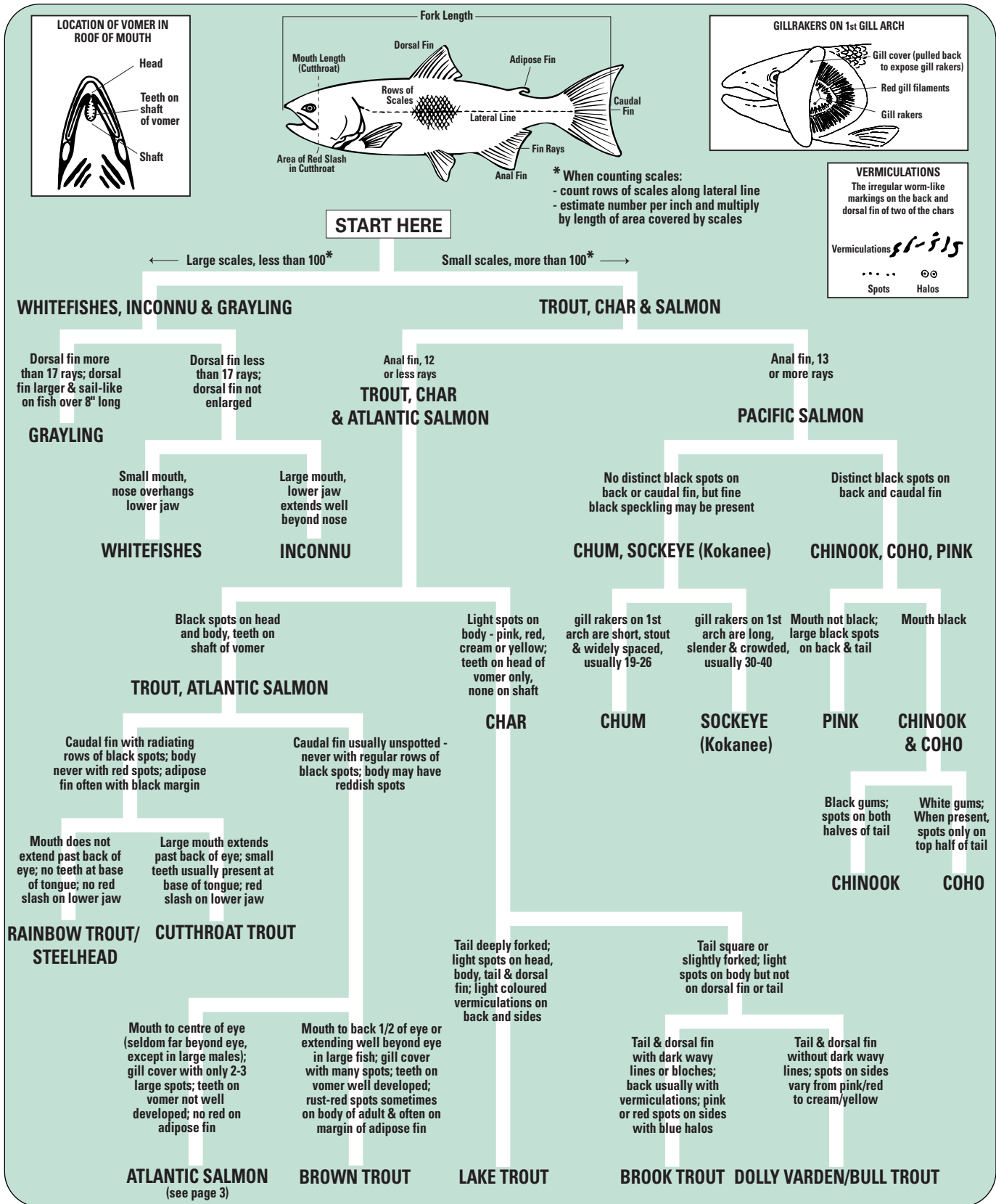


KNOW YOUR FISH



Key to the Trout, Salmon, Char, Grayling, Inconnu and Whitefish of British Columbia

Please refer to the colour illustrations of the Freshwater Fish of BC in the centrefold



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ANGLING ETHICS

Over 400,000 anglers enjoy fishing on lakes, rivers, and streams throughout British Columbia. If we are not careful, the popularity that recreational freshwater fishing enjoys may compromise not only the experience anglers are seeking, but also contribute to decline of some fish stocks, impact fish habitat and increase conflicts between anglers unless special care is taken.

