

# Whale Watching

IN PACIFIC CANADA

Marine Tourism Activities in Pacific Canada Series



*The commercial whale watching industry has developed into the fastest growing wildlife-based viewing industry in the world . Whale watching is an important educational experience as it allows people to become familiar with issues involving endangered and threatened species. Furthermore, the whale watching experience can help people become more aware of the ocean environment and the animals that live there.*

**P**acific Canada has a diversity of whale species that have been the focus of interest for whale watchers from every corner of the world, including humpbacks, killer, fins, sperm, sei, blue, beaked, northern right, minke, gray, and short-finned pilot whales. According to an International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) study, over 215,000 people participated in boat-based whale watching and over 70,000 people in land-based whale watching in British Columbia in 1998 . A total of 164 charter and cruise operators offer wildlife viewing as part of their product; 120 of these primarily focus on whale watching. There are about 60 tourism operators that depend solely on whale watching.

Whale watching attracts visitors to many coastal communities on northern and western Vancouver Island. A study undertaken in 1998 suggested that over 80% of whale watchers visiting northern and western Vancouver Island go there primarily for whale watching, while for 15% whale watching is part of the reason for the visit. Moreover in 1998, fewer than 1% of whale watchers on the west and north coasts of Vancouver Island were local residents, while less than 10% on the south coast were locals .

## Main Areas of Operation

The majority of whale watching is undertaken from Vancouver Island in three distinct areas:

- Haro Strait near Victoria
- Johnstone and Queen Charlotte Straits on north-eastern Vancouver Island
- West Coast of Vancouver Island near Ucluelet and Tofino

Victoria has the largest density of whale watching operators (about 45) with a fleet of about 80 vessels. Haro Strait and the islands that border it (B.C.'s Gulf islands and Washington State's San Juan Islands) are considered among the best and most accessible places in the world to watch killer whales. In this area the so-called 'southern resident' killer whale community consisting of three pods totalling 77 whales is a most popular attraction between May and

September when the whales feed on migrating salmon.

The maze of islands and waterways in Johnstone and Queen Charlotte Straits is the core area for the 'northern resident' killer whale community consisting of sixteen pods totalling 216 whales. The main month for viewing in this area is in July when these whales gather to feed on salmon returning to spawn in the freshwater streams of the area.

A transient killer whale population (219 whales have been catalogued to date) can be viewed year round and is commonly found all along the coast of Pacific Canada.

Whale watching on the West Coast of Vancouver Island centres on the northward migration of as many as 21,000 grey whales and can best be viewed from early March to late April.

## Economic Dimension

Globally in 1998, it is estimated that about 9 million people participated in whale watching in 87 countries and generated a total of US \$1billion in direct revenues . In Canada, the numbers of whale watchers have been increasing over the last decade. In 1991 numbers for all whale watching in Canada were estimated at 185,200 whale watchers on commercial

tours spending \$9 million. In 1994, this number had climbed to 462,000 spending \$22.3 million .

In 1998, the number of people who took a whale watching excursion in Canada surpassed one million placing direct revenues at about \$50 million. On the Canadian Pacific Coast in 1998, the 285,000 whale watchers generated a direct revenue of approximately

\$14 million and a total revenue of approximately \$108 million .

Whale watching also possesses the ability to stimulate additional tourism activities contributing economically to coastal communities and encouraging related industries.

Whale watching has become a vital industry for at least eleven coastal communities in British Columbia with the creation of new jobs and businesses. Communities like Tofino, a former fishing community on the west coast of Vancouver Island, and Telegraph Cove, a former sawmill town on the east coast of Vancouver Island, have been transformed by the economic benefits of whale watching. Whale watching in Pacific Canada has also become an important source of foreign currency as the majority of whale watchers are non-Canadians.

## Regulatory Dimension

In the mid-1990s the resident populations of killer whales in Pacific Canada were estimated at a total of 300 individuals. That estimate signified an increase in the whale population of more than 100 since 1975. Since then the growth of the northern community has levelled off and the population of the southern community of resident killer whales

decreased from 98 whales in 1995 to 83 whales in 1999 and to 77 in 2001. This has caused killer whales (and humpback whales) to be listed as threatened species by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada.

The Government of Canada attempts to prevent harm to marine mammals through Marine Mammal Regulations under the Fisheries Act. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) ensures that socio-economic, scientific, and educational benefits of whale watching are sustainable and conducted without disturbing the life processes of the animals. A disturbance occurs when people interfere with an animal's ability to hunt, feed, communicate, socialise, rest, breed and care for their young. Approaching too fast or too close, pursuing an animal, or obstructing its path, are all considered to be disturbances. Too many boats, excessive engine noise and exhaust fumes are also considered disruptive to marine mammals.

### The following list is offered as a source of further information.

People For Puget Sound is a regional citizen's organization founded in 1991 to educate and involve people in protecting and restoring the land and waters of Puget Sound.

