



Backgrounder: 2014

Fishing Together on the Fraser

Tips from the Fraser River Fisheries Peacemakers

A high run of sockeye salmon is expected on the Fraser River this summer. According to the early Fisheries and Oceans Canada forecasts, there is a 3 in 4 chance that the 2014 sockeye run will be above average and may exceed the record 30 million sockeye that returned in 2010. Fishing opportunities are expected for First Nations, commercial and recreational fisheries. The prospect of landing a sockeye salmon for the first time is likely to draw many more recreational anglers – including those new to the sport – to the banks of Fraser this year.

Aside from great fishing opportunities, this is a chance for new anglers to learn about fishing, and salmon fishing in particular, from the rich local knowledge of experienced anglers and from First Nations fishers who have a longstanding relationship to Fraser River salmon.

The Fraser River Fisheries Peacemakers are a group formed in 2009, a cooperative effort by First Nations and recreational angler groups to build positive, harmonious relationships among all those who come to the Fraser River to fish. They are here to help people learn about fishing and share the river in a respectful way.

Here are some fishing tips and links to online resources to help people encourage a fun and safe fishing season along the Fraser. Enjoy the season!

Fishing Tips

(1) Learn Your Fishing Basics

BC has some of the best fishing opportunities in the world, and fishing is an activity that the whole family can enjoy! Whether you are a beginner or an experienced sport fisher, there are always some fishing basics to keep in mind.

a. Beginner Tips

From information on fish species to the proper gear and fishing methods to keep in mind, the “Fishing with Rod” website has lots of helpful information:
<http://www.fishingwithrod.com/articles/introduction/index.html>

b. Become familiar with fishing rules and regulations

Even during times of abundance, fishing regulations in rivers, lakes and saltwater are applicable in BC. These regulations are designed to ensure the sustainability of our fish stocks for future generations and the quality of the sport fishing industry.

The regulations can include quotas, size limits, area restrictions, protected species, and allowable fishing methods and gear.

There are two government agencies that manage fish stocks in BC:

- Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is a federal agency responsible for managing the saltwater fishery in BC. DFO manages Pacific salmon species, which live in both saltwater and freshwater at different life stages.
- The BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations manages most freshwater fisheries.

BC has Aboriginal, commercial and recreational fisheries. The priority of the Aboriginal Food, Social and Ceremonial fishery is recognized under Canadian law, second only to conservation objectives, and is followed by commercial and recreational angling fisheries. Notices are published on openings and requirements specific to these fisheries.

There are different requirements for angling in tidal and non-tidal waters. The Fraser River is considered tidal water from its mouth up to the Abbotsford-Mission CPR bridge. See details from Fisheries and Oceans Canada: <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/tidal-maree/fraser-eng.html>

Check out the regulations that apply to the region where you intend to fish.

Here are a few links to get started:

- i. Freshwater fishing regulations synopsis (other than for Pacific salmon) from BC Forests, Lands and Natural Resources Operations: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/fish/regulations/#Synopsis>
- ii. Freshwater fishing areas (notes salmon fishery openings and gear) from Fisheries and Oceans Canada: <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/fwmap-carte-eng.asp>
- iii. Tidal waters fishing areas (notes fishery openings and gear) from Fisheries and Oceans Canada: <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/map-carte-eng.asp>
- iv. Other helpful links found on the “Fishing with Rod” website: http://www.fishingwithrod.com/articles/introduction/fishing_regulations.html

c. Buy your fishing licence

If you are 16 years of age or older, you must have a *valid basic licence* to sport fish for any species of fish in non-tidal waters in BC. You must purchase appropriate supplementary licences and stamps.

If you are under 16 and a resident of BC, you may sport fish in non-tidal waters in BC without any licence or stamp, and must still abide by fishing regulations.

Here are some key websites and information on fishing licences:

- i. **Buy a freshwater (non-tidal waters) fishing licence online:**
<http://www.fishing.gov.bc.ca/>
 - How to buy a fishing e-licence online:
http://www.fishing.gov.bc.ca/docs/tutorial_for_anglers.pdf
- ii. **Other ways to buy a freshwater fishing licence:**
 - From one of the many fishing licence vendors throughout BC:
<http://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/lvs/>
 - At a Service BC office: <http://www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/locations/>
- iii. **Buy a tidal waters fishing licence:**
<https://www-ops2.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/nrls-sndpp/index-eng.cfm>

d. Know your fish species

Knowing how to identify the fish you catch is important. Certain species of fish are protected and must be released. Some different species look very similar to each other, so it is important to recognize distinguishing features, such as shape, size, colour, spotting pattern, mouth position, tail shape and fin pattern.