Respect fish and treat them humanely.

Keep fish immersed in water until you identify the species and its size. Help us look after our fisheries by limiting your catch to your needs and never exceeding the legal limit. "Let them go, let them grow," and practice "catch and release" when appropriate or required (see page 11).

Practise courtesy toward other anglers and respect their rights.

Share the water with other users. Practise good angling etiquette by:

- ✓ moving around a water body in patterns appropriate to your gear and local conditions;
- ✓ when in a boat give a wide berth to wading anglers, other boaters and swimmers;
- ✓ leaving adequate room between other anglers and yourself, especially flyfishers.

Respect public and private property.

Always ask permission before entering private property, including Indian Reserve land. Leave natural areas as you found them, keep campsites clean and be careful with campfires.

ROTATIONAL ANGLING

Courtesy and Common Sense - Enjoying the Experience and sharing the Opportunity.

As angling pressures increase because of population growth, expanding recreational time and improved access to our rivers and streams, the need for courtesy and an angling code of conduct has become more evident.

"Rotation angling" is a system designed to encourage everyone on a stretch of river to fish sequentially through it, whether wading or from a boat. It was designed to allow each angler an equal opportunity to spend some time in the prime pools and riffles. Simply stated, it means starting at the head of a pool or run and following the immediate downstream angler at a courteous distance, with everyone progressing at a reasonable pace.

While rotation angling is not applicable to all waters and conditions, it has become an accepted practice on many of our Classified Waters.

Rotational angling is a system which can work well regardless of gear type, so long as each angler respects the others' methods.

The basic rules are:

- ✓ Avoid entering the water downstream of another angler who is already fishing, unless invited to do so;
- ✓ Leave adequate room between the downstream angler and yourself but do not remain stationary unless no one is following you;
- ✓ After catching a fish, step out of the line and return to the head of the pool, or start of the line;
- ✓ If you are not sure about the local etiquette, avoid any problems by first inquiring about the procedures from the anglers already on the water.



Myron Kozak photo

Co-existing with Spawning Salmon



Angling opportunities provided for some species of fish (e.g., trout, char, whitefish) may have negative impacts on holding or spawning salmon in the same river system. In many cases, angling for salmon is legally closed during times when angling for other species remains open. Anglers can minimize incidental hooking of salmon by adopting a cooperative approach to their angling activity. Some simple voluntary measures which will minimize the likelihood of hooking or disturbing spawning salmon include:

Gear Selection: Use fishing gear which will effectively avoid hooking salmon. For example, use fly fishing gear with a floating line and a dry fly. Sinking lines or spoons are not recommended as spawning salmon can be easily foul hooked. If the target species is smaller than the spawning salmon, use of a light tippet is a good added measure.

Bait Selection: If use of bait is allowed, avoid using bait types which aggressively attract salmon. Using bait such as worms, grasshoppers or other insects will effectively avoid salmon yet attract other species such as trout and whitefish.

Wading the River: Concentrate angling activity in areas of the river where salmon may be less prevalent. For example, avoid deep pools where salmon are holding prior to

spawning. Also, avoid areas of shallow water where you observe concentrations of spawning salmon and their redds (gravel "nests"). Salmon redds are generally between 1-2 square meters in size and may be recognised by the appearance of clean looking gravel which is loose and soft underfoot, as opposed to firmer and darker gravel nearby. When newly formed, redds will appear to be a depression with a mound of gravel on the downstream side. Eggs will be buried in the mound of gravel. Walking on the redds may kill buried eggs, so please avoid them entirely.

With the cooperation of knowledgeable anglers it is often possible to maintain angling opportunities which might otherwise be eliminated to protect vulnerable fish. Please adjust your angling techniques accordingly.



Single Barbless Hooks Mandatory in All B.C. Streams

B.C. Streams go Barbless

The use of single barbless hooks is now mandatory in all BC streams. This year, with the addition of the streams of the West Kootenays and of the Arctic drainage in northern BC, the requirement for single barbless hooks is now uniform across the province. In general, this regulation is intended to support management efforts by reducing hooking injuries and stress that may have sub-lethal impacts on released fish and sometimes lead to mortalities.

