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## **Wild salmon have a future**

On November 5, wild salmon champion Alexandra Morton congratulated Prime Minister Harper for ordering a judicial inquiry into Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) management of Fraser River sockeye. 'Prime Minister Harper's action is a significant step that could ensure wild salmon have a future,' said Echo Bay biologist Morton, 'there is clearly something very wrong with DFO and it would appear Mr Harper understands the gravity of the situation. The judicial inquiry 'makes me cautiously optimistic and hopeful that we are poised at the beginning of a new era of fisheries management, benefiting all Canadians,' she added.

The 2009 Fraser River sockeye collapse pattern is remarkably specific with some stocks returning at 4 times the DFO forecast and others failing by over 90%.

'When an animal demonstrates a pattern this bold (the fish migrating north disappeared, while the fish moving south flourished), it is possible to decipher the cause. However, DFO has thwarted progress with a torrent of highly contradictory and confusing misinformation,' said Morton.

'Prime Minister Harper has done exactly what Canada needs if we want the security and benefits of wild fish stocks,' Morton continued. 'Our sockeye are at the moment of no return. If there had been a judicial inquiry into DFO's management of our North Atlantic cod stocks, certain DFO scientists would have been allowed to speak earlier and we would still have those fish stocks.'

'The purpose of a judicial inquiry is to reveal the facts and then make recommendations to government. It is run by a judge and testimony is given under oath. The inquiry will examine what we know about the Fraser sockeye from the spawning grounds to the open ocean. Wild salmon are not just pretty fish, they are food, a climate stabilization mechanism, an economic powerhouse, and a national treasure. They belong to us. I am hopeful for the first time in a long time,' she concluded.



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