

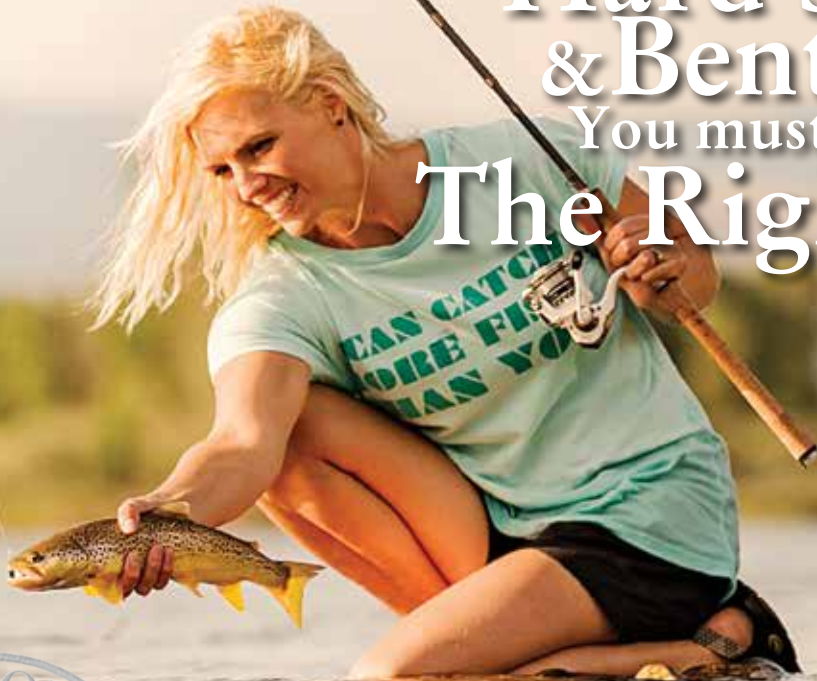
# Learn to Fish

A Beginner's Guide to Freshwater Fishing in BC



Freshwater Fisheries  
Society of BC

# Hard Strikes & Bent Rods You must be using The Right Lure.



*Bang Tail*

*Krocodile*

*Kwikfish*

*Hot Shot*

*A successful day on the water is the true test of what makes a lure a GREAT lure. With decades of proven success, Luhr-Jensen has the right formula. We utilize premium materials; proven actions; and quality finishes - to set the standard on the water.*

*So when you see the Luhr-Jensen name on our package,*

**Consider it the language of success.**

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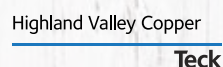
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Get off to a good start by choosing the right rod and reel combo – for you, and for the type of fishing you plan to do.

### Fishing Rods

The rod lets you cast, and its flexibility acts as a shock absorber. The right rod will bend enough to absorb tension from the line and stop it from breaking, but still be rigid enough for you to fight and land the fish.

A good choice for beginners is a light rod about 1.2 to two metres long (four to six feet). This is ideal for trout and other small fish, lightweight, and can handle smaller tackle very well.

### Fishing Reels

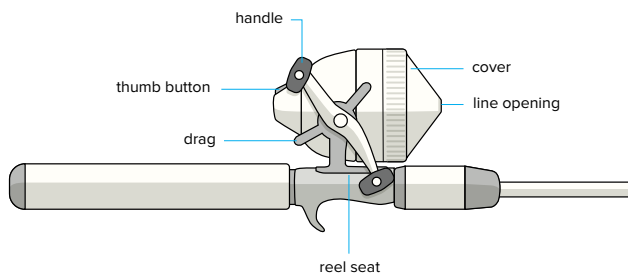
Fishing reels store line on a spool. Some have an adjustable friction device known as a “drag,” which maintains tension on the line as it’s pulled off the spool. Proper adjustment of the drag serves two important functions when a fish runs: first, it prevents the spool from over-spinning, releasing line in a controlled, orderly fashion without tangling into a mess (or “bird’s nest”); second, it provides a braking force that slowly tires the fish without breaking the line.

**Two basic rod and reel set-ups are spincasting and spinning. It’s important to match the rod with the proper reel.**

### Spincasting

A spincasting rod has the reel mounted on top of the rod, with the line guides facing upwards. On a matching spincasting reel, notice that the line is stored under a cover, and feeds from a small hole in front. These reels are very inexpensive and easy to cast, making them ideal for young children.

Take a look at our ‘*Casting and Retrieving*’ guide (page 8) for information on how to cast properly.

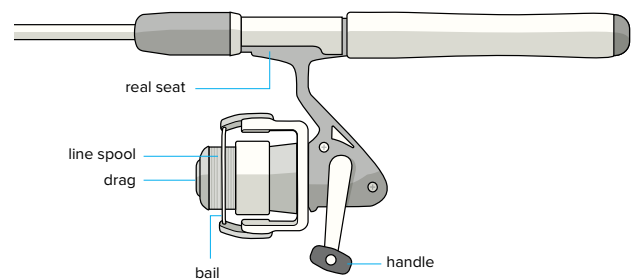


### Spinning

A spinning rod holds the reel underneath the rod, with the line guides pointing directly toward the ground. The line guides start larger than on a spincasting rod, and become smaller closer to the tip.

Spinning reels are a step up from spincasting reels, but still relatively inexpensive. Spinning reels use a metal bar (called a bail) to hold the line on the reel. As the reel handle is turned, the bail also turns, winding line neatly onto the spool.