There are many situations where an angler must release fish caught. This is true of the most wild steelhead fisheries across the province, where catch and release is required. In many other fisheries there is a restricted harvest that involves the release of fish that are either outside the allowable size limit, are a non-target species, or are over and above the daily quota. In addition, more

anglers are now voluntarily choosing to practice catch and release in general.

Many anglers recognize that the use of single barbless hooks helps to minimize injury to released fish by allowing for easier removal of the hook. Being able to quickly remove the hook significantly reduces the amount of time a fish is handled and kept out of water, which in turn reduces problems associated with scale and mucous loss, stress and lack of oxygen. Single barbless hooks are also much less likely than barbed or triple hooks to become entangled in the mesh of a net if one is used to help land a fish.

There are many other jurisdictions across North America that have implemented similar management practices in their fisheries. The adoption of this regulation brings a degree of consistency to all river and stream fisheries in British Columbia.



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Wild Fish Culture Program

The wild fish culture program is an important component of the province's integrated approach to fisheries management.

The five provincial hatcheries (Duncan, Abbotsford, Summerland, Clearwater, Fort Steele) stock about ten million fish each year into approximately 1000 lakes around the province as well as in a small number of coastal streams. Stocked waters attract anglers because they provide high quality angling on a consistent basis. About half of the freshwater angling in B. C. takes place on stocked lakes and these programs provide significant benefits for both rural and provincial economies.

The culture program is the envy of other jurisdictions in North America because it focuses primarily on wild native trout – rather than domesticated "farm fish". This emphasis helps to ensure that fisheries in B.C. will continue to be **"world-class"**.

Fish are transported in tanks of various sizes filled with water and supplied with a continuous flow of oxygen. Helicopters, float planes, ATV's and even backpacks are used to transport fish into lakes not easily accessible by truck.



Photo: Ray Billings



Photo: Brian Chan

Provincial fish culture staff are also providing "conservation fish culture" services in several stock restoration initiatives. For example, the "Living Gene Bank" for Vancouver Island steelhead will complete its third year of stocking and has seen the first adult returns back from the original stocking in 2000. Endangered sturgeon stocks on the Kootenay and upper Columbia rivers are also supported through conservation fish culture programs at the Kootenay Trout Hatchery (Fort Steele).

Of B.C.'s approximately 23000 lakes over 5 hectares in size, only about 770 have special fishing regulations and hence are included in the regional tables in this synopsis. Of these listed lakes, roughly 350 are currently being stocked (noted by the symbol ◀). Many other lakes not listed here are also part of the stocking program.

For information on individual waters, including species stocked, size of fish, numbers and release dates, go to <http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca> and click on "Fishing Regulations" under Popular Topics and follow the links.

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B. C. goes Fishing – June 13-14-15

Family Fishing Weekend makes it easy for any Canadian who has ever wanted to try fishing to enjoy B.C.'s great outdoors and discover one of our most popular pastimes. Check our web site www.familyfishingbc.com for complete details on fishing regulations, suggested places to fish and for details on where special community events are being held.

Get hooked! Take a friend! Have fun!

FRESH WATER FISHING

**Help Protect Our Fish Resources:
Learn to Fish Within the Rules**

During BC's Family Fishing Weekend, residents of Canada* can fish in most of B.C.'s thousands of lakes and streams, compliments of the provincial government. Except as noted below, a Freshwater Angling Licence is not required. Everyone can have fun within the rules, so please abide by all current angling regulations.
(* Individuals who have lived in Canada for the preceding 12 months)

Some Tips:

First, become familiar with the **province-wide regulations** (on pages 9-12) which cover allowable fishing methods, general rules on bait usage and general "No Fishing" areas.

Next, select the region you will be fishing in and refer to the **regional regulations**.

There are eight regions in the province (see the map on page 4). Look for things like regional daily catch quotas, possession quotas and other region-wide restrictions.

Finally, check to see if the **specific lake or stream** you want to fish is listed in the regional tables. If it is NOT listed, simply follow the regional and provincial regulations. If the water IS listed, then you must also follow the **special water-specific regulations**. One example is the closure of some streams in the spring to protect spawning fish.

The instructions in "How to Use This Synopsis" on page 4 will make this clear.

