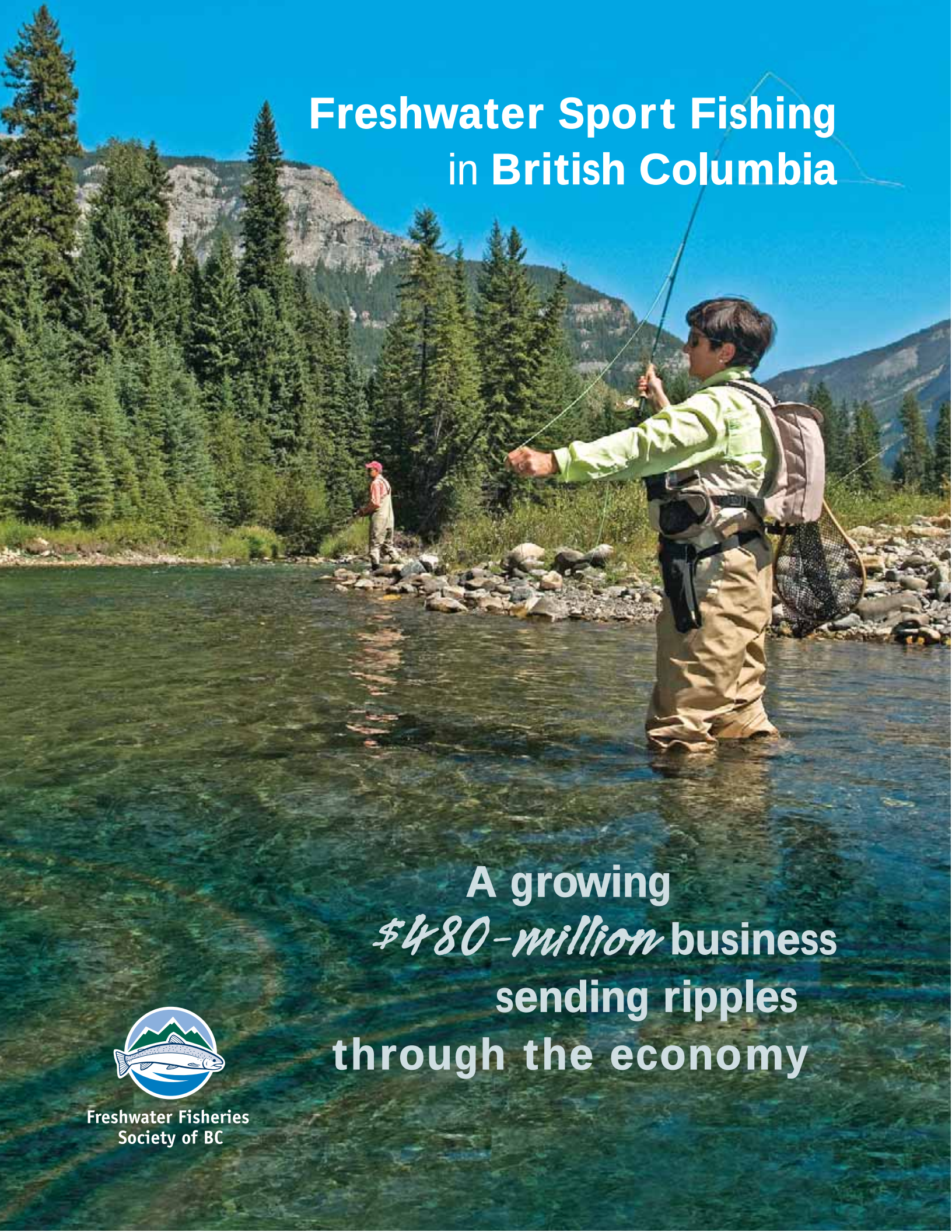


Freshwater Sport Fishing in British Columbia

A growing *$480-million* business sending ripples through the economy

Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC

Our Natural Advantages

A WORLD-CLASS RESOURCE

- B.C. has 200,000 lakes and 750,000 km of streams, home to outstanding flora and fauna
- 24 diverse species of freshwater game fish, including renowned fisheries for rainbow trout, cutthroat, steelhead, salmon and sturgeon
- Advanced fish culture and stocking programs that support half of the recreational fishing on B.C. lakes
- Pristine wilderness providing salmon and steelhead angling that is second to none
- Year-round fishing opportunities for everyone, from the novice to the elite angler

