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PACIFIC SALMON FOUNDATION

2024 20**24** ANNUAL REPORT



Cover photo by: Fernando Lessa

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

The Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF) is all in for salmon.

With new PSF data showing that 70 per cent of salmon in British Columbia and the Yukon are below their historical long-term average abundance, the need for our action and leadership has never been clearer.

Salmon have always given us so much, shaping our environment, cultures, and economies. Indigenous peoples have long led the way in caring for these vital ecosystems. Today, with many salmon populations struggling, it is our shared responsibility to honour that legacy and do our part to take care of salmon for future generations. Inaction is not an option.

PSF's work is shaped by Salmon Recovery, Salmon Resilience, and System Transformation – the three key pillars outlined in our strategic plan, which took effect in 2024.

Based on these guiding principles, we have been laser-focused on helping declining salmon populations recover, making sure stable populations are protected, and driving systemic change to tackle the pressing challenges salmon face today and in the future.



PSF's Michael Meneer tagging fish with Jamieson Atkinson from BC Conservation Foundation. Photo: Sam James

Through peer-reviewed science, research projects, restoration efforts, recovery planning, and strategic outreach and relationship building, 2024 was a successful year. Among many highlights, we released a first-of-its-kind State of Salmon Report, marked 35 years of community grants supporting local salmon stewards, and celebrated a landmark policy ban on open-net pen Atlantic salmon farms based on risks to wild Pacific salmon, backed by more than a decade of scientific research.

PSF recognizes that these accomplishments were made possible thanks to countless partnerships, showcasing what we can achieve together for salmon. A prosperous future for Pacific salmon starts with us. Thanks to our dedicated network of partners, supporters, and donors, PSF is uniquely positioned to help create meaningful change to benefit salmon for generations to come.

Together, we're taking action now for the future of salmon. Every project, study, initiative, and contribution matters, each one bringing us closer to our shared goal of saving and restoring wild Pacific salmon.

- Michael Meneer, CEO and President, Pacific Salmon Foundation

PSF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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E.L. (Ned) Pottinger George C. Reifel Don Swoboda Rob Waters Stuart Wolfe W.J.D. (John) Woodward STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS YEAR END, DECEMBER 31, 2024

TOTAL REVENUE \$ 19,348,994 28.6% 4.9% 56.5% 5.8% 4.2% **56.5%** Government contributions **\$10,927,632 28.6**% Corporate and individual contributions **\$5,530,075** 4.9% Fundraising events revenue \$957,048 5.8% Program management fees \$1,130,604 4.2% Interest income and other \$803,635 4.2% 22.1% DONATIONS \$ 5,530,075 52.2% Pacific Salmon Endowment Fund Society (Note 13) \$2,885,629

- **21.5%** Corporations **\$1,189,660**
- 22.1% Non-governmental organizations \$1,220,330
- 4.2% Government contributions \$234,456



52.2%

EXPENSES

\$ 19,083,426





RECOVERY SALMON RECOVERY

RESTORING SALMON POPULATIONS AND THEIR HABITATS BY ADDRESSING FACTORS THAT HAVE LED TO THEIR DECLINE OR DEGRADATION

Logs placed in-river to help recover salmon habitat damaged by fire. Photo: Brandon Deepwell/Oscar Beardmore-Gray

35 YEARS OF COMMUNITY-LED RECOVERY INITIATIVES

2024 marks the 35th anniversary of the Community Salmon Program – a cornerstone initiative that has been with the Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF) since the organization's inception. The Community Salmon Program awards grants to First Nations, stewardship groups, conservation organizations, and schools to advance local salmon restoration initiatives.

With a \$118,625 grant from the Community Salmon Program's 2024 cycle, the Skeetchestn Indian Band has restored salmon habitat in the Deadman River, a key Thompson River tributary supporting pink, coho, Chinook, and steelhead.

Decades of logging and recent wildfires have drastically altered the Lower Deadman. In turn, cottonwood forests - vital for stabilizing banks, providing shade, and sheltering salmon - have been lost.

In partnership with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), the University of British Columbia, and the Okanagan Nation Alliance, Skeetchestn Indian Band is reintroducing cottonwoods to the Lower Deadman.

In 2024, the team planted nearly 400 cottonwood tree seedlings, as well as more than 600 tree stakes to help stabilize young trees. Additionally, they restored more than 5,000 square metres of riparian, instream, and floodplain habitat.

PSF stewards funds from the Salmon Conservation Stamp on behalf of DFO, along with generous donations, to support hundreds of projects through the Community Salmon Program.

