



**PACIFIC WILD JOURNAL**

*Dispatches from a Northern Rainforest*

WINTER 2023-2024



# Forging a Future Path for Wildlife

A major challenge of conservation is that we have to prove that a species is on the brink of extinction before the government will decide to do anything about it. Even then, they may do nothing. Just look at the horrific government-sponsored wolf cull that has killed 1,926 wolves and counting. The federal government should have stepped in decades ago to save the last critical habitat for caribou. Instead, it transferred responsibility to the B.C. government and the only solution the Province has come up with is killing wolves. Passing off management of endangered caribou to a province without species-at-risk legislation is akin to giving the fox control of the henhouse.

The draft Grizzly Bear Stewardship Framework is more of the same. In a seemingly democratic move, the Province has proposed to offload its responsibilities towards this trans-boundary species to local and regional committees. All the while, many First Nations are deliberating

on their own wildlife stewardship strategies and laws, but there is no indication of how the different governments and committees will mesh when it comes to making policy decisions.

At a time when people around the world are suffering through war, poverty, and natural disasters, some may see caring about our wildlife as trifling or even irrelevant. But we do care. Working for a healthy future for species like bears and wolves means a healthy future for humans too. We need to legislate the grizzly bear hunting ban. We need to ensure that stewardship of wildlife puts at-risk species and their habitat first. With a provincial election less than a year away and a federal one to follow, now is the time to make sure that wildlife and habitat protection are in the minds, hearts, and election platforms of our candidates.



*Karen McAllister*

**Karen McAllister**, Executive Director

This fall I had an opportunity to connect with some old friends up in a salmon river valley of the Great Bear Rainforest. It had rained the night before and the looming rock faces that lined the inlet were glistening in the morning sunshine. We ambled through the estuary with its stamped-down golden sedges, withering asters, and silverweed. There were gaping holes everywhere—bears had been making good work of the roots and tubers of estuarine plants, digging them up at their end-of-season peak.

I saw my first coastal grizzly bear over thirty years ago. Little did I know what a formative experience it would prove to be, that the protection of these magnificent animals would dominate my conservation focus for years to come, and still does today.

I've spent a good chunk of my life in watersheds up and down the coast observing bears and there is no greater pleasure than watching them snorkelling in old growth-lined streams and feasting on giant spawning salmon to fatten up before heading to their winter dens.

During my days of ground-truthing grizzly bear habitat and mapping out large, connected conservation areas that could sustain healthy populations of bears, I was one defender of the hundreds who worked hard to ban the hunting of these majestic creatures. With all of the many pressures already facing grizzly bears, the last thing they needed was to be shot for sport. We finally succeeded in banning the hunt in 2017.



Staff march in the United for Old Growth Rally. (February 25)



Marine Specialist Sydney Dixon tries herring roe on a trip with Jack Wolfskin to capture the magic of the herring spawn on the west coast of Vancouver Island. (March 1–20)



Manager of Finance Rob Hackney conducts a bioblitz in a mature forest on a field outing. (April 4)



Crowds gather to protest ship-breaking in Baynes Sound, a critical spawning ground for Pacific herring. Marine specialist Sydney Dixon presents on marine toxicology at the rally. (April 30)



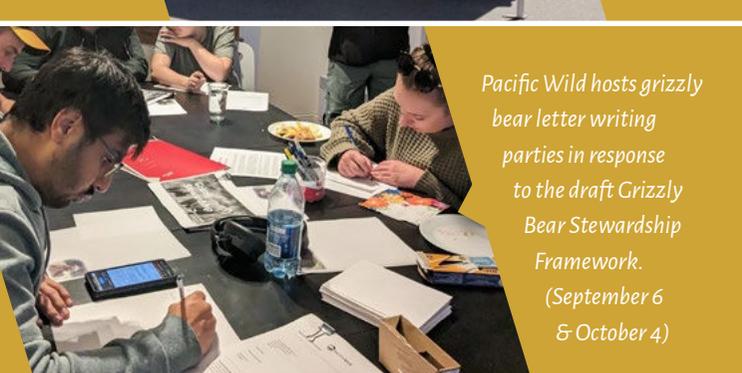
Our Wild Auction open house event celebrated Endangered Species Day with art, music, and a drum making workshop with Karen Whetung. (May 19)



Pacific Wild co-hosts a number of events during Victoria Oceans Week. (June 2–11)



Norm Hann and Bruce Kirkby "Stand Up for Marine Protection" by making the first crossing by paddleboard of Hecate Strait. Pacific Wild shared their journey on a **STORY MAP**, which allowed people to experience the marine protected areas on the north coast virtually. (June 2023)



Pacific Wild hosts grizzly bear letter writing parties in response to the draft Grizzly Bear Stewardship Framework. (September 6 & October 4)



Digital Content Designer Roan Bohonos and Marine Specialist Sydney Dixon stand by a mother tree on a fall excursion in the Great Bear Rainforest to document the salmon spawn and its interconnections in the ecosystem. (September 16–21)



A colourful forest jewel, likely *Laccaria ochropurpurea*, found on a staff field outing. (October 23)

## This Year, Pacific Wild:



Catalogued **270 TB of video** (the equivalent of 16,875 two-hour movies)



Used this footage to identify over **93 different species**



Travelled **2,400 nautical miles** documenting wildlife, ecosystems, and threats facing them



Edited and posted over **59 videos** online



Sent **15,208 emails** to provincial and federal decision makers



Collaborated with **55 outside organisations** and experts for SaveBCBears



Sparked **75 news stories...** and counting!

