

**It's time to end the herring roe fishery, completely and forever. There is no ecological, political nor economic justification for it to continue.**



When I first came to the Salish Sea 50 years ago, you would look out on the waters and see herring balls, marked by swarms of seagulls feeding from the air, while salmon were feeding below the visible surface. You'd see young salmon leaping from the sea surface. Because herring were overfished, the herring stocks collapsed in the 1970s, and the salmon runs declined markedly in response. To compensate, we spent fortunes on building and maintaining artificial fish hatcheries for salmon, which have proven to be of mixed benefit at best.

A real fishery feeds people and supports communities. The herring slaughter does neither today. Most of the harvest (~90% of the mass caught) feeds farmed fish, stealing a public resource to promote an unnatural, unhealthy private fish farm industry. But it's worse than that: even though 20% of the herring mass is caught in some areas, the remaining 80% of fish are disrupted from a natural spawn. An immense destruction of the base of the food chain is the result. No wonder herring balls are rarely seen these days, and salmon stocks still struggle to recover.

Let's accept the wisdom of nature, and let the base of the food chain thrive again. We also need to optimize the river water flows of waterways flowing into the Salish Sea. In the Comox Valley, the Puntledge River flows vary by a factor of 20X, sometimes even up to 50X in volume, because of outdated dams and BC Hydro's dangerous hydrological practices. Unfortunately, BC Hydro thinks they are doing a good job, but the survival rate of Coho salmon smolts going down the Puntledge is often only ~0.5% because of raging river flows that flush them into salt water before they can survive, or low

volumes of water flow in summer, when the water becomes too warm for young salmon to survive.

Let's get real. Nature has always known what's best. Let's work with nature instead of always thinking we know better. Let's restore our salmon rivers: this video shows what it takes to do that:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cy-4wRDzglk&t=26s>

Salmon are the basis of so many aspects of life on the West Coast. With controlled river flows over pristine natural waterways (with spawning beds restored as may be necessary), and with ample herring feedstock in the sea, the marine ecosystem will return to robustness once again.

This isn't about spending money; it's about making realistic, honest choices. Let's start a return to marine abundance by terminating the disruption we have caused to the herring spawn. Without that, all our most valiant efforts at marine management may prove to be in vain, yet again.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74Qrcqu9YZc&feature=youtu.be>