Special thanks to the Alastair and Diana Gillespie Foundation, AltaGas, BC Hydro, Domtar, Enbridge, Grassroots Conservation Fund, Industrial Alliance Insurance and Financial Services, Methanex, Mosaic Forest Management, Neptune Terminals, Pembina, Reel Time Fishing Charters and Marine Tours, Seaspan, SE-CURE Waste Infrastructure, SJ Foundation, Sutherland Foundation, Swiss Water Decaffeinated Coffee, Trans Mountain, and Wolrige Foundation.



Collaborative recovery efforts at the Deadman River in B.C.'s Interior. Photo: Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Sitting on PSF's Grants Committee, I've seen the investment the Community Salmon Program makes into communities across the province, and what it does for people and kids. It pulls communities together and creates education and awareness about salmon. It's really important to continue the Community Salmon Program into the future.

- Murray Ned, Executive Director, Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance and PSF Board Member

\$2,155,158 IN FUNDING APPROVED

PSF's Community Salmon Program in 2024:

BY THE NUMBERS

LOCAL PROJECTS



on education



12

assessment

on stock

enhancement

on stock

\$6.89

from the purchase of every Salmon Conservation Stamp is invested in community projects

IMPACT

IN 35 YEARS OF LOCAL GRANTS, THE COMMUNITY SALMON PROGRAM HAS DIRECTED NEARLY \$30 MILLION TO MORE THAN 3,400 SALMON CONSERVATION PROJECTS ACROSS B.C. AND THE YUKON.

MOBILIZING A REAL-TIME LANDSLIDE RESPONSE

almon habitat was compromised in the aftermath of the 2024 landslide at the Chilcotin River, a major tributary of the Fraser River. Photo: Courtesy of the Province of B.C.

On July 30, 2024, a major landslide near Williams Lake, B.C., threatened thousands of returning Chinook, sockeye, and coho salmon and steel-head – some of which were already struggling from long-term impacts of the 2019 Big Bar landslide. The Chilcotin slide initially blocked the Chilcotin River, temporarily preventing salmon from reaching their spawning grounds. Six days after the landslide, the trapped water broke through, sending muddy water downstream and blocking salmon migration for several weeks. By late August, Chinook and sockeye were able to start passing the landslide as the water cleared. Still, the slide caused significant destabilization and erosion of river banks and reshaped the river system, increasing the risks of future rockfalls and landslides.

The Tŝilhqot'in National Government (TNG) led landslide response efforts to help spawning salmon through this challenge, with support from various partners including the Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF).

TNG swiftly assembled a collaborate tripartite Emergency Task Force of government authorities (TNG, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), and

Province of B.C.) with support from TNG's Indigenous technical partner, the Upper Fraser Fisheries Conservation Alliance, combining local knowledge with technical expertise. This group monitored the effects of the landslide and salmon passage in real-time using helicopter and drone flights, camera and SONAR technology, and turbidity and water quality monitoring.

PSF contributed \$225,000 from its Climate Emergency Fund to support monitoring efforts, alongside funding from DFO, the First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC) of B.C., and the Province of B.C

PSF's Climate Emergency Fund provides grants to respond to all hazards and climate emergencies presenting life-threatening challenges to salmon or barriers to fish passage, including landslides, wildfires, droughts, and floods. These projects are identified by a broader working group with FNFC, DFO, the Province of B.C., and PSF.

Landslides along the Tŝilhqox (Chilko/Chilcotin Rivers) are old news to the Tŝilhqot'in people; however, with a record low salmon return about to make its way upstream, we knew we had to act fast.

- Nits'il?in Joe Alphonse, Tribal Chair, Tŝilhqot'in National Government.

SALMASHES REBUILDING SALMON HABITAT FROM ASHES

The 2023 Kookipi Creek wildfire burned 17,406 hectares along the Nahatlatch River, located in the lower Fraser Canyon in southwestern British Columbia.

The fire severely impacted a series of spawning channels and rearing ponds built more than two decades ago to provide high-value salmon habitat. Several populations of threatened Chinook, coho, and sockeye salmon rely on this area.

The Kookipi Creek fire caused excess sedimentation, clogged streams, and disrupted fish passage. The fire also led to a loss of forest cover, raising stream temperatures and causing heat stress for fish.

With a \$18,000 grant from the Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF)'s Climate Emergency Fund, Boothroyd Indian Band and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) launched recovery efforts in 2024. Using an excavator, they placed dozens of logs in the spawning and rearing area to provide cover, shade, and habitat complexity, helping pass excess sediment through the stream and restoring fish passage.

