and a member of Living Oceans’ Board of Directors since we were formed in 1998. Karen holds a law degree from Osgoode Hall Law School and has extensive experience in non-profit management and development. She will split her time between Living Oceans’ home office in Sointula, on the Central Coast of British Columbia, and its Vancouver branch.

Karen is an avid sailor and lives on a 40’ Newporter sailboat on Bowen Island where she is very involved in volunteer work in her community.



Sheila Muxlow

Sheila Muxlow, our new Energy Campaign Manager, was born and raised in B.C. and grew up kayaking, sail boating and swimming along the coast. Sheila is a long time activist and community organizer and comes to us after stints in Alberta with the Sierra Club of Canada and the Council of Canadians where she worked on water and tar sands issues. Prior to that, Sheila worked as an English teacher in the People’s Republic of China, the Siqgee Women’s Development Agency in Ethiopia and earned a BA in International Development and Globalization from the University of Ottawa.

Creature Feature

HAGFISH

Consider the hagfish.
But do so from a distance.
Or at the very least,
wear gloves.

If you have access to medications that quell feelings of nausea and/or panic, take those too.

Probably the best thing someone can say about hagfish is that they do not try to be anything that they are not. They look like something that probably burrows into dead and dying things to eat them from the from inside out, and that's exactly what they do.

Hagfish are best known for being extremely foul to us two-legged types. Handling one is an epically gross experience for even steely-stomached fishermen - not only do the 'slime eels' writhe around, moving their hideous mouthparts, twisting into knots, but they also produce huge amounts of tremendously sticky mucous.

So yes, hagfish do not score well on the charisma scale. But it's a good thing they're around, because they do some important things — specifically, they eat dead things. Quickly and efficiently. And not only with that nightmarish mouth, either — a very recent paper suggests that they may absorb nutrients through their skin.



PHOTO: NOAA

Hagfish are an ancient group of animals and they occupy a very interesting evolutionary position. For one, they have a skull — but no backbone.

There are dozens of species of hagfish, several of which are on the Pacific coast. Apparently, there have been experimental fisheries for two: the Pacific hagfish and the black hagfish. Who in their right mind would want to catch these things, you ask? Well, while fishermen may not be overly enthusiastic about

dealing with them, there is a market for human consumption, and for their skins, which are used as 'eel leather' for high-end fashion products (similar to the stingray skin that we highlighted a while back).

So consider the hagfish: a hard-working animal that does the work that few other things do, and certainly does not try to be anything that it is not. That's worth something, I guess.

Just keep them away from me. ■

goodbye



Katie Terhune

Katie Terhune, came to us as a YMCA EcoIntern a little over two years ago and ended up running both our Tanker and Ocean Acidification initiatives. We didn't want her to go so she has shifted to a part time position while she attends the

University of Calgary to work on a Masters Degree in Sustainable Energy Development. Her ultimate goal is to work on expanding renewable energy projects in rural communities on the B.C. coast.



Catherine Stewart

Catherine Stewart left Living Oceans in March after serving as the Salmon Farming Campaign Manager since 2005. Cath looks forward to spending more time with her brilliant grandson and traveling. We'll miss Cath's sense of humour, her keen insight and her negotiating skills, all of which she honed advocating for environmental and social justice issues ranging from climate change to toxics to old growth forests. Her sea hugger portfolio spans high seas driftnet bans, wild salmon habitat protection and promoting closed containment over open net-cages.



John Driscoll

John Driscoll is returning to Dalhousie University after serving as Sustainable Fisheries Campaign Manager since 2008. John played a key role in the recent collaboration with the B.C. bottom trawlers to protect corals and sponges (see page 1). He contributed his knowledge to the Finding Coral Expedition and wrote our advisory paper for ecosystem-based management. No less important, John was one of the original LOS "blog brothers." We're sure that John's passion, keen mind and rapier wit will serve him well as he submerges himself in hagfish research in preparation for his doctoral thesis.