# Do You Caribout Wolves?



Last spring a long-time donor asked us, “What can I do to make a bigger difference for B.C. wolves?” Fiona C. had a considerable gift to donate and wanted to raise awareness of the provincial government’s “predator reduction” program. She felt many in her community weren’t aware of the wolf cull, let alone that the Province contracts hunters to shoot wolves from helicopters and pays for it with millions of tax dollars.

Since the wolf cull began in 2015 Pacific Wild has been on the forefront of advocating for its end. We’ve taken it to the courts, presented the provincial government with a petition signed by over half a million people, and launched myriad #SaveBCWolves multimedia campaigns. Yet the government shows no sign of stopping its war on wolves, claiming that it protects endangered caribou populations. We maintain that the cull is unethical, unscientific, and ineffective, and this year we dove deeper into the plight of endangered caribou. With Fiona C.’s help, the billboard and web-based campaign [CARIBOUTWOLVES.ORG](https://cariboutwolves.org) was born.

On June 1<sup>st</sup>, we launched the website [CARIBOUTWOLVES.ORG](https://cariboutwolves.org) and raised the first billboard in Kelowna. Hundreds of thousands of



Okanagan residents and visitors saw the billboard in its first three months, adding up to over 3.5 million individual impressions. Many of these viewers wrote to Pacific Wild and their government representatives about the cull. Many also donated to fund more billboards across the province. On November 1<sup>st</sup>, a new series of billboards went live in the Prince George region.

The Caribout Wolves website provides a thorough

overview of the threats facing caribou and explains why predator-reduction programs won't save them. Pacific Wild produced maps showing the shocking amount of habitat loss that is driving caribou to the brink of extirpation and will ultimately lead to extinction. The site also includes projections of the wolf cull's ongoing cost to B.C. taxpayers.

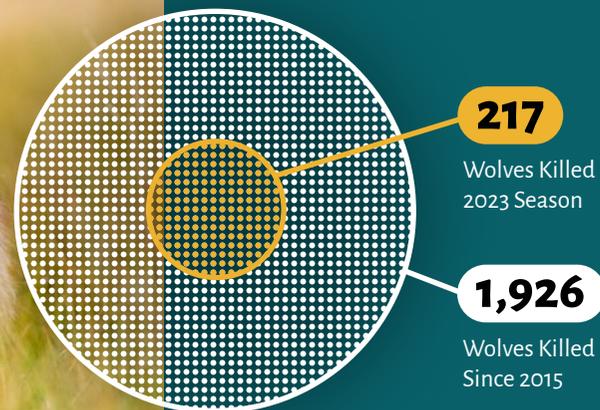
The website also features an extensive resource list compiled by ecologist Amelia Porter (MSc, EP, RPBio) that contains over 50 reference summaries from research articles, books, and government documents. Chapter topics include insufficient protection of caribou habitat, inadequate scientific evidence for the wolf control effectiveness, unintended consequences of predator removal, preferred non-lethal methods, ethics research, and public disapproval. The government tells us that science backs the wolf cull. This body of literature refutes that claim while offering alternative solutions.

## PICTURES TELL 46,000 WORDS

The B.C. government claims that the wolf cull is conducted humanely. We disagree. Last winter a retired fish and wildlife officer found a B.C. “Judas wolf” across the border in Alberta. The wolf’s collar was much too tight on him, indicating that he had been collared as a juvenile. He was 450 km from where he was collared and unable to properly eat or breathe because of his tight collar. Judas wolves are part of the B.C. government’s “predator reduction program.” They are so named because they are captured and released with a radio collar that allows aerial snipers to follow the wolf back to its pack. The pack is killed but the Judas wolf is allowed to live and lead shooters to other wolves.

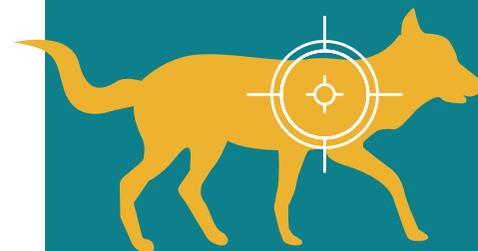
In April 2023, in response to Pacific Wild’s freedom of information request, the government released 46 images from the 600+ collected throughout the eight-year wolf cull program. Many showed that multiple shots were required to kill the wolves from a moving aircraft. We continue to press for the remaining images for an independent review by experts to assess the humaneness of the cull.

## HOW MANY WOLVES HAVE BEEN KILLED BY THE B.C. GOVERNMENT?



# \$7.5K

THE B.C. GOVERNMENT SPENDS \$7.5K PER WOLF KILL



# \$8.4M

SINCE 2015 \$8.4M HAS BEEN SPENT ON THE B.C. WOLF CULL



## The Dangerous Fallacy of Science vs. Emotions

“Facts before emotion,” one pro-trophy hunting commenter posted on the Pacific Wild Instagram page, echoing the persistent idea that protecting predators like wolves or grizzlies is based on sentiment, not science. The 2023 Draft Grizzly Bear Stewardship Framework claims that the ban on the grizzly bear trophy hunt “was not specifically or directly in response to a conservation concern. Rather, it largely reflected many British Columbians’ ethical or moral opposition to grizzly bear hunting.” Trophy-hunting advocates use this language to imply that being ethically motivated is scientifically invalid. However, the scientific method is just a tool, and history has shown that without ethics guiding the process, it can be used to justify terrible atrocities.