Again, see our ‘*Casting and Retrieving*’ guide (page 8) to learn how to cast properly.



## Fishing line

A good quality fishing line is essential for your angling success. You can always get solid advice at your local tackle store, but here's a quick guide to the three main types of line.

**Monofilament:** The most common type of line, it's typically clear or green, but each colour is almost transparent under water. Monofilament is a great all-purpose fishing line that can be used anywhere.

**Fluorocarbon:** Primarily used for leaders, this line looks like monofilament, but is virtually invisible underwater.

**Fusion and braided lines:** With these lines, the materials are either braided or fused together to make a single strand of line. This makes for an extremely strong line with a very thin diameter, and very little stretch. Since these lines are highly visible, they are generally used only as main line.

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## UNDERSTANDING LINE TERMS

These are some of the things you might see on line packaging at your local fishing tackle store.

### Strength

Line strength is expressed in terms of "test," and is measured in pounds or kilograms. The higher the test number, the stronger the fishing line. This number will be clearly labelled on any line you buy, and it's important to use the right test line for your targeted species and fishing conditions. Most rods and reels are also labelled with a suitable line weight or test, and following what is recommended will help the equipment to function properly.

### Visibility

This simply means how visible the fishing line is to the angler (not the fish). The fishing line box will generally be labelled as high visibility, low visibility, or invisible.

### Size

This is the diameter of the line. It will be labelled clearly on the box, and is measured in either thousandths of an inch or hundredths of a millimetre.

*Monofilament Line*



*Fluorocarbon Line*



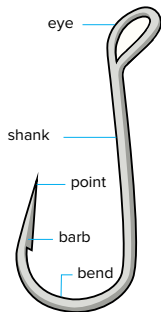
*Braided line*



Here's a simple guide to the basic tackle you'll need. Let's work backwards, starting from the hook. Remember that your local tackle store is a great place to ask for advice on what works best for fishing in your area.

### Hooks

Hooks come in many shapes and sizes, each designed with a different purpose in mind. All rivers, streams, and some lakes in B.C. require the use of single barbless hooks. If you buy a lure or spoon that has a treble hook you can easily replace the treble with a single hook, and pinch the barb flat on any hook with a pair of pliers.



### Bait

Bait is any food or substance used to attract the fish and tempt them to bite. Bait falls into two categories:

**Natural Baits:** worms, roe, and krill.



**Artificial Baits:** artificial substances that are scented or flavoured to attract fish to bite.



As your angling experience grows, you'll learn which baits are the best for catching each species. Some waters in B.C. prohibit the use of bait. For complete definitions of bait and the "Rules on Bait Usage," consult the *B.C. Freshwater Fishing Regulations Synopsis* (page 17) before you go fishing.

### Lures

**Spoons:** These wobble and dart in the water as you reel in. Their movement makes them look like wounded baitfish, which entices fish to bite. Depending on the water and type of fish you are targeting, there are hundreds of different designs, colours, and sizes of spoons to choose from.



**Spinners:** As a spinner moves through the water, its rotating blade at the front of the lure produces vibrations and flash which can trigger a fish's strike reflex. Again, there are many to choose from.



### QUICK TIP

Fish can be picky eaters. If you're not having much luck, try changing lures to increase your chance of catching fish.

## Leaders

A leader is a short piece of fishing line that goes between your main fishing line and your hook or lure. The material and breaking test strength of the leader will depend upon on the type of fishing you do. Usually, the leader's breaking test should be less than that of the main line, so that you only lose some leader if you break off on a snag or play a fish too hard. When fishing for larger fish, choose a heavier test leader; in clear water, you'll probably need a lighter, thinner leader.

## Weights

Weights (also known as sinkers) are usually made of lead or tungsten, and come in various shapes and sizes. Weights help you to cast further, and sink your bait or lure down to the fish.



## Swivels

Swivels are used to join your heavier main line to your lighter leader. Since each loop end of a swivel turns independently, it also helps stop your line from twisting, especially when using high-action wobbling lures like spoons. The two most common types are the barrel swivel (a closed loop at each end of a barrel), and a snap swivel (a quick-release snap on one end, and a closed loop on the other).



## Floats

Floats (also known as bobbers) help keep your hook off the bottom, and allow you to adjust the depth you're fishing. Easily moved up or down your line, floats let you place your bait, lure or fly right where the fish are swimming.

## KEEP YOUR TACKLE CLEAN AND ORGANIZED

A great way to keep everything you need close at hand is to invest in a tackle box. Although they come in many shapes and sizes, they all have sectioned trays to keep your weights, hooks, lures, and floats separated and untangled for easy access. Keep a small bag in your tackle box for trash or used fishing equipment. Protect wildlife and leave a clean environment – never leave hooks, lines, or refuse behind.