"British Columbians have access to an incredible variety of exceptional freshwater angling experiences. In the global marketplace, our trout and steelhead fisheries attract anglers wanting the thrill of great sport fishing in some of the most dramatic natural surroundings on earth. We all share a commitment to protect these outdoor experiences, and the fishery resource they depend on, far into the future."

Don Peterson,
President,
Freshwater Fisheries
Society of BC

For generations, British Columbians have turned to recreational fishing for tranquil moments and to connect with family, friends and the natural world.

B.C. enjoys an unparalleled natural setting for fishing and other outdoor activities. Our spectacular scenery draws visitors from around the globe and contributes to a richly varied angling experience–whether it's a family boat cruise in search of pan-sized kokanee on a popular interior lake or a lone angler casting for trophy steelhead on a remote northern river.

Every part of our province offers its own compelling blend of landscape, freshwater game fish and angling experience. B.C. is naturally an angler's paradise.

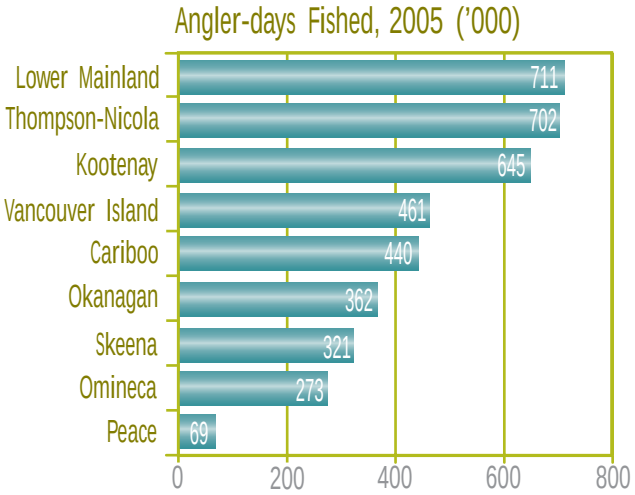
But more than just an outdoor thrill or leisure pastime, sport fishing is also a powerful economic engine and a key driver for conservation. As anglers spend money, the effects of their expenditures ripple through the local and provincial economies. By paying licence fees, these anglers also make a valuable investment that sustains sport fishing and conserves fish and aquatic habitats across B.C.

We have
breathtaking scenery
and amazingly
diverse freshwater fishing

The freshwater fishery is closely woven into the social, cultural and economic fabric of our rural communities. From its natural endowment, B.C. has built an impressive network of parks, campgrounds and trails. There are inherent links between this nature-based infrastructure and outdoor activities such as angling, hiking, kayaking and wildlife viewing that can be developed for everyone's benefit.

Our cities, as well, harbour untapped potential for expansion of sport fishing. The growing urban population can be a source of new anglers, including women, young people and cultural groups unfamiliar with angling. Fishing opportunities close to home and around our urban neighbourhoods appeal to families looking for healthy, economical and "greener" recreation choices.

With dedication and commitment, we can fully capitalize on these advantages to the benefit of British Columbians in communities throughout the province.



Anglers are active in every region of B.C.

Angling is about more than catching fish.

