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Is salmon virus in BC? ~ Sara Miles

Following recent outbreaks of the Infectious Salmon Anemia virus (ISAv) at fish farms in Chile and Scotland, biologist Alexandra Morton is calling attention to the risk the virus could pose to wild BC salmon.

Morton writes that the traceable virus came from Norway and 'went viral', killing 70% of Chile's 500 salmon farms.

In a recent letter to Minister of Fisheries Keith Ashfield, Morton made reference to minutes of a Mainstream/Cermaq meeting in April which she copied before they were removed from the internet.

In the minutes, employees of the Norwegian salmon farm corporation discuss a need to 'avoid speculation

about the situation in BC'.

Morton's letter asks the minister which situation they could be referring to, and how the minister plans to prevent and manage the possible catastrophe, should ISAv appear here.

She reminds that '1,250 salmon feedlot jobs in BC will be lost, wild fisheries of several species would be at severe risk and no coast has ever gotten rid of ISA virus once it has shown up in salmon farms.'

The minutes also state that people in BC are ignoring Morton and that the issue is very 'sensitive.'

The Cohen Commission public forums are scheduled to resume in late August. ☞

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