

Salmon farming continues to be a major issue



Open net cage salmon farming is one serious risk (Credit: [GoBot](#) via Flickr).

By Jay Ritchlin, Western Region Director

Salmon farming continues to be a major issue in Canada and the world. The David Suzuki Foundation receives many questions about this issue, and our CEO's recent meeting with a delegation of Norwegian parliamentarians in Vancouver raised more interest in our current work in this area. The David Suzuki Foundation continues to place top priority on the conservation and recovery of Canada's wild salmon. Open net-cage salmon farming is a serious risk over which we, as Canadians, can exercise real-time control. We advocate for the removal of open net-cage salmon farms from Canadian waters and a transition to closed-containment technologies for raising farmed salmon and related finfish. There is no evidence that open net-cage salmon farms can operate near wild salmon without increasing the risk of disease and parasites, among other environmental impacts from escapes, pollution and predator control. We also believe that other forms of aquaculture, with species that require fewer feed and chemical inputs, represent a better way to provide food and economic opportunities.

We speak to and work with many stakeholders, from First Nations, government, industry, food retailers and closed-containment entrepreneurs to wrestle with the complex social, economic and environmental challenges of getting open nets out of the water and shifting to closed containment. However, our message is consistent and is reflected in the key messages CEO Peter Robinson delivered to the Norwegian Parliamentary delegation:

- There is a wide range of well-informed and affected people you need to talk to, in particular First Nations that oppose fish farming.
- Fish farming has been framed as an economic development opportunity, but progressive and responsible legislators cannot put economics above mitigating the impact on natural systems.
- DSF is absolutely concerned about wild salmon: We have incredibly important and valuable wild salmon stocks and ecosystems in B.C. and we are committed to protecting and rebuilding them for the benefit of natural systems and the people who depend on them.
- Open-net fish farms harm wild salmon and no one has been able to fully control the impacts once they begin.
- We must invest in closed-containment technologies and stop the expansion of net-cage farms while we work to shift from open-net farms to closed containment