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More angles to the fisheries

Larry Pynn's recent series on commercial fishing provided insight into the changing face of this once-major B. C. industry. Unfortunately, it didn't recognize the extent to which recreational fishing has become the real economic powerhouse. According to a recent study commissioned by the B. C. Seafood Alliance, the recreational fishery produced \$ 642 million in annual sales, paid \$ 150 million in wages and benefits, created 3,950 fulltime jobs and contributed \$ 250 million to the province's gross domestic product.

In other words, the people and businesses providing services to 320,000 recreational anglers produce economic value equivalent to 70 per cent of the sales produced by the commercial fishery (which takes 70 per cent to 80 per cent of the salmon harvest, 88 per cent of the halibut harvest and virtually all of the sablefish, crab and bottomfish harvest.) The recreational fishery, by contrast, catches less than 10 per cent of the annual salmon harvest and is allocated 12 per cent of the halibut.

Pynn touched on an issue of growing concern to recreational anglers — how do 320,000 unorganized anglers get together to buy quota from a small group of commercial licence holders? More importantly, should recreational anglers be required to buy access to fish that they, as Canadians, already own?

ROBERT ALCOCK President, Sport Fishing Institute
of B. C. White Rock

Congratulations to The Sun and Larry Pynn for the Shifting Seas series. It's encouraging to see light shed on these important issues. We were especially pleased to see the spotlight turned on seafood mislabelling. We do, however, take issue with the emphasis the series placed on the effects of climate variation on stocks. Ocean conditions certainly affect B. C.'s fisheries. However, B. C.'s groundfish and wild salmon stocks face obstacles that are far more concrete and immediate and that are in our power to change: the destruction of fish habitat by bottom trawling and the lethal effects of open net- cage salmon farms on wild salmon. If we act now, B. C.'s fisheries future may yet be as rich as its storied past.

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