### Other tackle box essentials:

- Needle-nose pliers (to help remove hooks)
- A fish rag or cloth
- Mechanical scales (for weighing those big specimens)
- Measuring tape
- Nail clippers (great for snipping line)
- Bait container
- Small screwdriver (for repairing or tightening your reel)
- Plastic holder for your fishing licence
- Sharp filleting knife (for cleaning fish that you catch)
- Adhesive bandages, and a small tube of antiseptic cream, in case of cuts
- Extra fishing line and leader material
- Freshwater Fishing Regulations Synopsis

### QUICK TIP

*Depending on the season, it's also a great idea to pack sunscreen, insect repellent, sunglasses, a baseball cap, and extra clothes for changing weather conditions. If it's a family day out, remember the camera!*

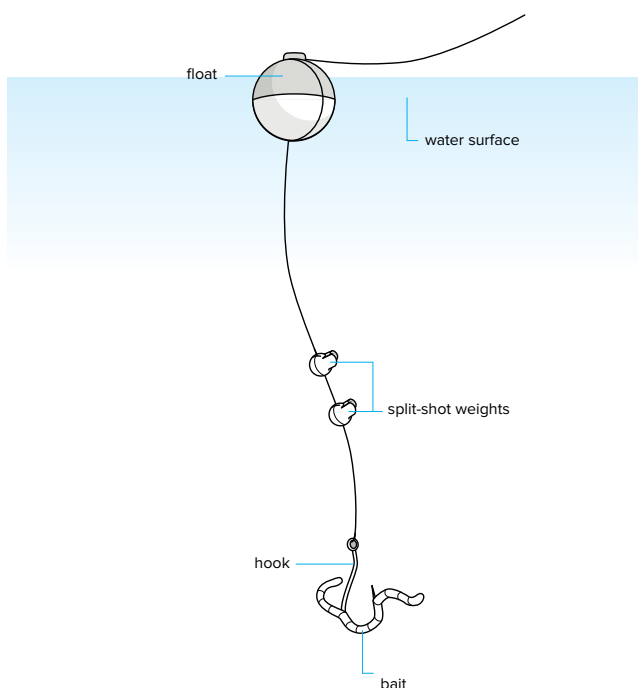
Here are some simple and effective ways to set up your equipment for different types of fish and water conditions.

### Float fishing

This is a popular method for fishing shallow water, or in the spring and fall when fish are actively feeding in the middle or top of the water column. With this technique, natural or scented artificial bait is suspended at a chosen depth in the water using a fishing float. Use split-shot weights to sink the bait below the float. When a fish takes the bait, the float is pulled under, alerting the angler. Adjusting the distance from the float to the hook and bait allows you to place your lure at the depth where the fish are.

#### HOW TO SET UP:

1. Pass your line through each of the guides on your rod.
2. Clip or slide a float onto your line. The amount of line below the float will depend on the depth you want to fish.
3. Tie your hook directly to the main line with an improved clinch knot (see next page), or attach your hook – tied to a short leader – to a swivel attached to the mainline.
4. Attach split-shot weights to the line at least 30 centimetres (one foot) above the hook. Add enough weight so that the float sits upright and low in the water.

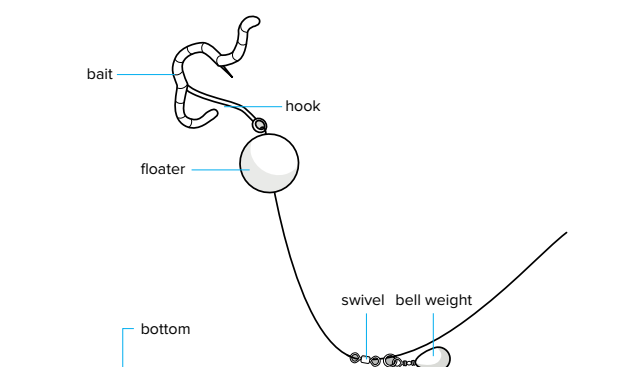


### Bottom fishing

Use this method for fishing deeper water during warm summer months, when fish are generally found near the bottom, or when targeting bottom-feeding fish like carp. Your weight will sit on the bottom. Try using a buoyant, scented artificial bait that floats just above the bottom, where it will be more visible to fish. Cast the weight and bait. After the weight sinks to the bottom, wind in any slack line until there is a taut connection between the weight and rod. Be sure to use enough weight to anchor the bait on the bottom.

#### HOW TO SET UP:

1. Pass your line through each of the guides on your rod.
2. Attach a sliding weight so that it slides freely on the main line.
3. Attach a hook and leader set-up to a swivel, then attach that to the main line below the sliding weight. Your leader should be 50 to 60 centimetres (1.5 to two feet) in length.
4. Cast and test to see if the weight of the sinker will hold your bait in place near the bottom. If not, add more weight.



#### QUICK TIP

*Knot-tying can be tricky, especially if you have cold fingers! Time spent tying knots while at the water also means you're not fishing! To maximize your fishing time, pre-tie extra leaders onto several hooks or lures, and pack them along with you. Many tackle companies offer handy and inexpensive leader organizers.*



## Spoon- or spinner-fishing

Lures such as spoons or spinners tempt the fish to bite a moving target. Cast your lure, and allow it to sink to your desired depth. Keep your rod tip pointed down at the water, and retrieve the lure by reeling it in. The depth you are fishing will depend upon how long you allow the lure to sink, the weight of the lure, and the speed with which you retrieve it. Fish can be found in all parts of the water column; by varying your retrieval speed and fishing depth, you'll cover all sections of the water, and improve your chances of a strike.

### HOW TO SET UP:

1. Pass your line through each of the guides on your rod.
2. Use an improved clinch knot (see this page) to attach a swivel to the end of your mainline.
3. Attach a 50- to 60-centimetre leader to the swivel, and then tie on your chosen spoon or spinner.
4. Adding weight just above the swivel will allow you to fish deeper in the water column.