The regulations (plus any recent updates) are also posted on the Internet at:

wlapwww.gov.bc.ca. Just go to "Popular Topics" and click on "Fishing Regulations".

Regular Fishing Licences Required to Fish Classified Waters

Eighteen special trout and steelhead streams called "Classified Waters" (see pages 6 & 7) cannot be fished during Family Fishing Weekend without purchasing a regular angling licence plus a Classified Waters Licence. Please check the regional tables to see which streams are "classified" during June 13, 14, and 15.



To Keep A Special Fish, You May Need to Make a Contribution to Conservation

Like any seasoned angler, you decide if you release your catch or keep it (regulations permitting). Everyone can fish for and keep a wide variety of fish during Family Fishing Weekend, but a Conservation Surcharge Stamp is needed if you plan on keeping a few special fish:

- Kootenay lake rainbow trout over 50 cm in length;
- Shuswap Lake rainbow trout over 50 cm;
- Shuswap Lake char (lake trout) over 60 cm;
- Any salmon caught in non-tidal water (check the federal regulations for openings and size limits for salmon); or
- Any steelhead (where harvest is permitted).

To keep and eat these special fish, you must have purchased the appropriate stamp in advance of fishing and affixed it to a **FREE Family Fishing Weekend freshwater licence** (available as a download on the FFW web site: www.familyfishingbc.com). If you have not purchased the required stamp, then any of these special fish caught must be released to the water. Your surcharge fees go to the **Habitat Conservation Trust Fund** to help fisheries conservation projects around the province. (For more information on the HCTF, please refer to our colour centrefold.)

TIDAL (SALTWATER) FISHING

Fisheries and Oceans Canada invites everyone to participate in BC's Family Fishing Weekend and enjoy the pleasures of saltwater sport fishing. Tidal Waters Fishing Licences are required for ALL anglers. They must be purchased by adults (16 and older), but are FREE for those under 16. Tidal Waters Licences may be obtained at most tackle shops and marinas. Pick up a FREE BC Tidal Waters Sport Fishing Guide when you obtain your licence. Check updates to the saltwater and salmon regulations (including area closures) on the web site at: www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

FISHING FOR SALMON

Although salmon are found in both fresh and salt water, these species are managed under the regulations of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The following apply when salmon fishing in B.C.:

- Barbless hooks are required for all salmon fishing;
- If you plan to keep any salmon caught, you must purchase a salmon conservation stamp* - and attach it to your complimentary Freshwater Licence or to your regular Tidal Waters Licence;
- Immediately record (in ink) on the appropriate licence each adult Chinook salmon retained (see definitions of "adult Chinook" in the Tidal Guide).

(* The surcharge fee paid for the salmon conservation stamp on your Tidal Licence goes to the Pacific Salmon Foundation.)

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Help Protect Our Aquatic Habitats From Alien Invaders!



B.C. contains the most diverse group of native plants and animals of any province or territory in Canada. We have a wide range of natural aquatic ecosystems that support many social and economic activities, including a

world-class freshwater sports fishery. Aquatic alien invaders, also called exotic or non-native species, threaten our native species, the diversity and stability of aquatic ecosystems, and recreational and commercial opportunities in B.C.

Alien invaders can be plants, animals or diseases that are not native to an ecosystem. These exotics often flourish in their new environment because they have no natural enemies to limit their ability to reproduce and spread. Some exotics have devastated our freshwater fisheries and destroyed important aquatic resources by degrading habitat, spreading disease or parasites, or by competing, predating or interbreeding with native species.

Examples of harmful exotics that are spreading in B.C.

- ◆ Yellow Perch, bass, carp and brown bullheads – may decimate native species through competition, predation, or habitat degradation.
- ◆ Bull Frogs - eat a wide variety of animals including fish, young birds and amphibians.
- ◆ Eurasian water milfoil, purple loosestrife, reed canary grass –spread quickly and degrade habitat for native species; milfoil may also impair boating, swimming and fishing (illustrated on facing page).

Most exotic species are spread by human activities and not by birds or wind. Exotics are often spread through accidental releases, sometimes by hitchhiking on boats, trailers, boots and other equipment. Other times, they are released intentionally by dumping live fish or freeing unwanted pets. Either way, they present a risk to native species.