Restoration will continue in 2025, incorporating techniques from PSF's Wildfire Playbook, a comprehensive resource released in 2024 that integrates salmon into the bigger picture of post-wildfire watershed recovery planning. The Wildfire Playbook summarizes risk management processes and offers more than 40 restoration solutions to mitigate risks for salmon and their habitats. DFO and Boothroyd Indian Band are helping improve conditions for juvenile salmon in the Nahatlatch River by implementing post-wildfire recovery techniques, supported by PSF. Photo: Brandon Deepwell/Oscar Beardmore-Gray

Seeing this work done is awesome. I can't wait to see the outcome. Protect the land and the land will protect you.

- Chief Mike Campbell, Boothroyd Indian Band



Learn more psf.ca/wildfire-playbook

Special thanks to the British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund, a joint initiative by the Government of Canada and Province of British Columbia, for supporting the development of the Wildfire Playbook.

RESILIENCE SALMON RESILIENCE

PROACTIVELY SUPPORTING SALMON POPULATIONS AND HABITATS TO BE RESISTANT TO FUTURE DEGRADATION OR DECLINE

Collecting juvenile salmon to tag them and track their survival throughout their life cycle. Photo: Danny Swainson

PACIFIC SALMON FOUNDATION

BRITISH COLUMBIA SALMON FARMS BANNED IN BRITISH COLUMBIA



Monitoring open-net pen salmon farms, both active and inactive, to study the presence of infectious agents. Photo: Brandon Deepwell

In June 2024, the Government of Canada announced a ban on open-net pen Atlantic salmon farms in British Columbia by 2029.

As a leader in research on the risks of pathogen transmission from farmed to wild salmon, the Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF) supports this decision to prioritize the health of wild salmon. Since 2013, PSF and its partners have built a growing body of dozens of independent, peer-reviewed publications on the risks open-net pen salmon farms pose to wild salmon.

PSF researchers, in collaboration with many partners including the Broughton Aquaculture Transition Initiative (BATI), a project led by the Mamalilikulla, 'Namgis and Kwikwasut'inux Haxwa'mis First Nations, have studied dozens of infectious agents and risks of spillover from farmed to wild salmon.

A peer-reviewed study published in December 2024, based on monitoring conducted under BATI's leadership, revealed that the odds of detecting pathogens were 4.3 times higher at active salmon farms than at inactive sites, and even higher for some pathogens of concern. This finding reaffirms that Atlantic salmon farms amplify pathogens and transmit them into B.C., creating exposure risks for wild Pacific salmon migrating through those waters.

Special thanks to the North Family Foundation for their support of PSF's Salmon Health Program.

The Pacific Salmon Foundation's independent science has been instrumental in providing evidence-based data and research that First Nations can use when making decisions about the future of open-net pen salmon farms in their territories. As legal counsel to several First Nations, I've seen firsthand how PSF's research has helped assess potential risks to wild salmon and inform decisions about their lands, waters, and resources.

- Brenda Gaertner, Senior Counsel, Mandell Pinder LLP, and PSF Board Emeritus.

IMPACT

FOLLOWING YEARS OF RESEARCH AND DOZENS OF PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DECLARED A BAN ON OPEN-NET PEN ATLANTIC SALMON FARMS BY 2029.

ONE TAG AT A TIME TRACKING SALMON SURVIVAL ONE TAG AT A TIME



The BC Conservation Foundation team uses a beach seine near the Puntledge River estuary to tag juvenile salmon before their ocean migration. Photo: Danny Swainson

In 2024, the Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF) and partners tagged more than 105,000 fish with Passive Integrated Transponders, or PIT tags.

These tiny microchips – about the size of a grain of rice – are similar to those used to keep track of pets or embedded in credit cards. Inserted non-lethally into juvenile salmon, PIT tags allow researchers to track how many fish return to freshwater as adults, providing insights into salmon survival. This work will show where and when salmon are dying, ultimately informing future conservation efforts.

Since 2020, the Bottlenecks to Survival project, a partnership between PSF and BC Conservation Foundation, have tagged juvenile Chinook and coho salmon and steelhead in 11 rivers on the east coast of Vancouver Island. So far, more than 6,300 tagged salmon have successfully returned to their home rivers as adults, with additional returns expected in the coming years.

PSF has expanded its use of PIT tag technology to the west coast of Vancouver Island to study at-risk Chinook salmon. In 2024, PSF and Ha'oom Fisheries Society installed a PIT tag detection system at the Somass River near Port Alberni to identify returning Chinook. Eventually, survival estimates from PIT tags will be integrated with cutting-edge 'Salmon Fit Chip' tools – similar to those used in personalized human medicine – to measure pathogens and environmental stressors affecting salmon health. Together, these innovative technologies will provide the most comprehensive overview to date of factors affecting salmon survival.