New marine planning process for B.C. coast

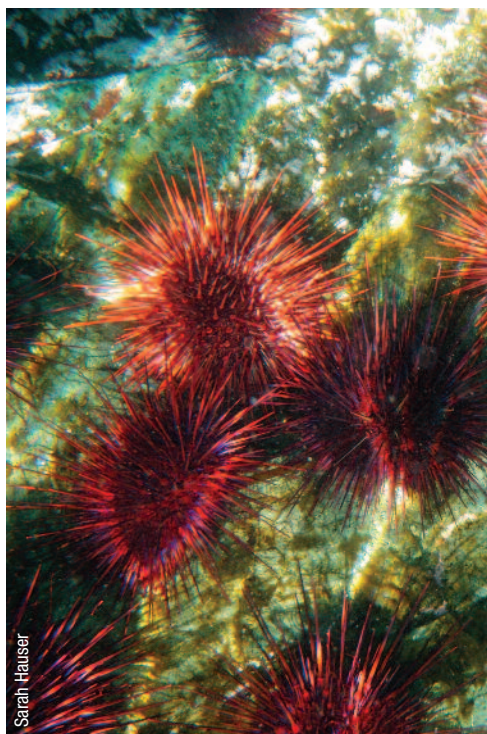
Living Oceans has worked for many years collecting local ecological knowledge on British Columbia's northern Vancouver Island and Central Coast. It is the knowledge that is passed through cultures or earned through a lifetime of living and working in the same locations, as with fishermen.

Now we have the opportunity to share this valued collection in a new way and to put it to good use when we join a committee to advise the new Marine Planning Partnership for the North Pacific Coast, or MaPP for short. MaPP is a partnership of the Province of B.C. and 20 First Nations of the North and Central Coasts and Haida Gwaii to create new coastal and marine plans.

"The MaPP partners recognize all the data and knowledge we've accumulated," said Kim Wright, Marine Planning and Protected Areas Campaign Manager. "MaPP marine use plans will contribute to one of our key goals; creating an effective network of Marine Protected Areas on the B.C. coast."

As this new planning process unfolds, we will draw on the expertise of a variety of local groups that we work with to provide input on conservation issues in the region.

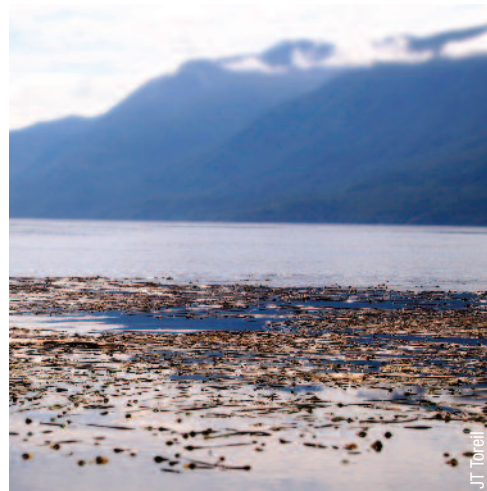
We foresee ocean ecosystems where there is clean water and sufficient habitat for a diversity of species to hide, forage and grow. It is where sustainable communities benefit from the bounty of a healthy ocean. This is the North Pacific Coast that we are working for.



Sarah Hauser



Rolf Hickler



JT Torell



Francis McKenty

Maps as tools for MaPP

Maps are one way we share our combined knowledge of the coast with you and with MaPP. Living Oceans' talented GIS department is experimenting with new interactive maps that allow you to see how different natural features overlap with areas you think are important, and how those places tie in with economic activities. Maps are a great tool for planning and whether it's our coastal livelihoods or the local haunts of salmon and orca that we are mapping, visualising how all the pieces fit together is an important step in planning for a healthy ocean.



MaPP wants input from the people who live and work on the coast. Go to <http://mappocean.org> to sign up for email updates about MaPP meetings, workshops and other events.

Most of us can picture kelp beds, sea urchins, orcas and salmon through photos if not from first-hand experience. Maps illustrate where they are found and where their habitat overlaps with human uses and possible threats.

disease
+ chemicals
+ waste
= organic?

† There is a cloud of mystery and a fair amount of 'greenwash' swirling around the topic of organic certification of farmed salmon. Let's cut the confusion. Is such a thing possible?

No. Net-cage salmon farming violates every principle you ever associated with 'organics'.

