



Port McNeill

Glendale River

Broughton Archipelago, BC

Sea Lice Management Update: Broughton Archipelago

Wild salmon start their lives in coastal freshwater streams and migrate out into the ocean waters to live and feed until they return to complete their life cycle. The out-migration of wild salmon in British Columbia began in March and will continue until June. In these early stages of their lives, small salmon are vulnerable to a range of threats, such as predators and competition for food.

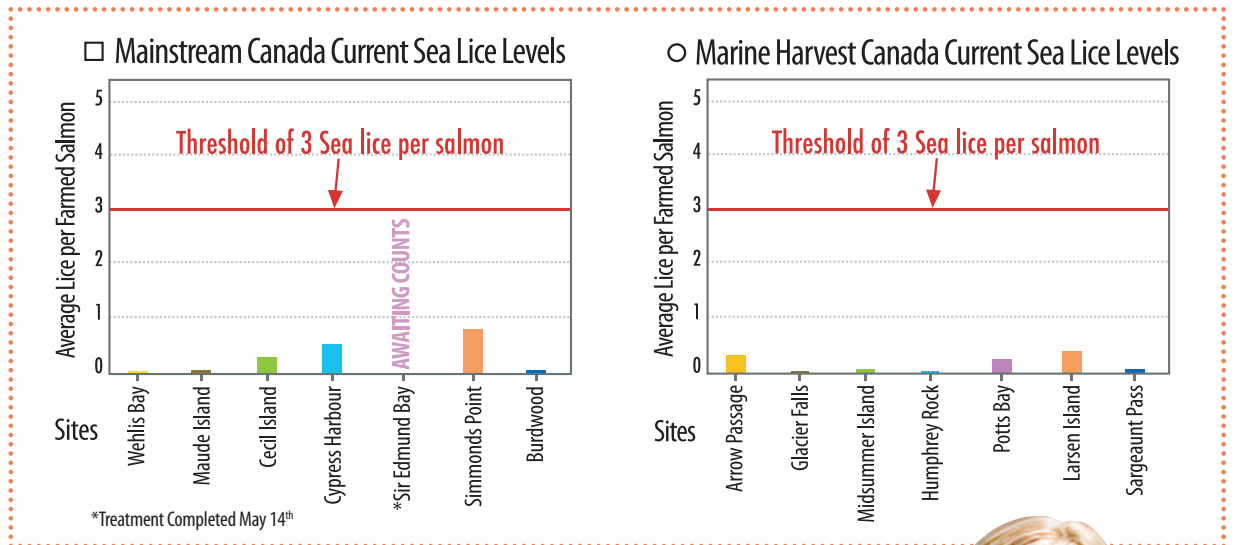
Although the state of scientific knowledge is inconclusive about the threat of sea lice to wild salmon, conservation is the best policy. That is why two salmon farming companies, Marine Harvest Canada and Mainstream Canada, have taken significant action to reduce and eliminate the potential for sea lice transfer from salmon farms to wild juvenile salmon.



Both companies have specific management plans that help ensure salmon farms are not adding to the multitude of threats already posed to young, juvenile salmon. The success of these plans in reducing or eliminating sea lice is detailed in the charts on the right.

The Facts

- Sea lice are a naturally occurring parasite found in the Pacific Ocean (Kabata 1973, 1979).
- Farmed salmon enter the marine environment free of sea lice (Saksida 2007a, Morton et al. 2004).
- Sea lice are initially passed from wild sources (wild Pacific salmon, Pacific herring, three-spined stickleback) to farmed salmon (Parker and Margolis 1964, Beamish et al 2005, Jones et al 2006).
- Farmed salmon are monitored monthly to check for presence of sea lice. Sea lice presence is variable and depends on factors such as farm location, salinity levels, proximity to sources of sea lice and water temperature.



- As per the Provincial Sea Lice Action Plan (2003), farmers ensure the number of sea lice per fish does not reach the threshold limit (3 per farmed salmon) during the out-migration months.
- Sea lice monitoring is audited by Provincial government regulators. http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/ahc/fish_health/
- Management of sea lice on farmed salmon is possible by the strict adherence to one or more strategies; low density of stock, timing of smolt entry, timing of harvest and timing of effective treatment (Slice™).
- Sea lice are naturally hosted by wild fish and cannot be completely eliminated. Therefore, to minimize the use of Slice™, treatments may be limited to out-migration months.

For more information on current sea lice science, please visit www.PacificSalmonForum.ca



Do we have all the answers? No. But Mainstream Canada and Marine Harvest Canada are committed to reviewing all science and improving practices to reduce risk to our salmon and wild fish. We look forward to continually sharing these improvements with you.