



# CLAYOQUOT WILDERNESS RESORT

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## **CLAYOQUOT WILDERNESS RESORT OPENS FOR 2019 SEASON; ANNOUNCES A PHASING OUT OF ITS SALMON FISHING PROGRAM**

*Resort prioritizes protection of wild salmon in light of chinook decline*

**Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada – May 16, 2019** – Clayoquot Wilderness Resort (CWR) opens today for its 19<sup>th</sup> season, announcing it will begin phasing out its salmon fishing program in an effort to reduce its impact and raise awareness about the diminishing wild salmon populations in Clayoquot Sound.

Native chinook salmon stocks have decreased at an alarming rate in recent years which has devastating consequences for the entire Clayoquot Sound ecosystem, particularly the endangered and iconic southern resident orcas which feed on chinook. Climate change, logging and industrial activity, overfishing, marine pollution, aquaculture and disease are some of the factors contributing to the decline.

“It’s a move we’ve considered for the last few years,” says General Manager Bradley Goian.

“Obviously this was not an easy decision, as salmon fishing is one of the main attractions to this region and has been part of our adventure programming since the resort opened in 2000. But the evidence is clear right in our own backyard on the Bedwell River that chinook are going extinct. We feel strongly that we don’t want to keep contributing to the problem.”

The remote luxury wilderness resort located outside of Tofino, on the west coast of Vancouver Island is known for its robust sustainability practices, creating its Environmental Legacy Program (funded privately by the resort and by resort guests through a 3% environmental tax) which is now dedicated almost entirely to saving wild salmon. Since 2001, the resort has worked with the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans and First Nation of Ahousaht to mitigate and repair human-caused environmental damage and habitat depletion in Bedwell Sound. Substantial work has been done to create new salmon spawning channels and restore native stocks to river systems with the help of organizations like the Tofino Salmon Enhancement Society.

Ahousaht First Nations Chief Lewis George believes this is an important and positive step. “This is a complex issue for many reasons, but I was so happy to hear the news of this decision from Bradley

and Antonella. I'm supportive of the direction CWR is taking and applaud them for making conservation the priority. This is a powerful statement in sustainability."

Executive Chef Michael Pataran also supports the decision and has removed salmon entirely from his menus in the Cookhouse Restaurant. "A big theme for us this year as a Relais & Châteaux property is to move away from utilizing over-harvested and commonly consumed fish like salmon, tuna and shrimp. Instead, we want to introduce our guests to lesser known fish and continue to emphasize the importance of eating sustainable seafood." The resort currently partners with Ocean Wise® to ensure that all seafood menu items are ethically harvested.

To date, guests at Clayoquot Wilderness Resort receive an ocean fishing excursion as part of their all-inclusive package pricing, which the resort will honour for the 2019 season given the timing of the decision. General Manager Antonella Puglisi explains, "We want to educate our guests about the issues, let them know the direction we're moving, and essentially put the choice in their hands this season. If guests choose to forgo the excursion, they will have the opportunity to donate the cost of the fishing trip (matched equally by CWR) to the Tofino Salmon Enhancement Society." For the 2020 season and beyond, salmon fishing excursions will simply not be offered. Fly fishing options, heli-fishing adventures, and certain saltwater experiences utilizing sustainable fishing practices will still be available.

Puglisi adds, "We hope that this decision will be a catalyst for continued dialogue and education about the severity of this issue. Salmon are a keystone species, providing food for wildlife and nutrients to our vast old-growth rainforests. They are crucial to the biodiversity and overall health of Clayoquot Sound. We know that our actions might not make a huge difference on a global scale, but can you imagine if we all made a conscious effort as individuals and businesses to conserve and affect small change?"

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## **About Clayoquot Wilderness Resort**

Clayoquot Wilderness Resort is a Relais & Châteaux all-inclusive eco-safari resort destination located near Tofino on the wild west coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada. The resort was named to Condé Nast Traveler's esteemed 2019 Gold List and was awarded the World's Most Sustainable Hotel honours in the 2018 World Boutique Hotel Awards.

Accessible only by seaplane, helicopter or boat, the resort is situated in a UNESCO-designated protected Biosphere Reserve amidst some of the last ancient temperate rainforests in the world. Guests enjoy luxurious tented accommodations, artfully prepared gourmet coastal cuisine, restorative spa and wellness experiences as well as an impressive menu of marine and land-based adventures, including whale and bear watching, horseback riding, kayaking, yoga and heli-adventures. Truly an escape to the heart of the wild, in the lap of luxury.

For more information about Clayoquot Wilderness Resort or to inquire about rates, call 1.888.333.5405, email [info@wildretreat.com](mailto:info@wildretreat.com) or visit [www.wildretreat.com/](http://www.wildretreat.com/) Follow us on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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