* 2006 survey of B.C. resident anglers

Angling opportunities abound in our **rural** *and* **urban areas**

An Economic Engine

WHAT ANGLERS SPEND

- 270,000 anglers spent $480 million on equipment, travel, accommodation and other items in 2005
- One person fishing can spend anywhere between $25 (close to home) and $1,500 (remote higher-end fishing) a day
- B.C. anglers spent seven times more on new fishing gear and boats than downhill skiers did for all equipment purchases in 2005
- $480 million in direct angler expenditures is roughly equivalent to:
  - 1.8 times cruise ship passenger spending within B.C.
  - What visitors spend each year in the Province's parks
  - Over 35 per cent of B.C. golfing expenditures

"We cater almost exclusively to U.S. clients who spend an average $7,000 flying to Williams Lake for their seven-day fly fishing adventure at our lodge, plus one or two days on either end in Vancouver. Our business and the fabulous trout fishery we have at our fingertips bring over $1 million to the B.C. economy, and that's only a fraction of the revenue this fishery is responsible for."

Skeed Borkowski,
Owner,
Northern Lights Lodge

When you picture a family fishing, a huge industry doesn't leap to mind. Yet this simple activity is part of an economic engine that powers thousands of B.C. businesses, generating hundreds of millions of dollars each year in goods and services.

Imagine a weekend fishing trip for office worker Jeff Knight and his teenage daughter Erin. On Friday, Jeff goes online and buys a freshwater fishing licence. Early the next morning, he and Erin hitch their new boat to the truck. On the way to a favourite fishing spot, they fuel up at a gas station. Jeff visits a nearby tackle shop to get gear and find out what fish are biting on that day, while Erin picks up groceries next door.

Arriving at the lake, they spend the day fishing for rainbow trout. Later, they dine out and stay the night in a local motel.

Jeff and Erin may not know it, but their fishing dollars are rippling through the economy, just like the rings on a lake's surface after a trout jumps.

$480 million
in angler expenditures
and *7,500 direct jobs*

B.C. Economic Impacts from Freshwater Sport Fishing, 2005

		Vancouver Island	Lower Mainland	Thompson-Nicola	Kootenay	Cariboo
ACTIVITY	Active anglers* '000	32.2	49.5	64.9	47.3	45.9
	Angler-days '000	461	711	702	645	440
	Total catch '000 fish	829	1096	1297	1800	982
PROVINCIAL IMPACTS	Angler expenditures $millions	39.6	94.0	84.8	58.7	75.5
	Gross domestic product (GDP) $millions	18.8	32.5	41.3	27.4	29.8
	Wages and benefits $millions	10.7	18.6	23.6	15.6	17.1
	Employment person-years	345	600	760	505	550
	Taxes paid $millions	11.3	19.5	24.1	16.5	17.7

* Anglers may fish more than one region.

The gas station, tackle shop, motel and other businesses in turn purchase goods and services from their suppliers. Workers in all of these industries spend their earnings on more commodities. At each step along the way, governments receive tax revenues that help to fund public services.

This economic rippling or "multiplier effect" builds on the direct impact of the initial angling expenditures. While the impacts may seem small from one family fishing for a single day, over 270,000 anglers fishing almost four million days means big business to the provincial and local economies.

Freshwater fishing is not just a relaxing day of family enjoyment spent outdoors. For B.C., it is a sustainable economic engine, with the potential to contribute even more in the future.

cont'd from p. 4

	Skeena	Omineca	Peace	Okanagan	Total
Active anglers '000	26.3	25.1	6.1	35.4	270.8
Angler-days '000	321	273	69	362	3984
Total catch '000 fish	624	711	152	702	8193

ACTIVITY

Angler expenditures $millions	43.2	32.4	7.1	44.6	479.9
Gross domestic product (GDP) $millions	21.1	15.0	3.0	21.5	210.4
Wages and benefits $millions	12.1	8.6	1.7	12.2	120.2
Employment person-years	390	275	55	395	3875
Taxes paid $millions	12.7	8.9	1.8	12.6	125.1