Dr. Gosia Bryja, conservation scientist and B.C. wildlife advocate, elaborates further: “Ethical opposition to grizzly trophy hunting goes beyond the notion of individual suffering. Hunting grizzlies is immoral not only because it cruelly extinguishes the lives of sentient creatures for trivial entertainment but also because it further imperils the future of grizzly populations. Indeed, there were valid reasons behind placing grizzly bears as a species of Special Concern under the federal Species at Risk Act. [...] The science of animal sentience and the science of wildlife conservation inform our ‘ethical and moral opposition.’”

Ethics, morality, and emotions, together with science, are necessary to guide us to humanely coexist with other species on this planet.

# Grizzly Bears, from Past to Present

130 Years of Grizzly Bear Persecution & Protection

1890s

Grizzly bears extirpated from the Great Plains

**Extirpated:**  
The local extinction of an organism or species.

1920s

Grizzly bears extirpated from California

1936

Grizzly bears extirpated from Arizona

1975

Grizzly bears listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in the US

1979

Last sighting of a grizzly bear in Colorado

1982

Grizzly bears extirpated from Mexico

1996

B.C. government replaces open season hunting of grizzlies with a limited-entry spring and fall hunt

1995

B.C. government commits to protect grizzly bears with "A Future for the Grizzly: British Columbia Grizzly Bear Strategy"

1994

K'tzim-a-deen becomes Canada's first grizzly bear sanctuary

1991

Grizzly bears extirpated from Canadian Prairies



2001

(February 2001) B.C. NDP government announces a three-year moratorium on grizzly bear hunting

2004

European Union suspends import of grizzly trophies from B.C. Grizzly Bear Harvest Management Procedure Manual comes into effect

2005

First trophy hunt tenure purchased for conservation

2012

Western population of grizzly bears noted as a species of concern by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC)

Coastal First Nations announce ban of grizzly bear hunting in their territories

2001

(July 2001) B.C. Liberal government rescinds the three-year moratorium



2017

(December 2017) All grizzly bear hunting is banned in B.C. with an exception for First Nations, who are able to hunt grizzly bears for food, social, and ceremonial purposes, or treaty rights

2016

Coastal First Nations post signs across B.C.: "Trophy Hunting is Closed in the Great Bear Rainforest. Respect our Traditional Laws."

2014

B.C. expands its trophy hunt into two new areas and increases the number of licences

Report disproves "economic" argument for grizzly hunt: bear hunting only brings in 1.2 million compared to over 15 million from ecotourism

(October 2017) *An Independent Audit of Grizzly Bear Management* finds that Ministries' management of grizzly bears failed to meet expectations

(August 2017) B.C. NDP announces an end to the grizzly bear trophy hunt after the fall season, but continues to allow hunting for meat

2018

Hunting guide files lawsuit against province over B.C. grizzly hunt ban

Western population of grizzly bears is officially listed in the Species at Risk Act: a recovery strategy must be developed within three years

2022

Judge grants guide outfitters class status to sue the B.C. government

2023

(July 2023) Ministry of Forests releases Draft Grizzly Bear Stewardship Framework for public comment

(October 2023) Pacific Wild and Valhalla Wilderness Society send an 11-point letter backed by 55 signatories to the B.C. government in response to the framework

(October 2023) Management of grizzly bears passes from the Ministry of Forests to the Ministry of Water Land and Resource Stewardship

## 2017 INDEPENDENT AUDIT OF GRIZZLY BEAR MANAGEMENT

*In 2017 an INDEPENDENT AUDIT found that the Province hadn't fulfilled its commitment to implement a grizzly bear management plan, a recovery plan in the North Cascades, or an inventory and monitoring strategy of grizzly bears in B.C. The audit found that the greatest risk to grizzly bears was the degradation of their habitat. Auditor General Carol Bellringer reported that "the expansion of development in oil and gas, forestry and human settlement makes it more difficult for grizzly bears to mate, and results in food source loss, as well as more human-bear conflict."*

# Poll After Poll Shows British Columbians Support Grizzly Hunting Ban

2001

Compass poll shows **76%** of British Columbians want a moratorium on grizzly bear hunting

Stratcom poll shows **59%** support for a complete ban on sport hunting of grizzlies, and **81%** support for a five-year moratorium

2008

McAllister Research poll shows **73%** of British Columbians support an end to the trophy hunting of grizzlies

2013

McAllister Research poll shows **87%** of British Columbians believe the grizzly bear hunt should be banned, with **78%** strongly in favour of the ban

2015

Insights West poll shows that **91%** of B.C. residents oppose hunting animals for sport

2017

Insights West poll reveals that most British Columbian **hunters (71%)** are in favour of ending the grizzly bear trophy hunt, while a majority (**58%**) would ban all hunting of grizzly bears in the province

B.C. Government announces that following “a consultation process with First Nations, stakeholder groups and the public, **78%** of respondents (of 4,200) recommended the hunt be stopped entirely”

2023

Research Co. poll finds **84%** of respondents disagree with trophy hunting of grizzly bears and **77%** would like the ban to be legislated

## OVER 3/4 OF BRITISH COLUMBIANS WANT THE BAN LEGISLATED

The majority of British Columbians have been in favour of banning the grizzly bear trophy hunt for decades. Six years after the Province banned the hunt, British Columbians' convictions remain strong, but the ban is not set in stone. In 2001 the NDP government enacted a grizzly hunting ban only for the incoming Liberal government to overturn it within just a few months. This kind of reversal could easily happen again despite the latest **RESEARCH.CO POLL** commissioned by Pacific Wild showing that British Columbians, regardless of their political leanings, disapprove of reinstating the hunt and 77% of respondents polled this September want to see the ban legislated.

