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Canada's Best Known Political Commentator

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## [The time has come](#)

Mar 18th, 2010 by [admin](#)

### **In this province, those who care for the environment must be their own media.**

Tom Paine, the “media” catalyst for the American Revolution, rallied Americans with the stirring words “these are the times that try men’s souls”.

Are these words applicable to British Columbia, its governments and the farmed fish issue?”

I say, clearly yes, with this difference – Paine was rallying for an armed revolution while those who oppose fish farms in BC waters rally for changes within the confines of our democratic system.

### **ALEXANDRA LEADS THE FIGHT – AS USUAL**

Alexandra Morton, who surely needs no introduction, has led the fight to save our wild fish from destruction by sea lice from farmed fish pens for nearly a decade. She has done this with a media that has deliberately refused to deal with the matter. Her fight has been relentless so that even the government’s servile hand maiden, the BC mainstream media, has finally been forced to report that there is indeed a problem.

Here’s what Alexandra Morton has to say:

“We cannot match the corporate fish farm PR machine, nor their lobbying power. So I am simply inviting people to make themselves visible by joining us on foot, electronically and by mail. This will be peaceful, colourful, musical, fun, family oriented. Unless we all stand up and become visible, government will continue to degrade the laws of Canada to the benefit of the salmon farming industry, as suggested in the most recent throne speech.”

The forces of protest and boycott have finally united their efforts and the call for action is for a major ongoing demonstration starting on Earth Day, April 22. I’m not going to outline the proposed action here but will do so when final plans in place. What is important at this point is to understand what’s brought this about, namely a tissue of ongoing blatant lies by the Campbell government now joined in pathetically ignorant enthusiasm by the federal government.

### **THE CAMPBELL GOVERNMENT LIED ABOUT ESCAPES!**

When I first got into the fish farm issue in 2001 the concern was the escapement of Atlantic salmon into our waters. The government opened by denying that it was happening. When that lie was disposed of it they said that no Atlantics were moving into BC Rivers – while independent biologist Dr. John Volpe, who leads the Seafood Ecology Research Group at the University of

Victoria, refuted this statement by simply going into the rivers and counting Atlantics by the hundreds. Atlantics don't breed with Pacific salmon but they do force our fish off spawning beds and they are spawning there and experts fear that they will establish themselves.

## **ALEX ARRIVES ON THE SCENE**

In 2002 I first came into contact with Alexandra Morton, who lived in Echo Bay in the Broughton Archipelago when I learned of her concerns that sea lice from Atlantic salmon fish farms were attaching themselves to and killing migrating Pink and Chum Salmon smolts, especially the former. Alex had been testing migrating smolts and the evidence was there – sea lice from nearby fish farms were doing to wild salmon smolts just what they had been doing to wild Atlantic Salmon and Sea Trout smolts in Norway, Scotland and Ireland.\*

The federal Fisheries and Oceans Canada's response was to threaten to throw Alex in jail for illegal testing!

## **POLITICS TRIES TO TRUMP SCIENCE**

From that moment on, politics took on science. Independent peer reviewed study after study after study verified Alex's findings – sea lice from fish farms were slaughtering Pink salmon smolts especially and that it was only a matter of time, and not much of that, before the runs would be wiped out.

The government handled these points as a Josef Goebbels might have – it simply denied the obvious facts and said that the "science" was on its side. This plain lie was especially pernicious because many of the public want to believe their leaders and don't want to believe that the Gordon Campbell government could lie through its teeth. Spin, yes, but surely their government wouldn't just plain lie!

But they did lie and they still do. Not only can they not get any independent science to back them, they consistently refuse to discuss the issue. As Dr John Volpe, has bluntly stated: "the debate is over." UBC's Dr. Daniel Pauly, Director of the Fisheries Center at the University of British Columbia, named by TIME as one of the world's top 50 scientists, agrees and calls Alex "a spunky hero".