PROVINCIAL IMPACTS

HOW THE PROVINCE BENEFITS

- $210 million in GDP from angler spending and its multiplier effect
- $120 million in total wages and benefits for B.C. workers
- About 7,500 jobs or 2,500 person-years of employment directly related to angling
- Total employment, including the multiplier effect, of 3,875 person-years
- $53 million in provincial tax revenues and $72 million in federal revenues
- Every $1 of angler spending contributes 11 cents to the provincial Treasury and 15 cents to the federal government

"The importance of outdoor recreation and especially the sport fishery to tourism in our region is obvious. For example, along our famous 'Fishing Highways' 24 and 20, lakeside resorts and restaurants cater to angling enthusiasts and families often also take advantage of boating, hiking, horseback riding and other local activities."

Scott Kovatch,
CEO,
Cariboo Chilcotin
Coast Tourism Association

Building Communities

BUSINESSES SUPPORTED BY FISHING

- The fishing industry consists of over 1,000 businesses that cater directly to anglers, including:
  - Tackle shops and retail sporting goods stores
  - Boat dealerships
  - Boat and equipment rentals
  - Marinas and campgrounds
  - Resorts and lodges
  - Guides and fishing charters
- Many more businesses, such as restaurants, motels, grocery stores, car rental agencies, gas stations, ferries and airlines, serve freshwater fishing indirectly

Freshwater fishing opportunities and their economic benefits occur in all regions of the province. Angling, unlike some of B.C.'s other outdoor recreation activities, is not limited to a few locations.

Anglers often purchase larger equipment like boats and vehicles in urban centres. However, much of their trip-related spending on items such as gear, fuel and accommodation takes place in rural B.C. Indeed, more than 70 per cent of direct angler expenditures and the economic impacts they generate flow to regions outside the heavily populated Lower Mainland and Southern Vancouver Island.

B.C. Angling Expenditures, 2005

Anglers spent $275 million on equipment and $205 million on trip expenses.

For this reason, continued growth in the sport fishery is vitally important to the economic well-being and diversification of our rural communities.