Special thanks to the British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund for supporting these efforts, and to the BC Conservation Foundation and Ha'oom Fisheries Society for partnering with PSF on these projects.



Setting up a PIT tag detection system in the Somass River near Port Alberni. Photo: Port Boat House

HERRING

TO HELP SALMON, FOLLOW THE HERRING

Pacific salmon need herring to survive.

The small, silver forage fish make up the majority of adult Chinook and coho salmon's diet in the Strait of Georgia. Healthy herring populations may also help reduce predation pressure on salmon by providing an alternative food source for seals.

In 2024, the Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF) launched a multi-year research project to better understand the role of herring in the salmon food web, in partnership with several First Nations.

This research deploys several methods: satellite imagery to detect herring spawning sites, Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVS), or underwater robots, to assess spawn habitat quality, underwater acoustics to estimate the size of adult herring populations, and manual surveys to detect the presence of juvenile herring in juvenile salmon diets.

During the first field season, PSF worked with several First Nations and the University of Victoria to conduct surveys throughout the northern and southern Strait of Georgia. Crews non-lethally sampled more than 1,000 juvenile Chinook and coho salmon, measuring their size and analyzing stomach contents to determine how much herring they had consumed and how this affected growth.

Additionally, 27 acoustic surveys were conducted to gather data on adult resident herring abundance in the Salish Sea.

Looking ahead, the project will continue with further fieldwork, lab analysis, and collaboration with First Nations to support the preservation of traditional ecological knowledge through community-led workshops and ceremonies.

Special thanks to the British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund for supporting this project.





TRANSFORMATION SYSTEMS

TRANSFORMATION

REDEFINING THE LANDSCAPE FOR PACIFIC SALMON RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE BY ACTIVELY WORKING TO TRANSFORM SYSTEMIC FORCES AND STREAMLINE COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

SALMON

Photo: Brandon Deepwell

With more than 10,000 distinct salmon populations across British Columbia and the Yukon, determining the state of salmon is complicated. Yet it's key to knowing where action is needed and how to best target efforts to help salmon recover.

In 2024, the Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF) released a State of Salmon report – the first of its kind to assess the state of each species of Pacific salmon and steelhead across B.C. and the Yukon. Before this report, mixed messages ranging from record-high salmon runs to unprecedented fishing closures often painted a confusing picture.

Grounded in data, PSF's first-ever State of Salmon report shows widespread declines in salmon coupled with encouraging signs of recovery for some species in some regions.

Overall, more than 70 per cent of salmon are below their historical long-term average. Of all species, chum salmon and steelhead are struggling the most.

The report also shows signs of hope. For example, coho salmon from the Fraser River and Chinook salmon from Vancouver Island and Mainland Inlets are above their long-term averages.



Learn more stateofsalmon.ca

BY THE NUMBERS



The State of Salmon report underscores the Pacific Salmon Foundation's efforts to modernize the systems that manage salmon in British Columbia. The challenges facing salmon today are far more complex than they were when these frameworks were first established decades ago. With access to data-driven insights like never before, we now have the tools, and the responsibility, to take decisive action to protect and rebuild salmon for generations to come.

– Michael Meneer, CEO and President, Pacific Salmon Foundation

STEELHEAD IN B.C. ASSESSING THE CONSERVATION STATUS OF STEELHEAD IN B.C.

The Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF) found that 86 per cent of steelhead population groups in British Columbia face major conservation concerns, where data were available.

In 2024, PSF released datasets and assessments of steelhead in B.C. in the Pacific Salmon Explorer – the most comprehensive resource for data on salmon, and now steelhead, in British Columbia.

Of the seven population groups with sufficient data available, the vast majority (six) had 'poor' status, and one showed 'fair' status. None of the steelhead assessed had a 'good' status.

Due to significant data gaps, it was only possible to assess 19 per cent of steelhead population groups in the province.

While the decline of some steelhead populations (e.g. interior Fraser steelhead) has been well-documented, these new assessments reveal the poor status of other steelhead population groups based on the best-available estimates of adult steelhead abundance.

The Pacific Salmon Explorer is routinely updated with new data as it becomes available.

Special thanks to the British Columbia Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund for funding these steelhead status assessments.

Learn more salmonexplorer.ca

Compiling and centralizing data allowed us to shed light on the poor status of steelhead across the province. There is a window of opportunity to catalyze future efforts and investments to improve steelhead monitoring in B.C., address conservation risks, and work more collaboratively towards both ends.

