

Only 11 wild salmon got past fish farms

Bill Taylor, Financial Post

Re: Ruth Salmon, Tall fish farm tales, Sept. 4

Ruth Salmon refers to the Atlantic Salmon Federation's media release, which indicates that this season's Atlantic salmon runs to many rivers throughout Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces are breaking recent records according to counting facility reports by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). She uses this to indicate that the warnings of conservation groups about the negative impacts of salmon farming on wild salmon, such as the spread of sea lice, are not justified.

I would like to point out that the good runs of wild Atlantic salmon to many rivers do not include the rivers that are adjacent to the salmon aquaculture industries in the Bay of Fundy and southern Newfoundland. In fact, the only river in Newfoundland that is showing poor returns this year is the Conne River, which is in the vicinity of the salmon aquaculture industry in Newfoundland. The run to the Conne River amounted to 1,747 by Aug. 29, compared with 2,146 (the five-year average 2005-09), 2,693 (the average from 1992-2009), and 6,144 (the average from 1984-92).

And all of the rivers adjacent to the Bay of Fundy salmon farming industry are either officially listed as endangered or severely threatened, and candidates for listing. The Magaguadavic River, located in the centre of the salmon aquaculture industry in New Brunswick, is the index river for assessing the interactions between wild and farmed salmon in North America. To date this year, 11 wild Atlantic salmon have returned to the river, which supported an average run of 800 in the 1980s.

It would be more productive for the Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance to recognize the well-researched studies that document the negative impacts of salmon farming on wild salmon and work with conservation groups to mitigate the impacts, rather than writing opinion pieces that distort the facts.

president and chief executive, the Atlantic Salmon Federation.