DO NOT MOVE FISH.

Moving fish (or any aquatic animal or plant) between waterbodies can have profound implications on the health of aquatic ecosystems. The introduction of new species into a relatively self-sustaining ecosystem like

a lake can be very disruptive to the species already resident there. As a new species becomes established it will compete for resources and can ultimately displace existing species that occupy similar ecological niches. In addition, the movement of fish between waterbodies will almost certainly result in the movement of other microscopic organisms in the water used for transfer. These can include bacterial or viral diseases that are not present in the receiving environment. This applies not only to the deliberate movement of fish by people, but also to anyone transporting fish or aquatic invertebrates for use as bait.

DID YOU KNOW?

Regulations have been developed to help prevent the spread of alien invaders in B.C. For example: it is unlawful to possess or move live fish (including lampreys) at any time in the wild without a permit. It is also illegal to use live fish for bait or to put live fish in a "live well" in your boat. See "Rules for Bait Usage" on page 9.

Only Ministry professionals are permitted to move live fish in BC. Hatchery fish are raised to exacting standards and the receiving lakes are carefully selected.

DO YOUR PART AND HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF AQUATIC ALIEN INVADERS:

- ◆ Don't move live fish or any other form of aquatic life from one body of water to another. Observe, Record and Report any such activity, including the use of live fish for bait, to the ORR toll free line 1-800-663-WILD (9453).

- ◆ Never release aquarium species or water garden plants into any water.
- ◆ Watch for alien hitchhikers. Inspect your gear. Drain water from motors, bilges, transom wells and all other containers, and remove plant parts and mud from your equipment, boat, anchor and trailer before you leave a boat launch. **BE PARTICULARLY CAREFUL IF YOU HAVE TRAVELED OUTSIDE BC.**
- ◆ Always clean equipment in case it has been used in infested waters, before moving to other waters. Wash and sun dry your boat, tackle, nets, waders and other equipment to remove or kill harmful species that may not have been noticed at the boat launch.
- ◆ Dispose of fish scraps, especially the head, bones and entrails, where the fish was caught. (See "Angling Tips in Bear Country" on page 66 for additional disposal suggestions.)

BC Fisheries is dedicated to protecting our native fish species and their habitats from Aquatic Alien Invaders. We are launching a campaign to raise public awareness to help prevent the introduction and spread of exotic species. A video entitled "**Trouble in Paradise: Threats to B.C.'s Freshwater Habitats**" has been produced. Look for the new "Exotics" web page on the ministry's web site at:

<http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/fw/fish/alien-invaders.html>



Photo: W. Stephen Price

Exotic bull frogs have invaded some B.C. waters

BOATING INFORMATION



Provincial
Regulations

Fluctuating Lake and Reservoir Levels

Water levels in lakes and especially reservoirs can fluctuate over the year. These fluctuations result in a change in the location of stream mouths (please check the definitions of "streams" and "stream mouths" on page 8). Note that a stream flowing through the drawdown portion of a reservoir basin is not considered to be part of the reservoir. Anglers are reminded that because lake and stream regulations may differ, care must be taken to ensure that the proper regulations are followed.

Please be aware that many large lakes in the province have boating safety restrictions in specific areas. These restrictions are identified through buoys and/or signs and typically mark swimming areas or speed restrictions. Your compliance with these safety restrictions is appreciated. Please refer to the Regional Water-Specific Tables for boating restrictions on individual waters, and to page 5 for more details.

Notice to Boaters



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Eurasian Watermilfoil Alert

Eurasian watermilfoil and other non-native aquatic plants can create aquatic, environmental and economic problems in our waters.



Important:

Thoroughly inspect your boat and trailer and remove all aquatic plants before launching and after leaving the water.

New infestations can develop from even small plant fragments.

Further information is available by contacting:
Manager, Environmental Protection,
Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection
3547 Skaha Lake Rd, Penticton BC V2A 7K2



WHIRLING DISEASE

Aquatic organisms can be accidentally moved from water body to water body. Undesirable species, parasites and diseases can upset the delicate balance of ecosystems and cause irreversible damage to native fish populations and valuable sport fisheries.

Whirling Disease is caused by a parasite which attacks and kills trout and is the suspected cause of recent trout population declines in Montana. Whirling Disease is not yet detected in British Columbia.