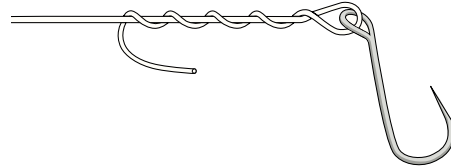
### QUICK TIP

*If you see fish chasing your lure but not striking, stop winding, and allow your lure to flutter down for a moment or two – to resemble wounded prey – before reeling in again. This might goad a fish into striking what looks like an easy meal before it escapes.*

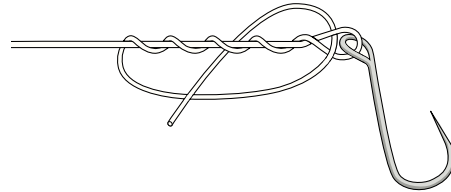
## The Improved Clinch Knot

A good knot for tying lines to swivels, lures and hooks.

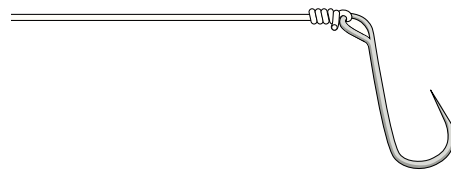
**STEP 1:** Pass the tag end of the line through the eye of the hook or swivel, allowing 10 centimetres (four inches) of line beyond the eye to complete the knot. Double the line back and make five to seven coils around the line going back to the rod.



**STEP 2:** Hold the coils in place by pinching with your thumb and forefinger. Avoid pinching the eye of the tackle or the first loop created by the coils. With the opposite hand, thread the end of the line through the first loop over the eye, and then back through the large loop created by this action.



**STEP 3:** Before tightening, moisten the knot with some water or a little saliva. Hold the tag end and the line going back to the rod, and simultaneously pull slowly and smoothly. The coils will form tight spirals. Use your fingers to slide the spirals back against the eye of the terminal tackle, making sure that the spirals are not overlapping each other. Give a final, smooth pull to securely tighten the knot, and then clip the excess tag end.

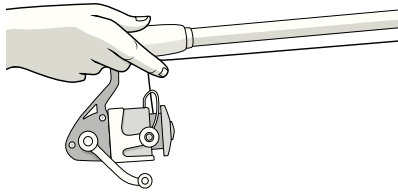


### QUICK TIP

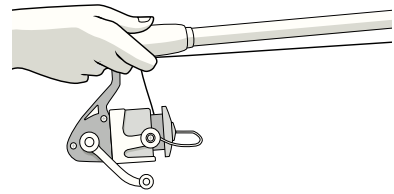
*Moistening the line before completing your knot prevents the friction of tightening from burning the line and weakening it.*

Casting correctly allows you to explore different areas of the water where fish might be lurking. With a little practice you'll soon be able to control your casting and place your bait or lure right where you want.

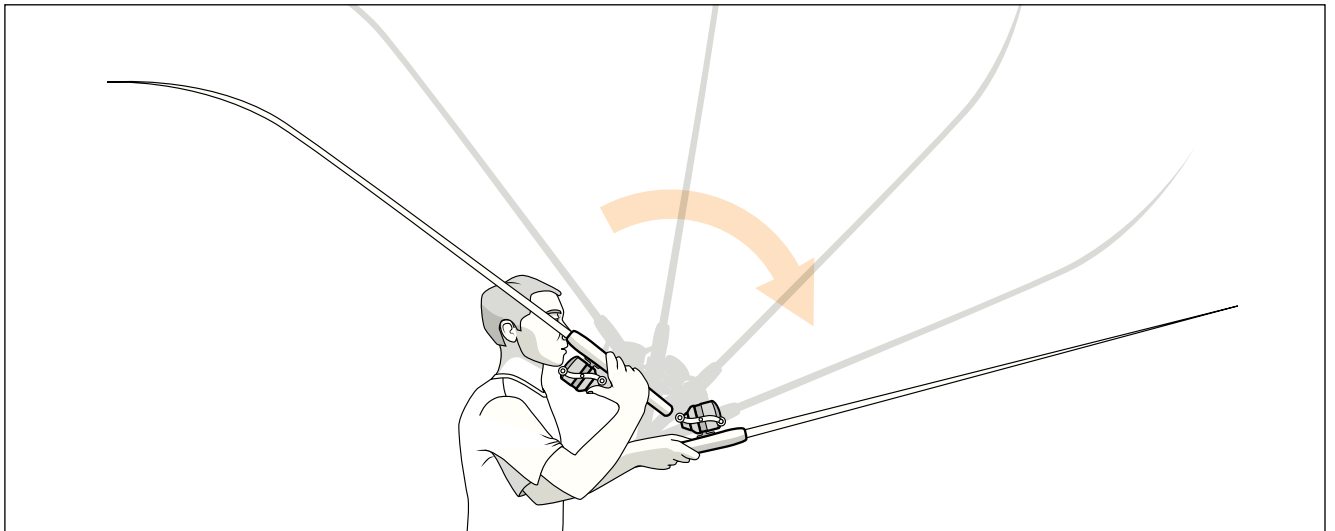
#### HOW TO CAST A SPINNING REEL:



**STEP 1:** Hold the rod handle with your casting hand, with the guides and reel pointing towards the ground. Wind in your line until you have about 15 centimetres (six inches) between the tip of your rod and your terminal tackle (float or lure). The rod should be pointing upwards slightly from the ground. Look behind you to ensure that no one is in your way.