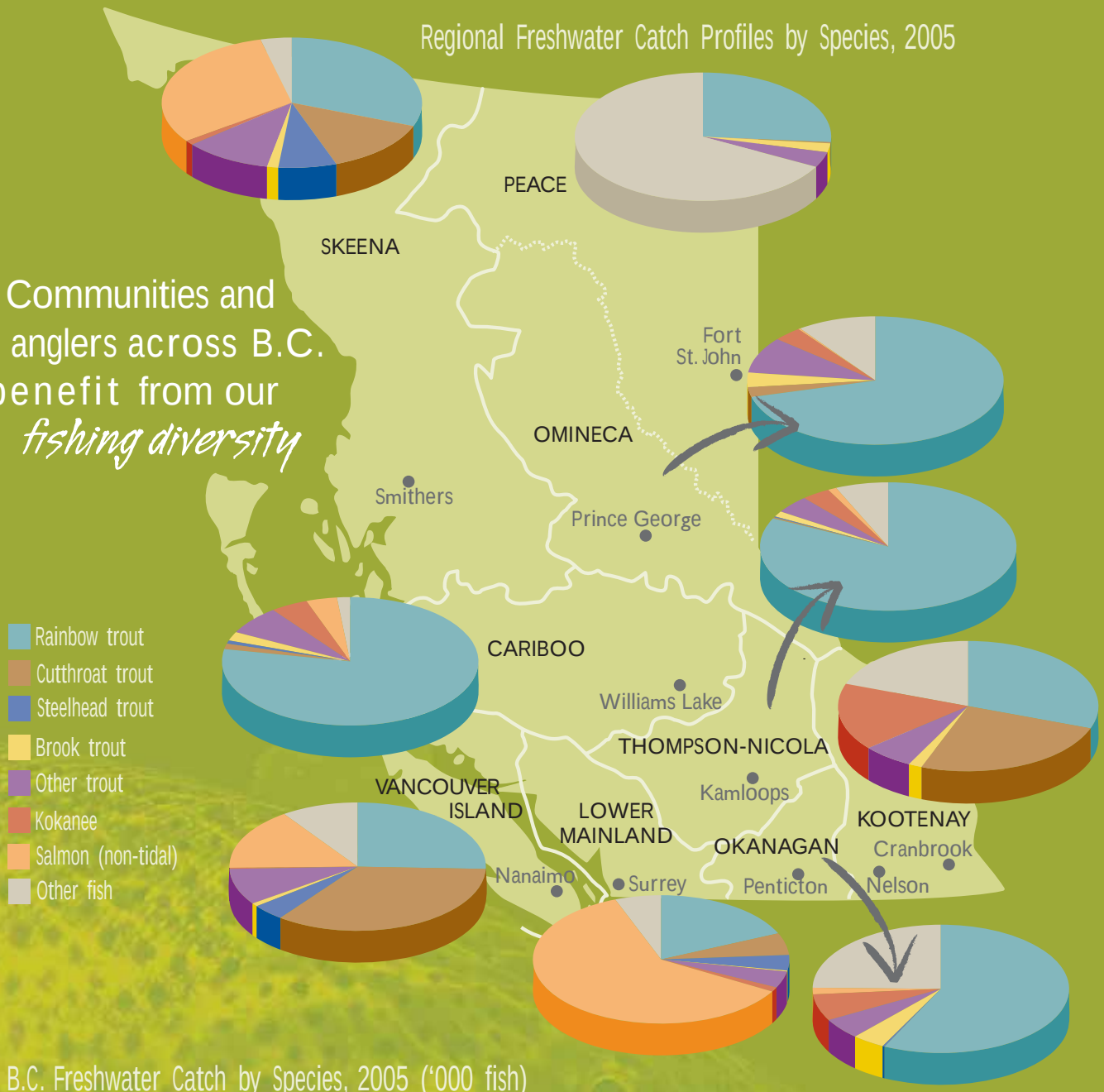
An *economic generator* for rural communities and cities alike

"I have a strong personal connection to fishing as one of my family's outdoor passions in the Kootenays. Across B.C., the freshwater sport fishery remains a key contributor to the government's renewed goal for economic and social development in our rural areas."

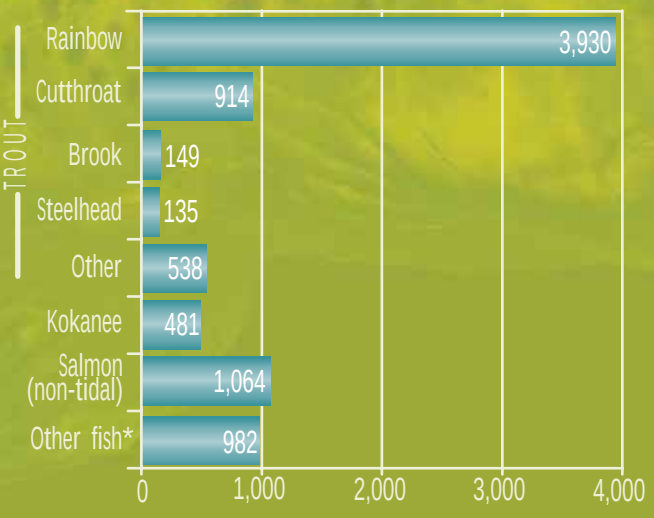
Honourable Bill Bennett,
Minister of Community
and Rural Development

Regional Freshwater Catch Profiles by Species, 2005

Communities and anglers across B.C. benefit from our *fishing diversity*



B.C. Freshwater Catch by Species, 2005 ('000 fish)



More than 270,000 active anglers catch over eight million fish in B.C. Rainbow trout are of primary interest, but anglers seek out many other game fish.