## CONSERVATION COALITION CONCERNED ABOUT B.C.'S NEW GRIZZLY PLAN

When we celebrated five years free of the grizzly bear trophy hunt in December 2022, we didn't know how important this milestone would become just a few months later. On July 12, 2023, the B.C. government released a draft **GRIZZLY BEAR STEWARDSHIP FRAMEWORK** for public comment. Despite the document's title, it is not a policy framework, nor is it a grizzly bear recovery plan as required by the Species at Risk Act (SARA). The document is instead a collection of general information on grizzly bears (including outdated population estimates and a concerning downplaying of the threat of habitat loss and climate change) intended as a resource for **newly-proposed local and regional committees that would take over the provincial and federal responsibilities towards grizzlies.**

The draft framework provides no guidelines on how the committees would be formed, governed, or held accountable. While 32 of B.C.'s First Nations have participated in the framework draft process, the document does not outline how the newly-proposed regional structure would collaborate with First Nations in decision-making. This fragmentation of wildlife stewardship also opens the door for more control by industry and hunting organisations, and even a return of the grizzly bear trophy hunt. The B.C. Wildlife Federation, a hunting and conservation organisation, wrote in a July letter to the Minister of Forests that they “will continue to work with First Nations and other groups to support a properly funded fish and wildlife management structure and the **return of a grizzly bear hunt** in British Columbia.”

The good news is that these recent developments have spurred a huge swell of support for grizzly bears. **Over 2,200 people signed the petition for an extension to the public engagement period for the Grizzly Bear Stewardship Framework.** Nearly 1,000 B.C. residents filled out the stewardship survey or sent messages to the government. Your voices were heard and the input period was extended three times since August, finally closing on October 31st. This extension gave the public, and in particular those vested in wildlife management issues, more time to read and respond to the draft document.

This fall Pacific Wild collaborated with Valhalla Wilderness Society and a handful of dedicated independent conservationists to co-author two open letters in response to the Framework with 55 signatories from environmental and animal-care organisations, wildlife experts, and nature-based businesses. Various media outlets, including Global TV, CTV, *The National*, and the *Times Colonist*, have published articles and interviews about our poll and our combined advocacy efforts around the proposed changes to grizzly bear management. We have met with elected officials to discuss next steps, and although B.C. Minister Nathan Cullen has stated that the government doesn't have any intention to reopen trophy hunting, we think it is the time to turn this intention into a legislated ban on hunting grizzly bears for good.

While the period of public consultation has passed, you can still **write to the B.C. government to express your opposition to the fragmentation of wildlife stewardship and ask them to both legislate the ban on grizzly bear trophy hunting and protect grizzly bear habitat from logging and industrial development.** Thank you for lending your voice to grizzlies.

# Making Waves for Marine Protection

2023 has been a year of significant milestones towards safeguarding our precious marine ecosystems at all levels of government: Indigenous, federal, provincial, and international.



## PROGRESS FOR MARINE PROTECTION AT IMPAC5

In February the Government of Canada finally announced its official endorsement of the Northern Shelf Bioregion Marine Protected Area Network Action Plan (NSB MPAN) at the global IMPAC5 conference for marine protected areas. This marked an important step towards meeting Canada's commitment of protecting 30 percent of the ocean by 2030. However, since their endorsement, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) has made little progress towards network implementation. With just over one year until the 2025 deadline for the implementation of Category 1 sites, we must put pressure on Canadian politicians to honour their commitment to making the network a reality within the timeframe promised.

Also at IMPAC5, Canada officially released details on the 2023 *Protection Standards for Marine Protected Areas*, which includes legislation prohibiting industrial activities such as mining, dumping, bottom trawling, and oil and gas exploration and exploitation in all new MPAs. The federal government announced a new policy to guide the establishment and management of national marine conservation areas (NMCAs), a step towards its goal to create ten new NMCAs in coming years. In the wake of climate change, overfishing, and increasing environmental uncertainty, protection cannot be delayed. **Write to Minister Lebouthillier today and demand that implementation of MPA promises begin immediately and that all MPAs be brought up to the 2023 protection standards.**

## INDIGENOUS-LED CONSERVATION IN 2023

This June the Tsawout First Nation near Victoria, B.C., designated 155 km<sup>2</sup> of ocean in its traditional waters as an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA). The Tsawout First Nation plans to use the QENT ("caring for" in SenĆoten) Marine Protected Area to restore tidal ecosystems, revitalise food harvesting, and implement their own coastal guardian program. The ripple effects of this declaration were felt internationally. Three months later, the Resighini Rancheria tribe of Yurok People, the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, and the Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria jointly announced that 1,813 km<sup>2</sup> of coastline between Oregon and California would become America's first ever Indigenous Marine Stewardship Area.

A proposed MPA 150 km off the west coast of Vancouver Island will also include IPCAs, the first of which will be a Haida Heritage Site. Other Indigenous partners such as the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, Pacheedaht, and Quatsino First Nations are expected to identify specially-monitored areas as well. This MPA would cover approximately 133,019 km<sup>2</sup>, and would encompass extraordinary seafloor features including more than 46 sea mounts and all known hydrothermal vents in Canada. It was identified in 2017 as a potential MPA and dubbed Tang.gwan – ĥač'w'iqak – Tsigis (a word combined from the languages of the partner Nations and referring to its great depth).

**While many are rejoicing at this year's progress on marine protection, there has also been an increase in pushback and misinformation campaigns, disparaging the importance of marine conservation.** Dismissing the notion of overfishing and environmental degradation entirely, these misinformation campaigns attribute perilously low catches to increasing fishing regulations. We continue our work to dispel these myths and remain steadfast in our commitment to safeguarding our marine ecosystems in order to ensure a vibrant future for our oceans and a lasting legacy for generations to come.