**STEP 2:** Hold the line against the rod handle with the tip of the index finger of your casting hand, and then use your other hand to flip the bail over until it 'locks' in the open position. The reel is now ready for casting.



**STEP 3:** Smoothly bend your arm at the elbow, and raise your hand holding the rod. When the rod is brought past your head, it will be bent backwards by the motion and weight of your tackle. At this point (about the "ten o'clock" position), without hesitating, move your forearm forward with a slight wrist movement similar to throwing a ball overhand, and gently sweep the rod forward in one smooth motion.

**STEP 4:** As the rod moves forward to about the "2 o'clock" position, release the line from under your index finger, allowing the line to go free. When your terminal tackle hits the water, wind the reel handle about one turn; the spring-loaded bail will unlock and flip over on its own, allowing you to continue rewinding your line onto the reel spool. Reel your line taut between your rod tip and the tackle.



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### HOW TO CAST A SPINCASTING REEL:

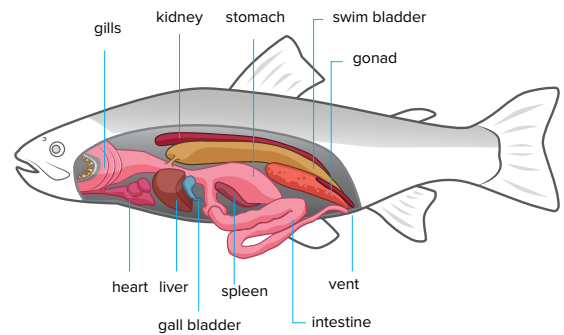
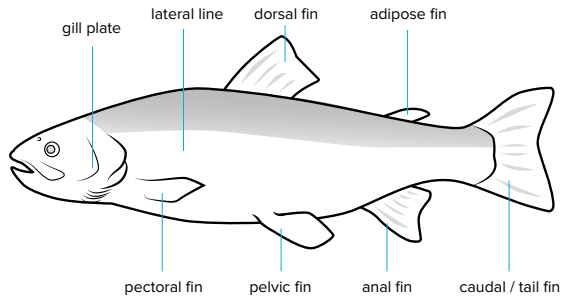
To prepare for casting with a spincasting reel, all you have to do is press and hold down the large button on the top of the reel with your thumb. Follow the procedures in Step 3 and Step 4 for casting a spinning reel, except that when the rod reaches the “2 o’clock” position of the forward cast, simply release your thumb’s pressure on the big button for the line to go free. When the terminal tackle hits the water, turn the reel handle until you hear a “click,” and then your line can be rewound onto the reel spool.

### QUICK TIP

*Practice your casting in an area that is open and clear of both people and objects in front of and behind you. Also, be safe when practicing by using only a weight, or removing the hook from your lure before casting. Be sure to use enough weight when practicing.*

The Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC manages six hatcheries, from which we stock over 800 lakes around B.C.

### BASIC BIOLOGY



### FISH IDENTIFICATION

Below are the most common fresh water fish targeted by anglers in B.C.



#### RAINBOW TROUT

*Kamloops Trout*

This is B.C.'s most common freshwater sport fish. Powerful and aggressive, rainbow trout are known for jumping clear of the water when hooked.



#### COASTAL CUTTHROAT TROUT

*Cutthroat Trout, Sea-run Trout*

A fast and aggressive fish, the coastal cutthroat feeds on other fish for a large part of its diet. Travelling in schools, they can provide fast and furious fishing.



#### EASTERN BROOK CHAR

*Speckled Trout, Brookie, Speckled Char*

When hooked, brook char will dive deep, often heading for the bottom as they pull the line from your reel. These fish rarely jump, but they always put up an exciting fight.



#### WESTSLOPE CUTTHROAT TROUT

*Cutthroat Trout*

Found in some of eastern B.C.'s high-elevation lakes and rivers and streams of the East Kootenay, these fish have a reputation for aggressively attacking lures and flies.



#### KOKANEE

*Land-Locked Sockeye*

A hard-fighting fish, kokanee are actually sockeye salmon that spend their entire lives in fresh water. Kokanee will eagerly take flies and lures – especially during the summer months.



#### WHITE STURGEON

Listed as a species at-risk in B.C., the white sturgeon is a catch-and-release conservation fishery, and only on portions of the Fraser River. As part of the recovery program for this species, the Freshwater Fisheries Society raises juvenile sturgeon at its Kootenay and Nechako hatcheries.

 To learn more about the fish we release and which lakes and streams we stock, visit [gofishbc.com](http://gofishbc.com)

Many species not traditionally recognized as sport fish are abundant and easy to catch. Here's a quick guide to some other fish that you can catch – and where to look for them.



**PEAMOUTH CHUB** – You can catch peamouth chub from the lakeshore, riverbanks, or piers. Look for rock piles, wood, bays, and any backwaters that may shelter them. During the summer months, peamouth chub can be found in the shallow, weedy areas of rivers, streams, and lakes.



**CARP** – Carp feed on or near the bottom, searching for the food by using their barbels. You'll find them in sloughs, small lakes, shallow bays of large lakes, and slow-moving streams with abundant aquatic vegetation and sandy to muddy bottoms. These fish are common, and can be easily caught using basic still-fishing techniques.