How You Can Help:

- **Remove mud and plants from all of your gear before leaving your fishing site.**
- **Drain all water on site and dry your boat and fishing equipment between locations.**
- **Leave live fish, plants and other aquatic animals where you found them.**

Whirling Disease thrives in polluted and damaged habitats. So let's not forget the bigger picture. Get involved locally in protecting fish habitat.



**Keep
Fish
Habitat
Healthy**



To obtain a fact sheet about Whirling Disease call 1-800-387-9853

White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative

For many people white sturgeon are one of BC's most fascinating fish. An ancient species covered with bony plates, they remind us of creatures we see in fossils.

Unfortunately, all BC populations are considered at risk. Those in the Nechako, Columbia, and Kootenay rivers are listed as critically imperiled. These populations are suffering from long-term spawning and juvenile rearing failures and now consist almost entirely of older fish. If this trend continues, once these fish die there will be no young fish to replace them.

Recovery Teams and Action Groups are targeting 2003 for completion

of recovery plans for the Nechako and Columbia populations.

The Kootenay plan has been put into action. Recovery efforts bring together federal, provincial and local governments; First Nations; public and industrial stakeholders; and U.S. regulatory and tribal agencies (where needed).



The causes of reproductive failure are complex and remain unclear. To address these problems, research and monitoring

continue under the guidance of the Recovery Teams, made up of experts in sturgeon biology, fish culture, recovery of endangered species, effects of hydroelectric dams, and habitat restoration. Due to the time required for white sturgeon to reach sexual maturity (more than 20 years for females), recovery requires a long-term commitment. Community involvement and public support are vital to the success of these efforts

Sturgeon support a valuable catch and release sport fishery in the Fraser River, but anglers are reminded that fishing for sturgeon is not allowed in the Nechako, Columbia and Kootenay systems due to conservation concerns.

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STEELHEAD RECOVERY PLAN



Announcing the Greater Georgia Basin Steelhead Recovery Plan



Photo: Tim Yesaki

On September 28, 2002 the Hon. Joyce Murray, Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection announced a new program to deal with a major conservation issue affecting steelhead stocks throughout the Greater Georgia Basin (from Juan de Fuca Strait north to Johnstone Strait). Wild and hatchery steelhead in 58 of the largest watersheds in this inner coast region have experienced serious declines in the last decade, and a majority have been classified at "conservation concern" or "extreme conservation concern" by provincial biologists.

Declines in steelhead abundance have been caused by reduced freshwater habitat productivity combined with sharply reduced ocean survival

during the marine portion of their life cycle. Many wild stocks will likely not recover unless freshwater rearing conditions can be significantly improved to compensate for persistently poor ocean conditions which seem to be beyond our influence.

Since the magnitude of this problem was first identified in the late 1990s, provincial fisheries biologists have worked closely with non-government partners, like the BC Conservation Foundation, in developing recovery plans for individual watersheds and steelhead populations. The culmination of this work was the recent release of the Greater Georgia Basin Steelhead Recovery Action Plan by A.F. Lill and Associates Ltd., working with the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection under sponsorship of the Pacific Salmon Foundation.

The action plan's primary objective is to "stabilize and restore wild steelhead stocks and habitats to healthy self-sustaining levels." A secondary objective is to "maintain and restore angling opportunities, which benefit both local

communities and the provincial economy."

Through recent advances at the province's Keogh River research station in northeastern Vancouver Island, it has been shown that a combination of hillslope erosion control, rearing habitat structures and whole-stream nutrient additions (i.e., inorganic fertilizers) can stabilize and modestly increase steelhead smolt numbers, even in the face of very low spawner returns. These results, which have been scientifically documented, can serve as a template for other watersheds where steelhead remain at risk.

In the coming months provincial staff and their BCCF partners will work closely with angling organizations, conservation groups, First Nations and industry to increase investments in steelhead recovery projects for priority waters within the Greater Georgia Basin. We encourage anglers and non-anglers to support this work which is critical to the preservation of this magnificent species on the south coast.

For more information on the Greater Georgia Basin Steelhead Recovery Plan contact regional fisheries staff in Nanaimo (250-751-3100) and Surrey (604-582-5200), or visit our web site at www.steelheadrecoveryplan.ca

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