## NOT ALL MPAS ARE CREATED EQUALLY

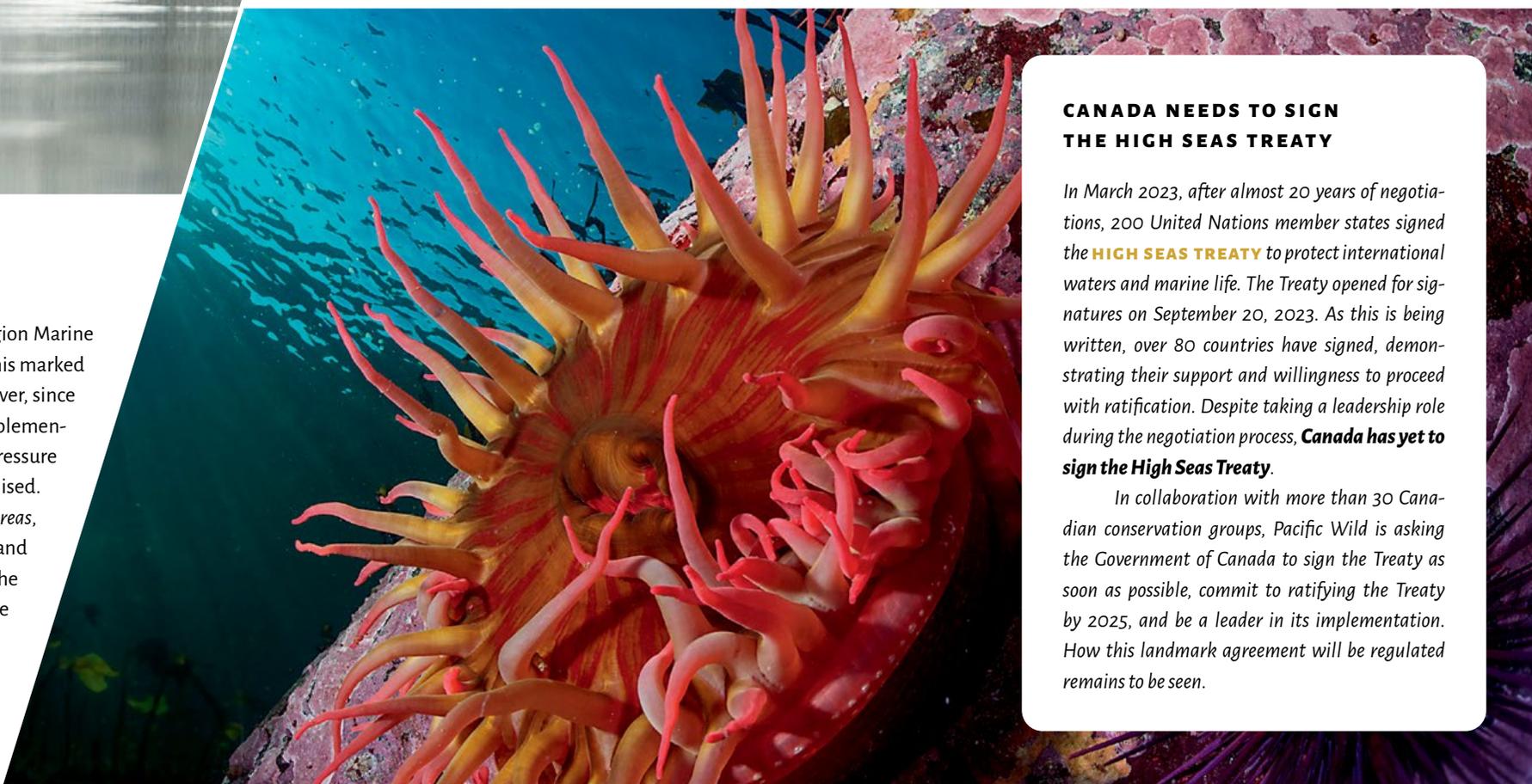
Research shows the most effective MPAs are large (>100 km<sup>2</sup>), old (>10 years), isolated, well-enforced, and fully protected. Currently, many MPAs in B.C. still allow for commercial fishing and other extractive industries.



## CANADA NEEDS TO SIGN THE HIGH SEAS TREATY

In March 2023, after almost 20 years of negotiations, 200 United Nations member states signed the **HIGH SEAS TREATY** to protect international waters and marine life. The Treaty opened for signatures on September 20, 2023. As this is being written, over 80 countries have signed, demonstrating their support and willingness to proceed with ratification. Despite taking a leadership role during the negotiation process, **Canada has yet to sign the High Seas Treaty.**

In collaboration with more than 30 Canadian conservation groups, Pacific Wild is asking the Government of Canada to sign the Treaty as soon as possible, commit to ratifying the Treaty by 2025, and be a leader in its implementation. How this landmark agreement will be regulated remains to be seen.



# Fighting for Sustainable Fisheries

## HERRING: THE HEROES OF THE COAST NEED OUR HELP

This spring Pacific Wild staff were lucky to observe herring spawning off the west coast of Vancouver Island, documenting grey whales, sea otters, black bears, and many bird species feasting on herring eggs. The roe (called k'w'aqm̓is, siihm'uu, and siixbuʔ in Nuu-chah-nulth languages) are also a nutritious springtime treat for humans. Since time immemorial First Nations communities up and down the coast have harvested herring roe from hemlock boughs or kelp, an example of a sustainable fishing technique called Spawn-on-Kelp (SOK).