*Includes Arctic grayling, bass, perch, sturgeon, walleye (pickerel) and whitefish

Licence Dollars at Work

FFSBC STOCKING PROGRAM

- Seven million fish a year are stocked in more than 800 lakes and streams
- Unique in North America for using B.C.'s wild brood stocks to provide eggs for hatcheries
- Leaders in the development and stocking of sterile forms of trout, char and kokanee, which improves fishing experience while protecting wild fish populations
- $8 million in stocking program costs generated approximately $168 million of angler expenditures in 2005
- Without stocking, fishing would quickly disappear in many lakes, especially in southern B.C.
- FFSBC also cultures endangered white sturgeon for the Kootenay, Upper Columbia and Nechako river systems

The Ministry of Environment (MOE), together with the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC (FFSBC) and the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation (HCTF), is responsible for the sustainable management, stocking, conservation and recreational use of the province's freshwater fisheries resource. The MOE manages the use and conservation of freshwater fish and aquatic habitats through legislation, regulation, licensing, enforcement, stock assessment, planning and policy development for effective fisheries management.

The FFSBC delivers the provincial fish culture and stocking programs and develops and promotes sport fishing opportunities. The Society is funded primarily through an innovative model that allocates a portion of fishing licence revenues for the delivery of stocking and other programs aimed at enhancing recreational fisheries. Each dollar invested in stocking yields an extraordinary return in local angling activity and expenditures.

Every $1
spent on stocking
means
$21 in angler spending

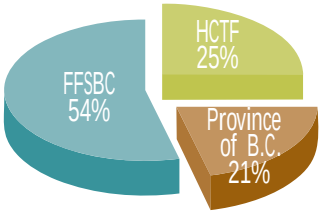
"The positive economic results of the freshwater fisheries stocking program are only part of the picture, as it also attracts people into a healthy sport and creates a better awareness of the importance of conservation of our water and wetlands ecosystems. The quality angling provided through the stocking program provides the public with a rewarding and memorable experience in B.C.'s outdoors."

Mel Arnold,
President,
BC Wildlife Federation

The HCTF receives fishing licence surcharges to invest in conservation projects. These projects seek to restore, maintain and conserve wild freshwater fish populations and habitats. The HCTF investments also help raise public awareness and generate more jobs and business revenues for the local economy.

In addition to this work funded from licence fees, thousands of British Columbians are actively engaged in the stewardship of freshwater fish and aquatic habitat. Angling associations and clubs, community groups and countless other organizations and individuals give their time and effort to support this valuable resource.

Allocation of Licence Fees



Angler licence fee revenues go to the government and two service agencies.

Licence revenues provide *$13 million* for enhancement and conservation

HABITAT CONSERVATION TRUST FOUNDATION

- Since 1981, more than $120 million has been invested in over 2,000 fish and wildlife projects across B.C.
- Funding is collected from a surcharge on licence fees for anglers, hunters, guide-outfitters and trappers
- Over $2 million annually from angler licence fee surcharges goes to fish and habitat conservation
- Projects include fish population monitoring, invasive species control, in-stream nutrient supplements, weir and spawning channel construction, and educational support
- Historically, every $1 invested has resulted in $2 to $2.5 spent by partners

"The Foundation invests in species and habitat enhancement projects that reflect the interests of anglers and our other contributors and also benefit all British Columbians. Our fish and habitat projects work to protect valuable fish stocks, support community stewardship and enhance fishing opportunities for freshwater anglers across B.C."