**NORTHERN PIKEMINNOW** – This species can be found in most of B.C.'s major river systems, and in many lakes throughout the province. Although not generally identified as a sport fish, they will eagerly take flies, lures, and bait. These fish are great fighters, and can be easily caught from shore, docks, or piers.



**SUCKERS** – The largescale and common sucker are the most plentiful of this species in B.C. The Salish sucker, which lives only in the lower Fraser Valley, is a species at risk (this is an example of why it is important to know your fish). Suckers are characterized by round mouths surrounded by fleshy, protruding lips, which they use to suck up their food.

While fishing, you might catch any of the following non-native species. These fish often compete with native fish species for resources, impacting resident fish stocks. Many B.C. water-bodies contain non-native fish which have been illegally stocked.



**SMALLMOUTH BASS** – Averaging 20 to 40 centimetres (eight to 16 inches) long, these hard-hitting fish put up a great battle when hooked. Look for shallow waters with structures like reeds, logs, and rocks. Bass are most aggressive during spawning, which occurs from late May through to July.



**PUMPKINSEED SUNFISH** – The pumpkinseed sunfish is a native of southeastern Canada. You can find the pumpkinseed in small lakes and ponds, and in the shallow, weedy bays of larger lakes. The pumpkinseed prefers clear water and the cover of submerged vegetation. It is common to find these fish in large schools.



**YELLOW PERCH** – When fishing for yellow perch in lakes, look for waters well-covered with reeds and weeds. Fishing near artificial structures like floating docks and piers can also be extremely productive. Yellow perch average 15 to 20 centimetres (six to eight inches) in length.



# Where, When, and How to Catch Fish

Part of the excitement of fishing is planning where and when to go, and what to fish for. This section will help you understand where in lakes and rivers to angle for the various fish species found in B.C., the best times to fish, and some suggestions of what to use to catch them.

## QUICK TIP

*Determining a fish's food source is the key to angling success! For example, are the fish eating insects, other fish, or plants? Are they feeding near the surface, or close to the bottom? Once you know, you can choose the tackle that best imitates their favourite food, and decide where in the water column you should put your lure or bait.*

## FINDING FISH IN LAKES

The most productive, or nutrient-rich, part of a lake is the shoal area. These shallows, home to sunlight-dependent aquatic plants and insects, make them a “grocery store” for fish. Fish will often be found cruising along the drop-offs at the edge of a shoal. Look for fish surfacing or jumping as clues to whether this is a good place to start fishing.

### Rainbow Trout and Brook Char

As a rule, the best seasons to fish for trout are the spring and fall, when water temperatures are moderate. Although trout and char can be caught at any time during the day, morning and evening are best: fish feed most actively then. These fish can be caught still-fishing with bait or by casting and retrieving a small lure or fly (page 6). If you're fishing from a boat, trolling a lure or a fly is a good method, because you can cover a large area in search of fish. When setting up your tackle, remember that trout and char are generally found in the mid- or top-water area.

## QUICK TIP

*The Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC stocks over 800 lakes and rivers each year. Many lakes are stocked with 'catchables' – trout that are large enough to be caught as soon as they are stocked. Get up-to-date stocking information at [www.gofishbc.com](http://www.gofishbc.com)*

### Kokanee

These fish prefer deeper water with cooler temperatures, usually less than 10°C. Kokanee are generally found in the open areas of a lake, at depths of five to 10 metres (15 to 30 feet), where they search for their primary food source: a very small organism called plankton. The best way to fish kokanee is from a boat, slowly trolling a set-up like the one pictured below. These fish are renowned for having a small soft mouth, so be careful when setting the hook and

playing the fish, or you may pull or tear the hook right out. Remember that kokanee like to “school,” or travel in a group; if you catch one, try trolling through the same area again.

### Sunfish (Bass, Crappie, Pumpkinseed)

These warm-water species are usually found in shallow water containing weed beds, logs, stumps, or rock piles. Sunfish hang around these structures because they are also home to insects and small fish, their main food sources. Both jigs and worms, fished with a float, are good choices to catch sunfish. Remember, these fish are aggressive feeders; if you don't get a bite in five to 10 minutes, try another spot.

## FINDING FISH IN RIVERS

### Rainbow Trout, Cutthroat Trout, Salmon, and Whitefish

In flowing water, these fish prefer pools or runs created below boulders or jams of woody debris which deflect or slow the current, creating back-eddies and backwaters. Fish (trout in particular) like to hold in these productive spots, since they need only use minimal energy while waiting for their next meal to be swept downstream. Mornings and evenings are the best times to fish for these species. Casting lures, or using a float and bait (like worms or fish eggs), are good techniques in these waters. Keep in mind that even though rivers are generally not as deep as lakes, you'll probably need a little extra weight on your line to offset the pull of the current and get your baits or lures down to within 30 centimetres (one foot) of the bottom, where the fish like to hold.

### Suckers, Northern Pikeminnow, and Chub

These species can be targeted year 'round in the warmer regions of B.C. In rivers, they tend to favour slower water, and are commonly found in backwaters or sloughs. Since these fish are usually located on or close to the bottom, still-fishing with a worm can be very productive. All of the fish in this group are relatively easy to catch, and can be caught throughout the day.