Pacific herring form the foundation of B.C.'s marine ecosystem, but more than a century of mismanagement has led to a dramatic decline in herring populations. **RECENT RESEARCH shows that significant reductions in the herring population occurred within decades of the initial Euro-Canadian settlement, resulting in a fisheries collapse of up to 99%.** This decline occurred more than 60 years before scientific description had begun and the magnitude of these effects are generally unrecognised in present-day fisheries management. The sustainability baseline needs to be changed to reflect pre-colonial numbers, not the post-collapse populations.

Today, three out of the five herring fishing grounds in B.C. remain closed to all commercial gillnet and seine fishing. These "kill fisheries" extract the eggs from females for export overseas and grind up the bodies into low-value fish meal—a key ingredient in farmed salmon feed, pet food, and garden fertiliser. Herring can spawn multiple times within their lifespan but the commercial roe fishery catches and kills herring right before spawning, interrupting the production of billions of fertilised eggs.

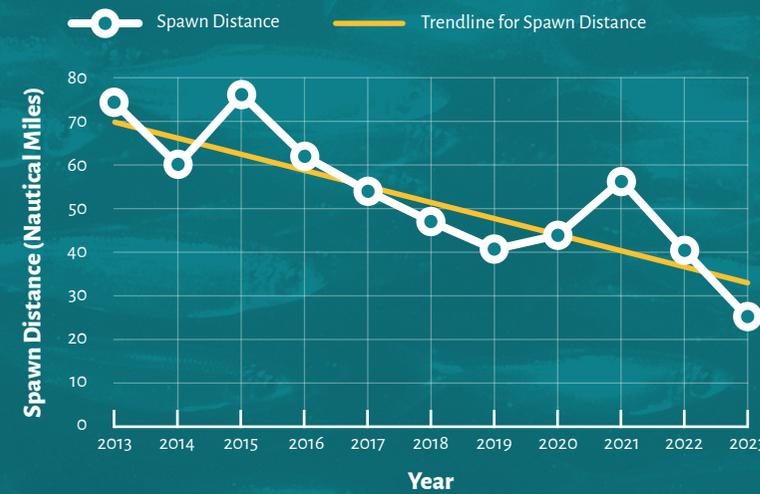
The Strait of Georgia (SoG) is one of the few areas open to commercial fishing. It is also considered the last stronghold for herring on Canada's Pacific Coast, home to 50% of remaining herring in B.C.. However, **the spawning biomass of herring in the SoG has been on a declining trajectory, with the 2023 spawn index measuring the third lowest in the last decade.** Despite widespread criticism and calls for a moratorium from scientists, conservationists, and many First Nations, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) re-opened the commercial seine and gillnet fisheries in the SoG this year.

This past spring DFO set a 10% harvest rate in the Strait of Georgia. However, the quota was set at a maximum of 6,625 tons, which would have represented an 18% harvest rate if the low end of DFO's prediction (range: 36,412-135,049 tons) of herring returned to spawn in 2023. DFO scientists previously identified this percentage as over-harvest. Pacific Wild believes this violates the precautionary principle, which states that "fisheries management requires caution when scientific knowledge is uncertain. The absence of adequate scientific information should not result in postponed action or failure to take action to avoid the risk of serious harm to fish stocks or their ecosystem." Both the seine and gillnet fisheries exceeded their quotas in 2023.

**Pacific Wild continues to advocate for a complete moratorium of the commercial gillnet and seine herring fishery until such time as herring populations can rebound** and the science behind their life history is more fully understood. The future health of our communities, the coastal ecosystem, and the longevity of various commercial fishing operations depend on a stable foundation built on the backs of Pacific herring.

## SIZE OF SPAWN AREA PER YEAR IN THE STRAIT OF GEORGIA

The area where spawning occurs in the Strait of Georgia (SoG) is in a linear state of decline. Herring have been fished out of the southern SoG, with spawn disappearing from areas that historically hosted large spawning aggregations.



## AUDITOR GENERAL SLAMS DFO FOR LACK OF MONITORING, DATA AND ENFORCEMENT

*In a damning report released this November, the Office of the Auditor General of Canada found that DFO has not succeeded in implementing the majority of the corrective measures that it committed to since the last audit seven years ago. The report states that DFO "still does not have a complete picture about the amount of fish harvested and their biological characteristics to make informed decisions. Without dependable and timely catch data, the department does not have the important information it needs to support the sustainable management of fisheries, and it runs the risk that fish stocks are overexploited."*



## HOLD THE FEDS ACCOUNTABLE ON FISH FARM PROMISES

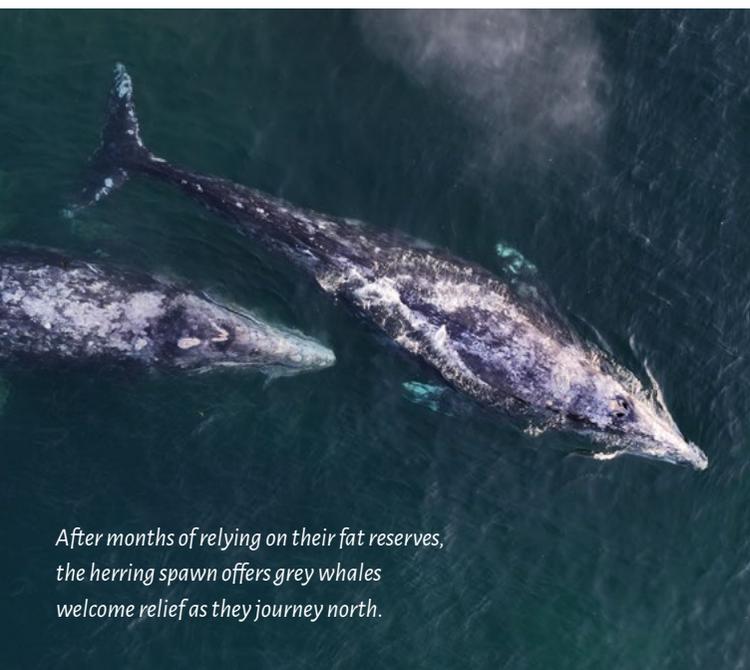
Open-net pen fish farms pose well-documented threats to wild salmon. **B.C. is the only region on the Pacific Coast of North America that still allows open-net pen salmon farms to operate.** These farms cannot control the outflow of waste from their facilities. Every day that they are permitted to operate in our waters, deadly parasites, pathogens, pesticides, and pollutants are released into the surrounding ecosystem to wreak havoc on the wild salmon stocks that are already facing unprecedented declines.

