

ENGAGE

WITH CWF



Get Wild — Outside!

More than 10,000 youth across Canada are teaming up to build bee boxes, make micro-plastic-free toothpaste and host nature walks. It's all part of a new Canadian Wildlife Federation (CWF) leadership program called Wild Outside, aimed at youth between the ages of 12 and 26, made possible with support from HSBC Bank Canada.

CWF will provide school boards with project funding to help youth complete their chosen environmental action-items. The Wild Outside youth leaders, who receive training as part of weekend nature camps, will encourage their peers to participate in these projects in order to engage a total of 10,000 youth by the end of the year. Vancouver, Edmonton and Calgary are among the cities involved.

The funding and mentorship provided by CWF will help ensure project success. Tanya Meira's teenager is participating in the Vancouver-area events. "Being part of important community based projects and programs has given him a great stepping stone to an incredible future," she said.



SEAN BRILLANT TALKS ABOUT

Open-Pen Aquaculture

Nova Scotia MP Bernadette Jordan has launched an online petition calling for a ban on open-pen finfish farming that she intends to table in the House of Commons, after the petition closes on July 27. If you support CWF's position on the issue — based on a comprehensive 2013 study by Sean Brilliant, CWF's manager of marine programs — you should give Jordan's petition a look. Meantime, Brilliant explains why the issue matters.

WHAT DID YOU DO IN YOUR 2013 STUDY?

We took a deep look at the primary literature around open-pen finfish aquaculture, both scientific studies and industry reports. We reviewed more than 100 papers, focusing on those that looked at how the practice affects wild salmon stocks. We researched a lot of issues — from how open-pen finfish aquaculture affects the surrounding environment and the spread of diseases, to the potential impact of escapes of penned fish on wild salmon. We found that although some studies showed no impacts, in other cases, studies did show impacts. So, yes, open-pen finfish aquaculture can be a threat to wild salmon. That finding formed the basis of the policy for CWF.

THINKSTOCK, ISTOCK, SEAN BRILLIANT.

WHAT IS CWF'S POSITION?

It recognizes that open-pen finfish aquaculture is an important economic driver in coastal regions of Canada. However, it's also clear that the practice can alter aquatic habitats with significant impacts on wild salmon and other wildlife. Our policy recommends that Canada end open-pen finfish farming in the next 10 years. It also recommends against expanding the industry during the intervening years.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF OPEN-PEN FINFISH AQUACULTURE?

There are several, but the key concern is that open-pen finfish aquaculture tends to occur in areas through which salmon regularly migrate. There are diseases and parasites associated with farmed fish, just as there are with many farmed animals. So you tend to get disease and parasite "hot spots" where you have open-pen aquaculture. There's a lot of evidence suggesting the penned fish infect surrounding wild salmon, diminishing their survival. A particular concern is with young salmon leaving the rivers and heading out into the ocean. It appears they're becoming infected and not surviving in the open water. Adults coming in are more robust, and their mortality doesn't seem to be as much of an issue.

WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE TO OPEN-PEN AQUACULTURE?

The most likely alternative that we're looking at is contained aquaculture. That's not necessarily land-based, but it's aquaculture that uses a closed system that is not exposed to the environment. The water used is recirculated or treated before it's disposed of. This is an emerging technology that looks like it will be able to avoid the problems with open-pen finfish farming. We're supportive of research to help develop closed-containment.

WHY HAS THE AQUACULTURE INDUSTRY FAVOURED OPEN-PEN FARMING OVER CLOSED-CONTAINMENT TO DATE?

Open-pen farming is a lot cheaper than closed-containment, for starters. Closed-containment requires a lot more infrastructure and a lot more space. It breaks down the business plan because of the costs. The other argument is that salmon bred for open-pen farming have developed traits that are beneficial to the industry. They grow fast, they know nothing other than living in cages, and so on. The advantages of these fish won't translate to closed-containment systems, which means the industry will need new methods of husbandry to develop a strain of salmon that will work well in closed-containment systems.

ISTOCK, CWF.

STAY ACTIVE

TUNE IN TO HINTERLAND'S WHO'S WHO

The latest additions to the ever-popular Hinterland Who's Who vignettes are being released this summer. Stay tuned to see our new 15- and 30-second PSAs about the elusive Canada lynx and iconic grizzly bear. Kids and adults alike can have some fun and test their skills and knowledge with our new Candy Crush-style game, TRACKS, featuring animal tracks from some Canadian wildlife critters.

FOLLOW THE WHALES

CWF is partnering with a consortium of researchers and conservationists — including Dalhousie University's Kimberly Davies — to scour Canada's oceans in search of whales. Using drones, vessels and airplanes, they'll focus on species most at risk from vessel strikes, fishing gear entanglement, noise pollution and climate change. Check out CWF's website and blog for news, real-time reports from expeditions and information on whale ecology and conservation.



TAKE ACTION



JOIN A CELEBRATION OF NATURE

Use a photo to tell us how you feel in nature and get an opportunity to have it featured at the World Conservation Congress taking place in Hawaii from Sept. 1-10. How? Easy. Take a picture and post it to social media using the hashtag "For Me, Nature is #(your feeling) #NatureForAll." The more likes your photo receives, the better chance it has of being featured at the congress.

CELEBRATE CANADA'S PARKS DAY

Mark your calendar for Canada's Parks Day on Saturday, July 16. Head out to explore one of our country's beautiful and scenic parks. Making it an overnight stay? Be sure to register your camping trip at CWF's GreatCanadianCampout.ca for your chance to win the ultimate camping gear package and other cool prizes.

KNOW YOUR PLASTIC FOOTPRINT

Microplastics are becoming a pervasive threat to the health of our waterways and the wildlife that live in them — and to us. CWF is raising awareness about the big problems these small particles of plastic are causing. Do you want to help out? Visit RiverstoOceans.ca to find out what your plastic footprint is and how you can help reduce it by making simple changes.