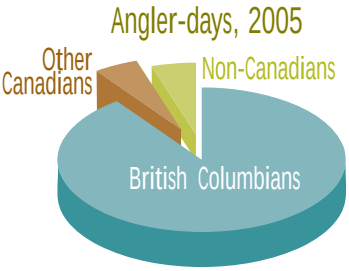
Brian Springinotic,
Executive Director,
Habitat Conservation
Trust Foundation

Casting Ahead

RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS WITH OUR PARTNERS

- Simplified fishing regulations
- Electronic licensing
- 40,000 children and parents have received Learn to Fish instruction
- Fishing in the City has delivered enhanced trout stocking, better signage and promotion of urban fishing opportunities
- New piers and wharves in Whistler, Duncan, Coquitlam, Mission and Prince George
- The Discover Fishing BC website explains where to fish, with over 238,000 visitors since January 2009
- Angler licence sales rose by seven per cent from 2005 through 2008

What is the outlook for B.C.'s freshwater sport fishing business? Over the past 20 years, the recreational fishery has seen a worldwide decline due to urbanization, a faster pace of life and other influences. Yet a few jurisdictions, such as England, have managed to increase angling licence sales by as much as 40 per cent since 1990. The reason has been an aggressive strategy focused on removing barriers to angling and raising the profile of fishing as a positive, healthy outdoor activity available to everyone.



Most of our angling activity is by B.C. residents.

Since 2006, B.C. has followed a similar approach and the signs are now promising for our sport fishery. Licence sales and angler spending have increased from their 2005 levels. Moreover, research shows that, with a concerted effort, angler participation could be grown substantially during the next decade and beyond.

Targeting *30 per cent growth* in angler participation by 2017

"There's no question that proactive stocking under Fishing in the City has brought new anglers and increased business to the freshwater fishery. In our shop, traffic focused on program venues has likely increased tenfold with more young adults and single moms coming in to buy licences and gear. Without this kind of program, how would kids from the inner city get a chance to go fishing?"

Dave Steele,
Owner,
Highwater Tackle

Progress has been possible through a partnership of governments, fishing businesses and non-profit organizations led by FFSBC. This collaborative made-in-B.C. strategy is the province's first-ever Angler Market Development Plan designed to rebuild angler participation by 30 per cent by 2017. Already a number of exciting pilot initiatives are making inroads under the plan.

But much more needs to be done to attract new anglers and raise activity levels. The public needs better information and improved access to fishing opportunities. The FFSBC, MOE and their partners must develop new opportunities and more effectively market the B.C. sport fishing brand at home and abroad.

Our province offers remarkably diverse freshwater fishing experiences in an outstanding natural environment. The sport fisheries are a vital element of recreation and tourism and a recognized powerhouse for the provincial and local economies. As well, the government has a unique management model that encourages partnerships and innovation, and directs licensing revenues back to conservation, stocking and other targeted services.

Commitment and investment by all partners will allow continued growth of our freshwater fishery, further enriching the provincial economy and benefiting communities across British Columbia.

SELECTED ACTIONS FOR REACHING THE TARGET

- Develop community fisheries, including more accessible angling near urban areas
- Improve stocking to support local fishing opportunities
- Promote B.C. sport fishing in targeted external markets
- Encourage tourism operators to package angling with other vacation activities
- Create more designated family fishing opportunities like the Family Fishing Weekend event
- Implement a sustained multi-media advertising campaign for B.C. residents and visitors
- Through actions like these, angler expenditures have grown by 10 per cent since 2005 and could reach $640 million by 2020

"What occurred time and again with Learn to Fish was that the excitement from the kids infected the adults. These events became family adventures that everyone shared. Whole families, from babies to grandparents, came together to experience the outdoors and I believe now better appreciate the importance of preserving our natural environment."

Constable Mark Poppe, Saanich Police Department

The Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC is an independent non-profit organization created by the B.C. government in 2003 to conserve and enhance freshwater fish resources for the benefit of the public. Working with our partners, we provide fish culture, stocking, marketing and public education services in support of recreational fishing and the conservation of wild fish populations in the province.

The economic impact estimates used above are based on the 2005 Survey of Recreational Fishing in Canada and a subsequent report prepared in 2009 by GSGislason & Associates Ltd. titled *Freshwater Sport Fishing in British Columbia: Sending Ripples through the Provincial Economy*.

For a copy of the study or to learn more about the Society's work, visit ***www.gofishbc.com***.

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Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC