



Reporting Atlantic salmon sightings in British Columbia waters

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is seeking assistance in identifying and reporting Atlantic salmon in British Columbia (B.C.) waters, following the escape of Atlantic salmon from an aquaculture facility in Washington State.

DFO's Atlantic Salmon Watch Program has received over 55 reports of Atlantic salmon caught in B.C. waters since this event. These reports are from locations as far apart as the Campbell River and Tofino on Vancouver Island, as well as in the lower Fraser River.

DFO requests all First Nations, fishers or those conducting stock assessment activities, to report sightings to the Atlantic Salmon Watch Program. For captured fish, please retain the head and stomach of any suspected Atlantic salmon and send the photo by email. Samples of full fish would also be appreciated. DFO will arrange for the transportation of any samples, which will then be tested to confirm their species and origin, and to determine if they have been feeding.

Tips on identifying Atlantic salmon are on our website. The key distinguishing feature of Atlantic salmon is black spots on the gill cover. The escaped Atlantic salmon weigh about 4.5kg (10lbs) each and the Department has been assured the salmon were free of therapeutants at the time of the escape. Encounters with Atlantic salmon at any life stage should be reported.

There is a very low likelihood of Atlantic salmon establishing in Pacific waters based on numerous failed attempts to introduce Atlantic salmon to this coast in the past. Since 1991, the Atlantic Salmon Watch Program has found no evidence of established Atlantic salmon populations in BC. Nevertheless, it remains important to be vigilant and ensure establishment does not occur. Your reports will help in determining priority rivers for the Atlantic Salmon Watch swims. DFO shares information about all reported sightings on our website. Thank you for your help in monitoring B.C. waters.

Atlantic Salmon Watch Program, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

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<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/aquaculture/aswp/index-eng.html>