Four years ago, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau promised to get open-net pen salmon farms out of B.C.'s coastal waters by 2025. As of June 2023, there are still 57 salmon farms and 79 federal salmon farming licences active in B.C..

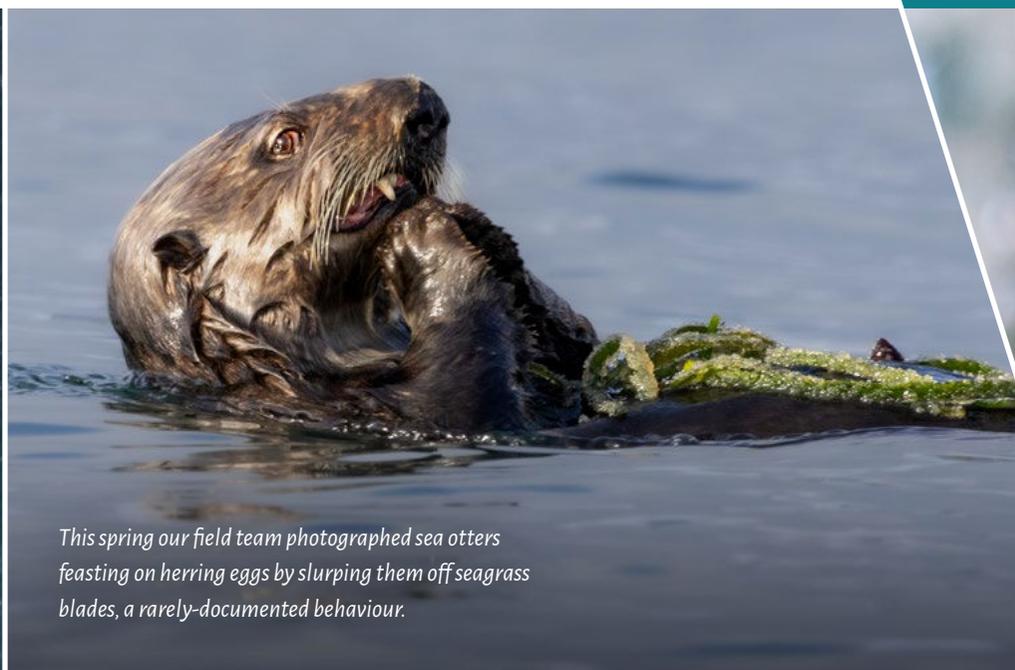
The decline of wild salmon populations threatens the welfare of First Nations and coastal communities, as well as iconic species like killer whales, eagles, bears, and wolves that rely on salmon as a food source. Write to Minister Leboathillier and tell her you want to see timely and meaningful action on the promise to remove all open-net pen salmon farms from B.C. waters by 2025.

**"Salmon and all marine life are a vital resource to all Indigenous Nations. Any actions which threaten salmon or marine life threaten our well-being and the livelihood of our Peoples. Fish farms destroy their immediate environment and threaten marine life and wild fish stocks."**

— Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, 1998



After months of relying on their fat reserves, the herring spawn offers grey whales welcome relief as they journey north.



This spring our field team photographed sea otters feasting on herring eggs by slurping them off seagrass blades, a rarely-documented behaviour.



A female herring can lay up to 20,000 eggs a year, and can spawn up to ten times in their lifespan.

# Trawling for Truth

Bottom trawling is a highly destructive fishing method that uses large, weighted nets to scrape the bottom of the ocean, capturing everything in their path and causing permanent damage to the seafloor. There are approximately 44 active vessels in B.C. whose primary target species are rockfish, flatfish, lingcod, and sablefish. However, other species are easily swept up in the nets only to be discarded as bycatch, dead or dying. The incidental capture of salmon, herring, and oolichan by bottom trawlers offshore undermines species preservation efforts inshore and puts the livelihoods and food security of coastal communities at risk.

Trawling occurs offshore at great depths, making it difficult to monitor and regulate. In their 2023 report, the Auditor General of Canada summarised that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) is “unable to collect the dependable and timely catch data that it needs to sustainably manage commercial marine fisheries and protect Canada’s fish stocks” largely due to insufficient monitoring. **A poll commissioned by Pacific Wild in 2022 revealed only half of Canadians express confidence in the federal government’s ability to manage fisheries in Canada.**

We’re not the only ones that think bottom trawling is a drag. This year, trawling made international headlines as the United Kingdom and New Zealand took the first steps to ban bottom trawling from protected areas and inshore zones. Closer to home, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reported that ten killer whales were caught as bycatch in the Alaskan bottom and mid-water groundfish trawl fishery in 2023 alone. This is a huge increase from the five killer whales reported caught by the Alaskan groundfish fishery between 2016 and 2020. In response, the Center for Biological Diversity has announced it intends to sue NOAA for failing to protect marine mammals from being killed by groundfish trawl fisheries in the Bering Sea and the Aleutian Islands. Additionally, some fisheries scientists and commercial fishers blame trawlers for dwindling salmon runs outside of Bristol Bay and drastic declines of red king and opilio crab stocks in the Bering Sea.

