

Writing to Protect Wild Salmon



Objective: To direct the attention of key decision makers towards addressing important national and international water issues, namely, the protection of wild salmon in Canada.

Abstract: It can be extremely influential when a large group of people take the initiative to contact key decision makers (i.e. politicians, company CEOs, newspapers, international political bodies) to express their concern about an issue and what they think must be done about it. Decision makers pay attention to certain issues if enough people deem them important; the number of letters (and articles) published in newspapers and sent to politicians on a particular topic are often used to gauge which issues are important to Canadians. Remember, politicians cannot read minds – you need to communicate your thoughts to get a point across. Writing letters can be a fun and effective method to do so.

Make it an event! Invite your friends over, bake some goodies or grab a coffee, and write, write away!

Number of Participants: It's up to you. Make a goal for the number of letters you would like to send. The more the better!

Total Hours of Planning Time: 3 hours

Total Hours for Participants: 2 hours

Appropriate Age of Participants: 10+ years

Materials:

- Paper and pens (or computers and printers)
- Sample letter and important facts about your issue
- If you want to brainstorm with your group, use a large sheet of paper or a white board to share ideas before composing letters

Action Plan:

1. Research the issue and collect necessary facts. A suggested topic to write about is “protecting wild salmon”. Start your research with the information about salmon, provided below.
2. Determine a meeting place to brainstorm as a group and write letters together. Invite others to join you (e.g. friends, family, school club, religious group, organizations you are affiliated with).
3. Look up contact information for the politician, organization or newspaper you would like to write to. (Contacts for Canadian politicians and newspapers are provided below).

4. Write away!!!

Note: When writing to politicians, it's great to start with a standard letter template for writers to follow, however, **the more personalized the letter, the more attention it will receive.**

Note: When writing to a newspaper, keep in mind that "Letters to the Editor" is the most read section in the newspaper. Hook your letter to a local or national current event to increase the likelihood of having it published.

5. Encourage others to join in your letter writing campaign. The more letters sent, the more powerful their impact. For example, post a note on your Facebook profile with your letter and use your status to encourage others to write too. Or ask your teacher if he/she can allocate class time for students to write letters. There's power in numbers!

6. Mail your letters.

Note: **Did you know that when mailing a letter to a politician in Ottawa, you don't need to use postage? Just pop it into the mailbox!**

7. Share your experience by uploading your project report onto the online Project Database at: <http://www.janegoodall.ca/members-project-registry.php>

Resources to get you started:

David Suzuki Foundation resources on wild salmon
http://www.davidsuzuki.org/Oceans/Wild_Salmon/

Salmonopolis: David Suzuki Foundation and Watershed Watch Salmon Society
<http://www.salmonopolis.ca/salmonopolis/home/soIndex.asp>

Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council Resources
<http://www.fish.bc.ca/resources>

Sample letter and politicians' email addresses from the David Suzuki Foundation
http://www.davidsuzuki.org/Oceans/Take_Action/ProtectWildSalmon.asp

Fisheries and Oceans Canada
http://www-comm.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pages/consultations/wsp/default_e.htm

Canadian Newspaper directory
<http://www.google.com/Top/News/Newspapers/Regional/Canada/>

Choosing sustainable seafood
<http://www.seachoice.org/>

The Jane Goodall Institute is not responsible for the content of external websites.

How to contact your representative:

1. Send a letter to Prime Minister Harper:

The Right Honorable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
Langevin Block
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A2

2. Send a letter to a Federal MP or Minister:

(For example, the Minister of Fisheries & Oceans Canada)
House of Commons,
Parliament Buildings,
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Visit Canada's Parliamentary site for information about MPs and Ministers

http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/senatorsmembers_cabinet.asp?Language=E&Parl=37&Ses=2&Sect=mincur

3. Send a letter to your federal representative:

Search by postal code to find the contact information for your federal representative

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/people/house/PostalCode.asp?Source=SM>

4. Send a letter to your Provincial Representative:

Click on your province to find contact information for your MPP/ MNA/ MLA

British Columbia: <http://www.leg.bc.ca/mla/3-1-1.htm>

Alberta: <http://www.assembly.ab.ca/lao/mla/index.asp>

Saskatchewan: <http://www.legassembly.sk.ca/members/members.htm>

Manitoba: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/leg-asmb/members/alphabetical.html>

Ontario:

http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/go2.jsp?Page=/members/members_main&menuItem=mpps_header&locale=en

Quebec: http://www.assnat.qc.ca/fra/Membres/circ_lst.html

New Brunswick: <http://app.infoaa.7700.gnb.ca/gnb/pub/ListMLA1.asp>

Nova Scotia: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/members/directory/alpha.html>

PEI: <http://www.gov.pe.ca/leg/members.php3>

Newfoundland: <http://www.gov.nf.ca/hoa/members/>

Nunavut: <http://www.assembly.nu.ca/english/contact.html>

Northwest Territories: <http://www.gov.nt.ca/research/mla/index.html>

Yukon: <http://www.legassembly.gov.yk.ca/>

Facts on wild salmon:

Wild Salmon are endangered in Canada, and the federal government has an obligation to protect these wild species of salmon before they become extinct. The main issues are associated with fisheries management and fishing practices, which need to be better regulated by the government through legislation, and funding for educational programming.

Different conservation groups are recommending different priorities for the protection of wild salmon. According to the Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council, priorities include stock conservation and enhancement, and habitat restoration, protection, and improvement. The David Suzuki foundation is recommending an increase the number of habitat enforcement officers and the provision of increased funding for the implementation of the Pacific Wild Salmon Policy.

It is important that we act to encourage the sustainability of wild salmon, as stocks have constantly been in decline, and are threatening the species. Further, youth have a powerful voice in encouraging the government to protect these species and create powerful legislation, because the effects of a future decline will impact our future ecosystems, economies, and cultures.

Contact:

For more information about this project, contact roots_shoots@janegoodall.ca