



WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR LETTER TO MINISTER MURRAY

Address:

The Honourable Joyce Murray
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard
200 Kent Street
Station 15N100
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E6
(Note postage is free to federal ministers)

Who you are (connection to Hornby, Salish Sea, and organizations you represent, etc)

Why the herring are important to you

- Herring are a “foundation” species that salmon and many other fish species, seals, sea lions, orcas, humpback whales, wolves, bears and sea birds rely on for their survival.
- These herring predators are all important for the billion dollar sports fisheries, whale watching and the “Super Natural British Columbia” tourism industries.

What you want

- There is an urgent need for DFO to implement a fishery moratorium and herring recovery program to protect herring populations and bring them back to historic high population levels. This program would include:
- Phase in a moratorium on the herring roe and food and bait fisheries until stocks have had a chance to rebuild coastwide
- Assist First Nations to rebuild stocks and herring habitat in their territories
- Buyback and retire commercial herring fishing licences
- Support fishermen with retraining
- Support coastal communities
- Fund independent science to better understand herring as a keystone species
- Support local small-scale industries that will use herring as a human food, including First Nations roe-on-branch, i.e. move from a high volume, low value industry to a high value, low volume fishery.

Your reasoning

- The Strait of Georgia (SoG) herring stock is the last remaining of five major B.C. herring stocks on Canada’s west coast.
- The primary goal of the fishery is to extract the mature eggs to be sold mainly to Japan as a delicacy. The remains of the females and all of the males, which is about 90% of the harvested biomass, is not used for human consumption but for pet food and salmon farm feed.
- This March, even after Minister Murray reduced the quota from 20% to 10% of the predicted biomass the herring fishers could only find and catch 4,300 tons of their 7,850 ton quota
- The Northern Gulf Islands is the most important area on the entire BC Coast for Pacific Herring, home to half of the remaining critical spawning grounds in the Strait of Georgia. This year, despite the appearance of some spawn, few herring returned and only 3 of the dozen DFO-recognized critical spawning sites were active in the Northern Strait of Georgia. With herring being repeat spawners that home back to their natal sites, a lack of spawn one year can lead to the wiping out of future generations of herring, as has occurred in the southern portion of the Strait of Georgia and other regions of the west coast of Canada in recent years.

For more info and resources, visit

<https://www.conservancyhornbyisland.org/herring>

<https://www.facebook.com/conservancyhornbyisland>

April ____, 2022

The Honourable Joyce Murray
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard
200 Kent Street
Station 15N100
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E6
604-664-9220

Dear Minister Murray;

I am very concerned with what has happened to the herring that have spawned around Hornby every year. We hope that it will continue to be one of the great spectacles not just for us who live and visit Hornby but all who love the Salish Sea. The herring bring the sea lions, whales and seabirds that need to build up their strength to carry on their migrations and raise their young. Herring eggs may be a luxury in Japan but they are essential also for the the salmon, cod, halibut ground fish and indirectly for Killer whales who need salmon for their survival.

When the herring arrived here in early March it quickly became clear that the spawn was one of the smallest and lightest in recent history. The commercial fishers only managed to catch 4,300 tons of their 7,850 ton quota - a quota that the you had wisely reduced by 50%. Even the fishermen, three DFO test boats and flights couldn't find the fish because they just weren't here.

Therefore, I am asking you to place a moratorium on the commercial herring fishery, and introduce a Herring Recovery Program to protect and restore herring stocks, assist First Nations and help fishermen and shore workers phase out of the industry. We also need independent science to better understand this important forage species. The future of the entire marine ecosystem depends on healthy herring stocks.

In short, the herring and Salish Sea need your help. Please help us to ensure that herring do not become the next Atlantic cod.

Yours sincerely;

Address:

CC and/or phone:

BC Fisheries Minister MLA Josie Osborne, 3945B Johnston Rd, Port Alberni, V9Y 5N4; 1-800-663-7867

NDP Federal Fisheries Critic MP Gord Johns, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ont. K1A 0A6 (no postage required); 613-992-0903

Other comments: