

Newsletter

Aboriginal Aquaculture Association

Special Edition
Highlighting Socio- Economic Study



Economic Opportunities in Finfish Aquaculture for BC Aboriginal Communities

A study prepared by Canadian Aquaculture Systems Inc. for the Aboriginal Aquaculture Association in August of 2011, *Socio-Economic Impact of Finfish Aquaculture in BC Aboriginal Communities*, finds that BC's aboriginal communities are well positioned to generate additional socio-economic benefit through enhanced engagement in commercial (finfish) aquaculture.

Information for the report was drawn from information gathered through surveys of industry (leading salmon farming companies, processors and suppliers currently working with First Nations) and First Nations communities themselves.

Aquaculture production has increased steadily in Canada since 1990, when output values were approximately \$200 million and reached a high of \$900 million in 2006. "The industry has contributed to the revitalization of many coastal communities

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Aquaculture can help to revitalize coastal communities by providing year-round, stable, well-paying jobs

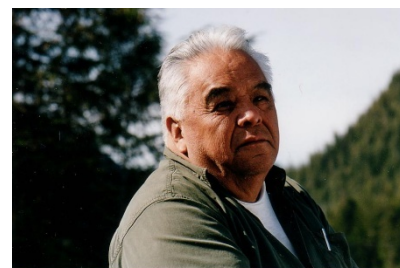
Economic Opportunities story continues

which depend on the wealth generated from more than 16,000 stable, year-round, well-paying jobs and by providing the critical economic activity necessary to stimulate infrastructure development and growth in secondary and tertiary businesses.”

British Columbia accounts for more than 54% of total aquaculture production in Canada, generating about 6,000 full-time equivalent jobs through direct, indirect and induced activities in BC. Within the sector, over half of the employees on aquaculture farms are between the ages of 21 and 35 years which is particularly relevant to future aboriginal participation since young aboriginal people are the fastest growing demographic in Canada.

There are currently more than 286 aboriginal people employed in the BC salmon aquaculture sector earning almost \$11 million in annual salaries and wages in management, processing and administrative positions. Mutually beneficial operating agreements are in place between various commercial ventures and First Nations for 78% of the total salmon production in the province, bringing socio-economic benefits to at least 28 coastal First Nations.

The report highlights the Kitsoo/XaiXais First Nation as a success story in the area of finfish aquaculture. The remote coastal community relied for decades on the commercial salmon industry and faced extreme economic hardship when that industry collapsed. The First Nation developed a salmon farm in partnership with an established salmon farming company and also constructed a processing plant. Today salmon farming provides 15 full-time equivalent jobs for Kitsoo members worth \$450,000 annually and their processing plant processes 1.4 million pounds of farmed salmon each month generating revenues of \$2.2 million monthly and employing 30 full time equivalent jobs at full operation, contributing \$1 million in wages to the village economy. The Kitsoo retain final decision-making powers pertaining to environmental impacts decisions with the ability to shut down the operations if environmental degradation occurs.



Kitsoo/XaiXais First Nation

“No one should be fooled into thinking that the Kitsoo First Nation had sold out and sacrifices any part of its environmental heritage in order to become part of the salmon-farming industry”
Percy Starr,



First Nations well positioned to persuade both government & industry to make meaningful space for First Nations in the industry

Concern over finfish aquaculture development remains a controversial subject among First Nations as a result of many factors such as potential infringement on aboriginal and treaty rights, exploitation of resources, lack of compensation or benefit to First Nations, environmental impacts and impacts on wild fisheries populations. For First Nations that have been able to overcome their challenges and concerns and see their interests met and protected through agreement with corporate partners, however, the industry has provided benefits such as employment for members, wealth generation, and capacity and skill development in a variety of areas.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans' Aquaculture Policy Framework (2002) recognizes the potential for First Nations to contribute to and fully benefit from aquaculture development and First Nations are therefore in a good position to persuade both governments and industry to make meaningful space for First Nations in the industry, while respecting First Nation values.

First Nations have much to offer to potential partnerships with corporate ventures including: access to production sites in their traditional territories, a rapidly growing population of young people to fill the many direct and indirect jobs that can be available and traditional ecological knowledge. Mutually beneficial agreements with corporate ventures help to facilitate dialogue with First Nations, provide for direct First Nations participation in industry and provide operational security for the ventures and potential for continued growth.

“Sustainable aquaculture can provide the kinds of economic development & employment opportunities that can sustain coastal First Nations communities and allow people to continue to live in and depend upon their tribal territories for culture ad prosperity.”

Successful and respectful partnerships in the aquaculture industry can go along way to reducing high unemployment rates in coastal communities, and can see First Nations becoming true beneficiaries of the sustainable use of resources in their territories.

The Aboriginal Aquaculture Association believes that aquaculture development has the potential to play a major role in the diversification and strengthening of the local and regional economies of First Nations. Our mission is to promote and assist the development of First Nations' aquaculture that respects and supports First Nation communities, culture and values.

In 2011, AAA developed the Aboriginal Principles for Sustainable Aquaculture (APSA) standard, which requires First Nations and the applicant to work together and develop a local sustainability plan to ensure aquaculture operations in their area are conducted in accordance with the principles in the standard and reflect specific values and interests of the local First Nation. Elements of APSA include: Transparency and First Nation inclusiveness, social & environmental & economic responsibility.

Careers in Aquaculture

There are many career and job opportunities in aquaculture. Jobs in aquaculture are generally year round, well paying jobs that can include benefits. Jobs categories include hands on, managerial & supervision and science & research. Below is a short list of potential job/career opportunities:

- Fish farm technician
- Farm manager
- Saltwater production manager
- Hatchery technician
- Hatchery manager
- Fish health technician
- Aquaculture engineer
- Research scientist
- Instructor
- Regulatory affairs officer
- Aquaculture development specialists
- Aquaculture extension officers
- Habitat biologist
- Research technician
- Aquaculture diver
- Feed production technician
- Aquatic veterinarian
- Processing line supervisor
- Processing line operators
- Waste management technologists

Follow the link below to check on current job opportunities:

<http://www.aquaculturejobs.com/>



Spin Off Jobs

There are a number of spin-off jobs and services that are related to the aquaculture industry.

Good and services are provided in a number of areas a few examples include:

Transportation

Truck hauling

Barge operators

Divers

Welders

Packaging industries

Ice facilities

Feed producers

Marketing professionals

Examples of suppliers to the aquaculture industry:

Link:

www.ironfish.org

Contact Us



To promote and assist the development of First Nations' aquaculture that respects and supports First Nation communities, culture and values.

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