## **THE NORWAY SCENE**

The former Norwegian Attorney General Georg Fredrik Rieber-Mohn, who authored Norway's original sea lice policy, has recently stated unequivocally that Norway's policy on sea lice, which the industry successfully lobbied to weaken, has failed miserably and that lice from fish farms were wiping out Atlantic salmon runs; and that the policy must change dramatically. Even the largest shareholder in Marine Harvest – the world's largest salmon farming company and #1 in both Norway and in British Columbia – agrees that we must move the farms. In 2007, when he was fishing on the River Alta – one of Norway's most majestic wild salmon rivers – John Fredriksen made a plea as a passionate angler *to relocate open net cages to save wild salmon. This from the world's #1 fish farm entrepreneur!*

## **ENTER THE FEDS**

Still the Campbell government denies and denies and is now joined now by the federal government as Fisheries Minister Gail Shea, who last August attended a worldwide fish farm convention in Oslo, encourages even more fish farms for BC! Here we have DFO, mandated to protect our salmon, *at the same time shilling through the minister, for those who would destroy them!*

## **THE COHEN COMMISSION AND THE FRASER SOCKEYE**

Mr. Justice Bruce Cohen has a broad commission to look at the catastrophic wild salmon situation in BC. It's of critical importance that we the public of BC show how much our wild salmon mean to us. Mr. Cohen must know our resentment that government fish farm policy has not only led to hugely depleted returns of Pinks and Chum but, strong evidence indicates, has permitted sea lice from fish farms to kill sockeye migrating from the Fraser River where the 2009 returns were catastrophically low.

## **THE PUBLIC LOSES PATIENCE**

How long can decent British Columbians who love their province stand idly by as its very soul, the Pacific salmon, is deliberately slaughtered by foreign corporate interests that are encouraged to do so by the two senior governments?

Haven't we all shown the patience of Job with these politicians who clearly put the interests of donors to their party coffers ahead of those of the people they're elected to serve?

Has the time not arrived where we British Columbians must take action, action sustained until we've rid ourselves of these disgraceful companies who profit hugely from our enormously important assets and the governments that support them?

## **THE TIME IS NOW!**

I say it's long past time. We have been robbed blind by Marine Harvest and others with the connivance, indeed the encouragement, of our governments. Surely we must act with firmness, conviction and steadfastness starting now!

The public must be informed of those who market farmed salmon and restaurants that serve them and be encouraged to boycott these places in favour of those who do not.

We must march in protest in ever increasing numbers and occasions; we must also demonstrate against those who supply fish farms, especially those who provide feed from small fish populations from South American waters, which have consequently been wiped out or dangerously depleted.

This is, of course, an economic issue and a health issue as well. Marine Harvest and friends make hundreds of millions literally stealing our assets; study after study say that wild salmon are far healthier to eat than farmed ones full of chemicals and colourants.

## **THE CRUX OF THE MATTER**

**“THE WILD SALMON BELONG TO THE PEOPLE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA AND THEIR SAFETY IS CRITICAL TO OUR ENVIRONMENT; THEY ARE THE SOUL OF OUR PROVINCE AND OUR SOUL IS NOT FOR SALE”**

It is time, past time for citizens of BC to rally around Alexandra Morton and fight this fight to a finish – a finish that will put paid to the Atlantic salmon fish farms in our province.

*\* It should be noted that Atlantic salmon and Sea Trout smolts are considerably larger than our wild salmon smolts so are hardier when they meet the lice, fortifying the point that our salmon are at an even greater risk than they are.*

Tags: [Alexandra Morton](#), [Gordon Campbell](#), [salmon farms](#)

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The book cover for 'The Life And Death Of Democracy' by John Keane. The title 'DEMOCRACY' is written vertically in large, bold, black letters, with a large black 'X' over it. The author's name 'JOHN KEANE' is written vertically on the right side. Below the cover, the text reads: 'The Life And Death Of Democracy', 'John Keane', 'Best Price CDNS\$ 27.38 or Buy New CDNS\$ 27.41', and 'Buy from amazon.ca'. At the bottom, there is a 'Privacy Information' link.

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