Pacific Wild has spent 2023 diving deeper by submitting access to information requests to both DFO and NOAA and embarking on a new research project with local law students. In February we published and distributed “Dragnetting Coastal Communities,” a white paper report which highlights the major policies that have worsened the economic position of fishers and coastal communities in B.C.. It reveals the stark lack of transparency within the fishery and its severe ecological effects. Meanwhile, our allies have been out in the field interviewing local fishers affected by the trawl industry and filming these super bulldozers of the sea in action. Through our joint actions, we are piecing together a picture of the tremendous effects trawling has on the biodiversity, climate, and economy of the Pacific Northwest.

Access the full report at  
[PACIFICWILD.ORG/DRAGNETTING](https://PACIFICWILD.ORG/DRAGNETTING)



## In Memory Of:

**KAALI ALLAN (1998-2023)**



Kaali Allan grew up surrounded by nature. His youth was spent sailing the B.C. coast, visiting the remote family cabin in the South Chilcotins, and exploring many other wild corners of our blue planet. In those impressionable years, he spent time with people who cared about and were dedicated to protecting nature, including the founders of Pacific Wild.

Kaali developed into a very fit young man with a passion for spending time outdoors. He was well-educated and wise with a tremendous sense of commitment to causes and people. Friends could always count on him! We imagined that Kaali would become a force for environmental activism and the protection of nature. He was a frugal consumer who balanced his ambitions and achievements with his principles, aiming to use only basic necessities with a low environmental impact. He tread very lightly on our special planet.

Tragically, we lost Kaali at the age of 24. One of his last wishes was to donate his net financial worth to organisations that worked to protect the natural world that he loved. In accordance with his final wish, the Allan family has made a donation to Pacific Wild’s work in conservation awareness and nature protection in B.C..

**DR. WOLFGANG JILEK (1930-2021) AND  
DR. LOUISE JILEK-AALL (1931-2022)**

In quiet memory, we celebrate the remarkable lives of Dr. Wolfgang Jilek and Dr. Louise Jilek-Aall, both long-time supporters of Pacific Wild. The two met during medical training in Switzerland before moving to Quebec and later B.C., where they became psychiatrists. They both received degrees in Anthropology and travelled the world researching ethno-psychiatry before taking positions as Clinical Professors of Psychiatry at UBC.

Their lives were marked by an impressive array of accomplishments, especially in the field of comparative cultural psychiatry, but we knew them as ardent advocates for B.C. wildlife, particularly wolves and bears. We offer our deepest gratitude for their generous legacy gift, which inspires us to stand as guardians of the natural world in their honour.

**MICHELLE J. EARL (1969-2023)**



Sadly, we also commemorate the life of Michelle Earl. Michelle was a true West Coaster. Whether she was surfing, sailing, fishing, or hiking along the seaside, she had the Pacific Ocean running through her veins. Michelle was a beacon of compassion and kindness who touched the lives of all fortunate enough to know her. Her willingness to lend a helping hand made her a true pillar of the community. She volunteered

much of her time with her local Oddfellows organisation and was an active member of Pacific Wild’s board. We are so grateful for her legacy as a force for positive change.



Are you an artist, maker, or business owner? Do you make conservation support a central part of what you do? Do you want to run a fundraising expedition or campaign with your friends and family? Join us at [FRIENDS.PACIFICWILD.ORG](https://FRIENDS.PACIFICWILD.ORG)!



*This year’s featured friend, Wilder Harrier, is a member of 1% for the Planet. Not only do their donations help fund our conservation efforts, but their pet food is making a difference too by substituting harmful ingredients such as herring for sustainable alternatives such as invasive species, crickets and black soldier flies.*

If you’re feeling social, take a picture of yourself holding this year’s journal, “Dispatches from a Northern Rainforest,” and send it in to [DEVELOPMENT@PACIFICWILD.ORG](mailto:DEVELOPMENT@PACIFICWILD.ORG). We’ll share pics on our @friendsofpacificwild Instagram and high resolution images may show up in next year’s journal.

Take our journal with you when you’re out in the world and pass it on to someone new to spread the word!

# You can be a hero for wildlife in B.C.

Gifts received before midnight December 31, 2023 will be matched by a generous donor. **Double your gift today!**



## Please select the statements below if you agree:

- Yes!** Making sure wildlife and fragile ecosystems are protected is an important part of who I am.
- Yes!** I am passionate about helping save animals and wild places so they are here for future generations.

**MY HEARTFELT ONE TIME GIFT** to help save B.C. bears, salmon, herring, wolves, and wild ecosystems

\$500  \$200  \$50  Custom \$

- I'd like to join the Wild Giving League recurring giving community with a **monthly gift** of:



- Please send me information about how I can leave a gift for Pacific Wild in my **will, trust, and other planned giving opportunities.**



## MAKE AN IMPACT FASTER

Give online at [PACIFICWILD.ORG](https://PACIFICWILD.ORG) or call 250-380-0547

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*All mailed-in donations must have a postmarked envelope dated before January 1, 2024 to receive a 2023 tax receipt.*



PACIFICWILD

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