## QUICK TIP

*In streams, fish often lie just off the edge of the main current or behind bottom structure (like boulders), where it's easier for them to swim. While almost hidden, and feeling protected by the cover of the overhead current, they can easily dart out to snatch a meal as it drifts by.*





# Proper Fish Handling

Whether you plan to keep (harvest) your fish, or return it to the water (catch-and-release), make sure you know how to handle it properly.

## Catching-and-releasing

If you're planning to practice catch-and-release, it's vital that you don't injure the fish by mishandling it. Always follow these rules:

- Play and land the fish as quickly as possible.
- Try to keep the fish in the water while removing the hook; if you can't, return the fish to the water as quickly as possible.
- If you use a landing net, buy a rubber, soft nylon, or cotton net designed to protect the fish's sensitive scales.
- If you must handle the fish, wet your hands first, and be as gentle as possible; try not to squeeze.
- Use barbless hooks, and be prepared to cut your leader if the hook has been swallowed too deeply. The hook will dissolve over time.
- Revive an exhausted fish by holding it upright in the water until it swims away on its own. Never just throw a fish back into the water.

## Harvesting your catch

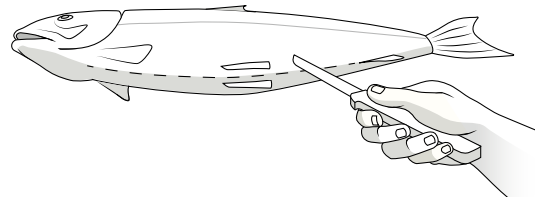
Fish are living creatures, and should always be treated humanely. Also, remember that responsible anglers never harvest more fish than they need. If you plan on keeping your catch, here are some useful tips.

### WHEN YOU'RE AT THE WATER

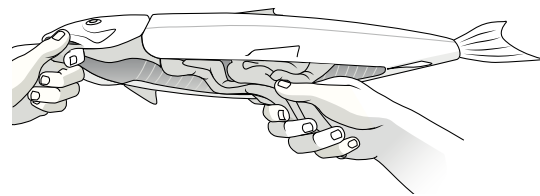
1. Decide what to do with a fish immediately after catching it. In B.C., you are not allowed to retain fish in live wells. All fish that are not legally harvested must be released immediately.
2. Clean fish promptly. Digestive enzymes can quickly spoil the flesh, making it taste bad. To comply with the law, you must leave the head, tail, and all fins on your catch until you get it home.
3. Use clean water or premoistened wipes to clean your knife frequently and avoid transferring bacteria into the flesh.
4. Once cleaned, wipe your fish with a cloth or paper towel, put it in a sealable storage bag, and store it in a cool place; a cooler full of ice is best. Do not put your catch in a plastic bag unless you can store it in a cool place; in warm temperatures, the sealed environment will quickly heat up and break down tissue.

### CLEANING YOUR CATCH

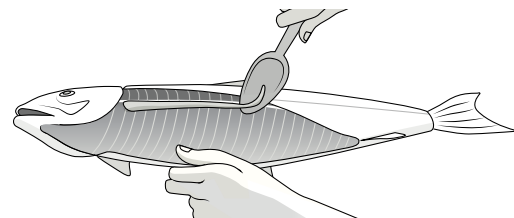
- Using a sharp knife, insert the tip of the blade into the vent, and cut through the belly all the way to the gills.



- Remove the guts.



- Scrape out the reddish-brown kidney, which lies along the backbone, with a small spoon.



### WHEN YOU GET YOUR CATCH HOME

1. As you cut up your catch, clean your knife between cuts to avoid contaminating the fish. Wash your knife, hands, and cutting boards often with warm, soapy water, and then rinse thoroughly.
2. Cut and package your fish into meal-sized portions, then freeze or refrigerate promptly.
3. Fish you don't plan to freeze should be stored in the refrigerator in a covered container, and used within two days.
4. Keep refrigerated raw fish separated from cooked to prevent cross-contamination.
5. Thaw frozen fish in the refrigerator, under cold running water, or in the microwave, and use immediately.

**Good anglers respect the environment and their quarry, and realize that we all have a duty to protect both. You can become a better angler by understanding and following the Angler's Code of Ethics:**

1. Support Conservation Efforts. Give your support to initiatives that protect our environment and the creatures that depend on it. Be a helper, not just a watcher.
2. Never harvest more fish than you can use – even if the limit allows.
3. Fight Pollution. Pack out all your trash, recycle, and remove any trash that you find – especially used fishing line.
4. Promote Safe Angling and Boating. Enjoy your boating and fishing, but don't take risks. Set an example by refusing to go along with others that do.
5. Follow Fishing and Boating Regulations. The regulations are there for a reason: it's in everyone's best interest to follow them properly.
6. Respect the Rights of Other Anglers. Treat other anglers with the courtesy and respect that you would expect from them. Don't crowd in on someone else's fishing spot. Don't make lots of noise, or throw things into the water to disturb the fish.
7. Respect the Rights of Property Owners. Trespassing to access a fishing location gives all anglers a bad name. Fish only where permitted.
8. Share Knowledge and Skills. Help other anglers to improve their skills and enjoy their fishing; share your tips.
9. Promote Ethical Sport Fishing. Follow this code of ethics, and help others to understand and follow it too. Be a safe, knowledgeable, and considerate angler.