Check the regulations for details. Rule of thumb – *if you don't recognize it, release it!*

Here are some identification tips from the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC:

<http://www.gofishbc.com/fish-facts/freshwater-fish.aspx>

(2) Safety First!

Large numbers of anglers and tourists heading to fishing areas may result in an increase in crowding and safety risks. Here are some helpful reminders.

a. Designated fishing areas

Choose a fishing spot in a designated and safe fishing area. Undesignated river shores may be unstable and run the risk of washout.

- i. Check maps and on-site signage to find designated areas.

Here are two online resources:

- BC lakes map from the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC:
<http://www.gofishbc.com/where-to-fish/fishing-bc.aspx>
- Online map of Fraser River fishing between Chilliwack and Hope:*
<http://www.zeemaps.com/view?group=1016370&x=-121.694438&y=49.297281&z=7>

** This map is for general information purposes only, and sites listed are an approximation of river locations based on local angler knowledge between the areas of Chilliwack and Hope. Access points can change, so please respect official on-site signage and instructions.*

b. Boating safety

- i. Ensure everyone has a lifejacket

- ii. Make sure you have your documents with you, such as your proof of competency, personal identification and pleasure craft licence
- iii. Slow down in crowded areas and watch for drift and/or gill nets on the water
- iv. Do not consume alcohol while boating.
- v. For more boating safety information, see the Transport Canada Safe Boating Guide:
<http://www.tc.gc.ca/publications/EN/TP511/PDF%5CHR/TP511E.pdf>

c. Fire Safety

- i. It's forest fire season, so campfire safety is important in park and campground areas. See the BC Parks website:
<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/campfire-safety.html>

d. No Trespassing

- i. Use designated railway crossings to access fishing and boating areas. It's the law!
 - To report incidents contact:
 - CN hotline - 1-800-465-9239
 - CP hotline - 1-800-716-9132
- ii. Use designated parking areas. Do not park on the Trans-Canada Highway or Highway 7. It is dangerous to jaywalk on high-speed highways.
- iii. Be aware of private property and First Nations reserve lands. Crossing into these areas is trespassing without permission. Please be respectful of others' property.
- iv. This online map* is helpful for locating designated railway crossings and parking areas:
<http://www.zeemaps.com/view?group=1016370&x=-121.694438&y=49.297281&z=7>

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See suspicious or dangerous activities? Contact your local authorities:

- For emergencies, dial 9-1-1
- RCMP Community Policing Offices – 604-792-4611 (Chilliwack), 604-796-2211 (Agassiz), 604-869-7750 (Hope), 604-826-7161 (Mission)
- Fisheries Violations (Department of Fisheries and Oceans) – 1-800-465-4336
- Poachers and Polluters (Department of Fisheries and Oceans) - 1-877-952-7277

(3) Be a friendly fisher

With the likelihood of crowded fishing and boating areas during the 2014 sockeye run, respect, communication and consideration are important priorities for everyone. Here are some key points to keep in mind:

- Ensure you give your fellow anglers enough space.
- Don't move your boat across sections where other anglers or First Nations fishers are fishing. First Nations drift nets and gill nets are usually marked with a buoy or other marker.
- When fishing from shore, remember to pull in your line sufficiently to allow First Nations fishing boats with nets to pass safely and to avoid tangle-ups. Remember that boats with nets cannot stop or turn quickly.
- If you are arriving at a spot that is occupied by other anglers, either ask if you could use the same spot or proceed to another area.
- Always watch your surroundings before casting so hook injuries can be avoided and you don't cast over other anglers' fishing lines.
- When another angler is fighting a big fish, be sure to keep your fishing line out of the water so tangles and fish loss can be avoided.
- Respect your environment and ensure you leave you area cleaner than you found it. Do not leave fishing lines lying around and discard fish innards back into the river
- Be generous about helping others and demonstrate good river manners. Respect and patience are key to sharing the river.

For more on fishing etiquette, see Fishing with Rod's Fishing in BC – General Etiquette (http://www.fishingwithrod.com/articles/introduction/general_etiquettes.html) and the Peacemakers' River Manners video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZ8YStwrhy4>).

(4) Plan Your Trip Ahead

Whether you're going for a day, weekend or an extended fishing trip, planning ahead can lessen the stress of your visit. Looking for resources? See the online maps above.

a. Boat Launches

- i. Avoid the crowds at the most popular boat launches by considering others.

b. Campgrounds

- i. There is a shortage of campground areas between Mission and Hope that provide easy access to the Fraser River.

c. Toilets

- i. Many toilet facilities can be found in the regional and provincial parks and campsites.

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