In spite of this, 'Canadian Organic Aquaculture Standard' salmon will soon be appearing on supermarket shelves and restaurant menus.

This 'Organic' Aquaculture Standard will allow:

- ✗ The use of synthetic pesticides
- ✗ The continued, uncontrollable spread of disease and parasites to wild fish
- ✗ Uncontrolled disposal of fish feces into the ocean
- ✗ Escapes of farmed fish that compete or interbreed with wild fish
- ✗ Entanglement, drowning deaths and 'legal' shootings of marine mammals
- ✗ The unrestricted use of feed from non-organic, potentially unsustainable sources as opposed to

the 100 percent organic feed requirement currently in place for all other organic livestock

- ✗ The unlimited use of wild fish in feed which contributes to a net loss of marine protein and a drain on already strained global fish stocks.

Closed containment tanks can greatly reduce or eliminate these environmental risks and are more compatible with organic principles, but their use is not required by the new standard.

Living Oceans Society and more than 60 groups and 1,500 individuals asked the Canadian General Standards Board to raise the standards for farmed salmon. The only concession made was to prohibit the use of antibiotics.

"The process was flawed from the beginning," said Kelly Roebuck, Sustainable Seafood Campaign Manager. "It began behind closed doors inside DFO and was only opened up to selected groups late in the day. The Board worked with a committee stacked full of government and industry representatives. Little wonder our "no" votes did not carry the day."

**Fair is fair.
Say 'no' to 'organic' farmed salmon.**



Organic farmed salmon? Really?

Credible eco-certification

Certifications and claims of seafood sustainability have flooded the marketplace in recent years. Certifications can play important roles for traceability, chain of custody and reassurance for the public - but not all are created equal!

Here is a quick guide.

A 'sustainable seafood' certification:

- ✓ Is transparent about who is involved in the certification process and how it will be used from start to finish
- ✓ Provides updates on progress and challenges
- ✓ Has a process for on-going improvement
- ✓ Has a balanced representation from the seafood industry, science, conservationists and the local community
- ✓ Is based on scientific evidence with periodic reviews to address new findings
- ✓ Is independent
- ✓ Is verified by a third party to avoid conflict of interest
- ✓ Monitors and evaluates progress to determine eligibility for re-certification
- ✓ Addresses key environmental impacts

For more information and help on which ocean-friendly seafood to buy visit www.seachoice.org



Stay in touch between newsletters

The best way to keep current with Living Oceans Society is to follow us on Facebook.

Join the movement to protect Canada's oceans. Get the latest news, updates, videos and action alerts. Join the conversation. Here's what a few of our 1,800+ fans have to say:

"This is fascinating stuff ... more please"

"The time has come for this idea!!!"

"Thanks for the lovely photographs!"

"This is an EXCELLENT article!"

"Thanks so much for exposing this report."



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Become a monthly donor

Your gift of as little as \$10 a month will help us to protect ocean habitats for the fish, birds, marine mammals and coastal communities that depend on them.

YES!

Support Living Oceans Society

1 Donate directly to Living Oceans Society, (if you do not require a tax receipt).

By cheque: Please make cheque payable to Living Oceans Society and mail to: Living Oceans Society Box 320 Sointula, BC V0N 3E0.

By credit card: Please call 250-973-6580 and provide us with your information.

2 Donate to Oceans Fund at Tides Canada Foundation if you would like a tax receipt (min \$25).

By cheque or credit card: please fill out this form. Cheques must be payable to TIDES CANADA FOUNDATION-OCEANS FUND. Please note if you would like to make a one time or monthly donation. Monthly donors will receive annual tax receipts.

Online: www.livingoceans.org/donate.

Living Oceans Society advises Tides Canada Foundation regarding grants made from the Oceans Fund. Contributions donated to the Oceans Fund are granted to various charitable organizations that we collaborate with to support work that advances our mission of research and education projects to increase public awareness of the problems affecting our ocean and solutions that will ensure healthy oceans for generations to come. Donations to support this charitable work are eligible for a charitable tax receipt issued by Tides Canada Foundation.

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Questions? Contact Living Oceans Society at 250-973-6580 or info@livingoceans.org