### Clean, Drain, Dry

To help prevent the introduction of Zebra and Quagga mussels and other aquatic invasive species such as Eurasian Watermilfoil, anglers should follow the “**Clean, Dry, Drain**” protocol:

- **Clean:** After a boat is pulled from the water, thoroughly clean all plants, animals, and mud from the boat, motor, trailer, and other equipment
- **Drain:** Drain onto the ground all water from the boat (bilges, engine compartments, hull, intakes, etc.) and from any containers that can hold water, including bait containers, live wells, and ballast.
- **Dry:** Allow all items to dry completely before transporting the boat and equipment to another water body.

### How To Report Aquatic Invasive Species:

You can report invasive species by visiting [www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species](http://www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species) or using the “Report Invasives BC” App on your smartphone.

If you have a boat or equipment that you suspect may contain invasive mussels or if you see a contaminated boat please contact the Conservation Officer Service Hot-line: 1-877-952-7277 (RAPP)



# Freshwater Fishing Licence & Regulations

Regulations exist to protect B.C.'s fish and wildlife, and the environment we all share. These regulations change from time to time to reflect changes in the environment. It is every angler's responsibility (not to mention the law) to read, understand, and follow the fishing regulations, including:

- Provincial regulations
- Regional regulations
- Water-specific regulations
- In-season regulation changes



Fortunately, you'll find everything you need to know about the regulations (plus lots of useful angling information) in one place: **The British Columbia Freshwater Fishing Regulations Synopsis**. Pick up a printed copy of the Synopsis at your local tackle store or Service B.C. office, or find it online at: [www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/fish](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/fish)

**Note:** *Since the Synopsis is only printed every two years, be sure to check the online version for any in-season changes.*

*If fishing for Pacific salmon in fresh or salt water, you need to refer to the regulations managed by the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans at: [www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/recfish](http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/recfish)*



## Need more information? Start here.

The Freshwater Fisheries Society's website, [gofishbc.com](http://gofishbc.com), is a great source of information for both beginners and expert anglers, from fishing tips to lake-by-lake stocking reports. For even more up-to-the-minute news, sign up for our free e-newsletter, and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

The Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC was created in 2003 as North America's only private, non-profit fisheries service funded by licence revenues. We manage six freshwater fish hatcheries (which stock over 800 lakes and streams each year), help restore fish species at risk, and deliver programs to educate anglers – including *Learn to Fish*.

**Website address:** [gofishbc.com](http://gofishbc.com)       [facebook.com/gofishbc](https://facebook.com/gofishbc)  
**Tel:** 250.414.4200       [@gofishbc](https://instagram.com/gofishbc)  
**Toll Free:** 1.888.601.4200  
**Email:** [fish@gofishbc.com](mailto:fish@gofishbc.com)       [@Go\\_Fish\\_BC](https://twitter.com/Go_Fish_BC) #gofishbc

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### Provincial Fish and Wildlife Regional Offices

To pick up your copy of the B.C. Freshwater Fishing Regulations Synopsis or ask about in-season changes to the regulations, visit or phone the office closest to you.

NANAIMO	2080A Labieux Road, V9T 6J9 250-751-3100
SURREY	10428-153rd Street, V3R 1E1 604-586-4400
KAMLOOPS	1259 Dalhousie Drive, V2C 5Z5 250-371-6200
NELSON	Suite 401-333 Victoria Street, V1L 4K3 250-354-6333
CRANBROOK	205 Industrial Road G, V1C 7G5 250-489-8540
WILLIAMS LAKE	400-640 Borland Street, V2G 4T1 250-398-4530
SMITHERS	Bag 5000, 3726 Alfred Street, V0J 2N0 250-847-7303
PRINCE GEORGE	4051-18th Avenue, V2N 1B3 250-565-6135
FORT ST. JOHN	Rm 400, 10003-110th Avenue, V1J 6M7 250-787-3411
PENTICTON	102 Industrial Place, V1J 6M2 250-490-8200

### Sport Fishing Institute of British Columbia (SFI)

SFI can provide valuable information about fishing B.C.'s tidal waters, including all-inclusive vacation packages to saltwater fishing resorts, and information on charters and guided trips.

**Website address:** [sportfishing.bc.ca](http://sportfishing.bc.ca)  
**Tel:** 604.270.3439  
**Email:** [info@sportfishing.bc.ca](mailto:info@sportfishing.bc.ca)

### B.C. Fishing Resorts and Outfitters Association (BCFROA)

BCFROA is a great source of information on freshwater fishing outfitters, resorts, guides, vacation packages, and more.

**Website address:** [bcfroa.ca](http://bcfroa.ca)  
**Tel:** 250-374-6836  
**Toll Free:** 1-866-374-6836  
**Email:** [bcfroa@telus.net](mailto:bcfroa@telus.net)

### Fishing BC

The Fishing BC website features fishing stories and destinations, trip ideas and licence information. This is the go-to site for fishing inspiration.

**Website address:** [fishingbc.com](http://fishingbc.com)

### BC Family Fishing Weekend

Information on the annual BC Family Fishing Weekend, when Canadian families can fish for free in most freshwater lakes and non-tidal streams in B.C.

**Website address:** [bcfamilyfishing.com](http://bcfamilyfishing.com)



## We help make fishing even better.

When you buy a fishing licence, you help us stock more than 800 lakes a year and create more fishing spots close to home. You also help fund important research, conservation and education programs. To learn more and purchase your licence visit [gofishbc.com](http://gofishbc.com)



**Freshwater Fisheries  
Society of BC**

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