– Katrina Connors, Senior Director, Pacific Salmon Foundation

Special thanks to Steamworks for directing proceeds of the Steelhead Lager to PSF to support conservation efforts.



BY THE NUMBERS

Of the 36 distinct steelhead population groups assessed,





is H

Had good status

Had fair status



Were data deficient





RECOVERY

A NEW APPROACH TO SALMON RECOVERY

British Columbia is at a critical crossroads for salmon recovery. While efforts across the province are growing, they often lack coordination. To address this, the Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF) and the First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC) have jointly developed a framework for a Made-in-B.C. Salmon Recovery Model.

Inspired by a successful strategy from Washington State and shaped by input from hundreds of salmon experts, the proposed model introduces a three-scale approach to guide recovery efforts:

- 1. Watershed scale: Develops local recovery plans and implements on-the-ground projects.
- 2. Regional scale: Leads regional planning, allocates funding, and provides technical support to watershed bodies.
- 3. Provincial scale: Offers centralized coordination, funding distribution, and progress reporting.

In 2024, PSF and FNFC formalized their collaboration by signing a Commitment to Action memorandum, emphasizing shared leadership and prioritizing Indigenous decision-making authority in recovery planning.

Furthermore, the first-ever B.C. Salmon Recovery and Resilience Conference in 2024 culminated in a presentation on the proposed recovery model to gather feedback and build momentum with hundreds of salmon experts.

Looking ahead, PSF and FNFC are scoping how to pilot the Made-in-B.C. Salmon Recovery Model. This next phase will require both funding and support from across the province.

Special thanks to the Sitka Foundation for supporting these efforts.

We don't need to reinvent the wheel for salmon recovery. A lot of important work is already happening. But we need to ensure that we are all driving in the same direction and working together. The proposed made-in-B.C. model is an opportunity to do salmon recovery differently, and be more collaborative, effective, and productive.

- Tom Rutherford, Strategic Priorities Director, Cowichan Watershed Board

Crews visit Big Silver River, a key sockeye spawning site where funding helped restore river flows after severe flooding and drought. Photo: Brandon Deepwell

LOOKING FORWARD LOOKING FORWARD



CLOSING REMARKS FROM THE CEO

The Pacific Salmon Foundation (PSF)'s strategic plan will guide our work over the next five years. We will continue leading salmon recovery, building resilience, and modernizing salmon management systems and approaches during an era underscored by the challenges of climate change and the importance of reconciliation.

Our ongoing priorities include:

- Expanding the reach of our climate emergency response efforts
- Working to address threats within our control, such as **log booms** in estuaries that increase salmon vulnerability to seals, and **6PPD-quinone**, a tire chemical linked to coho salmon deaths
- Influencing the **open-net pen Atlantic salmon farm transition** process by contributing science and research
- Evolving our **community grants program** to foster innovative and strategic ideas for salmon
- Advancing the use of **innovative technology**, such as Salmon Fit-Chips, which help measure salmon health
- Seeking additional opportunities to collaborate with Indigenous partners
- Identifying watersheds to catalyze recovery and resilience planning using the Made-in-B.C. Salmon Recovery Model
- Continuing to report out new data and information on the **State** of Salmon
- Planning the 2026 B.C. Salmon Recovery and Resilience Conference, building on the success of the inaugural 2024 event

Together with our many partners, PSF looks forward to advancing these objectives, and more.

We are honoured to work alongside a passionate and dedicated salmon community, including First Nations, researchers, streamkeepers, and countless others. The future for salmon is bright when we bring our knowledge, commitment, and hearts together.

Through meaningful collaboration, we create real change, and renewed hope, for Pacific salmon.

- Michael Meneer, CEO and President, Pacific Salmon Foundation

WITH GRATITUDE WITH GRATITUDE

The progress made for salmon in 2024 would not be possible without you – the Pacific Salmon Foundation's growing network of partners, supporters, and donors.

Special thanks to:

- **Each individual** who has made a donation in support of PSF's work to save and restore wild Pacific salmon
- 1,003 new donors, including individuals, companies, and foundations
- **450+ individuals** who attended the inaugural B.C. Salmon Recovery and Resilience Conference
- Hundreds of sponsors and supporters who raised funds at PSF events
- Thousands of salmon supporters that celebrated Wild Salmon Day and Salmon Spotting
- Province of British Columbia
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Pacific Salmon Endowment Fund Society

WE ARE ALL PEOPLE FOR SALMON

PACIFIC SALMON FOUNDATION

PSF, Ha'oom Fisheries Society, and partners installed a new tag detection system in the Somass River to monitor at-risk Chinook salmon on the east coast of Vancouver Island. Photo: Port Boat House