<http://www.pugetsound.org/>

**THE WHALE MUSEUM** in Friday Harbor, Washington, created the Soundwatch Boater Education Program in 1991, which established an internationally recognized model of community stewardship for the shared waters of Haro Strait and Boundary Pass, where vessel-based wildlife viewing is highest for both British Columbia and Washington State.

<http://www.whale-museum.org/>

**THE WHALE WATCH OPERATORS ASSOCIATION OF THE NORTHWEST** is an international industry organization, which represents commercial whale watching ventures operating in the Pacific North West waters of Juan de Fuca, Haro and Georgia Straits, the waters of Puget Sound and those waters surrounding the Gulf and San Juan Islands (the home of the southern resident killer whales).

<http://www.nwwhalewatchers.org/>

**THE WHALE RESEARCH LAB** at the University of Victoria, B.C., established in the late 1980s, consists of faculty and graduate students who are currently studying gray whales off the West Coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

<http://office.geog.uvic.ca/dept/whale/wrlmp.html>

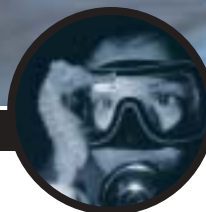
**WHALES DOLPHINS AND PORPOISES OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA** is a Fisheries and Oceans Canada publication from 1999. The publication accurately details the cetacean population living in B.C. waters and provides information on specific species as well as answers to popular questions.

**The other Backgrounders available in this series are: Sea Kayaking, Scuba Diving, Tidal Recreational Fishing, and Recreational Boating.**

# Scuba Diving

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*Scuba diving in British Columbia has attracted an ever-increasing number of enthusiasts over the last 15 to 20 years. Traditionally, scuba divers would travel to warm destinations (e.g. Caribbean), however, increased awareness of the unique visual and scenic opportunities and the abundance of marine life in colder destinations have drawn the interest of divers to Canada's Pacific coast.*

In fact, the British Columbia (B.C.) dive product is considered superb both for its abundance of sea life and the visibility found in local waters, particularly during the late fall through early spring. It is estimated by some that the diving industry in B.C. has been experiencing an estimated growth of 20% annually since the mid-1980s. This growth is reflected in the demand for diving courses, the establishment of dive shops and commercially operated dive charters that range from transportation and equipment providers to guided dive trips, and live-aboard operations. Scuba diving is comprised of two general user groups: (1) private or independent divers and (2) guided divers that dive as part of an organized commercial tour. Independent divers either purchase or rent equipment and transportation whereas guided divers are usually

outfitted and transported by a tour operator. The diving experience for both user groups ranges from half a day to multiple days in duration.

A study undertaken by the Tourism Industry Development Subsidiary Agreement (TIDSA) estimated that in 1980 guided dive tours offered by commercial operators in British Columbia generated \$0.9 million in direct revenue and 7,500 room nights . By 1986 this number had increased to \$2.3 million and 48,900 room nights . In 1991, the British Columbia Ministry of Tourism and Small Business published a scuba diving study based on 1989 data that estimated revenue and room nights had again risen to \$3.5 million and 58,680 respectively .

These three studies provide no expenditure data for independent divers making their own arrangements.

## Main Areas of Operation

Rodales Scuba Diving Magazine ranked diving in Pacific Canada as one of the best locations in the world for both value and the opportunity to experience a healthy marine environment . The reputation of the Vancouver Island coast continues to grow in international diver's circles as a favoured scuba diving destination.

The Nanaimo and Gabriola Island areas are currently considered the 'hot-beds' of diving in British Columbia. However, there are a number of other favoured areas including the Gulf Islands, Campbell River, the Sunshine Coast, Port Hardy, Barkley Sound, Victoria and Vancouver.

Wreck diving is popular with all scuba divers, and amongst the most popular dive sites in Pacific Canada the six artificial reefs sunk by the Artificial Reef Society of British Columbia (ARSBC). All six ships have been sunk by the ARSBC since 1990. The most recent, the HMCS Cape Breton, is reported to be the world's largest upright artificial reef sunk to date.

These wrecks are sunk in conformity with the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) administered by Environment Canada.

## Economic Dimension

The total direct and associated tourism activity generated in 2001 by commercial operators in Pacific Canada was estimated to be \$8 million and 141 jobs . A recent study by the Underwater Council of British Columbia (UCBC) also estimated that there are about 70,000 recreational diver use days per year undertaken in British Columbia .

Commercially, scuba diving operations in British Columbia consist of about:

- 6 dive clothing manufacturers
- 29 dive shops
- 10 dive resorts
- 20 retail outlets selling equipment
- 80 air fill stations
- 4 live aboard operations
- 23 dive charter operations

Internationally there are three certifying organizations of which the Professional Association of Dive Instructors (PADI) has the largest market share in British Columbia (estimated at 75%) with the remainder being divided amongst Scuba Schools International (SSI) and the National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI).

On average, between 1996 and 2000, 19,000 British Columbia residents per year became certified scuba divers. This alone would amount to an expenditure of about \$5 million per year in basic training courses. In 2001, for example, it is reported there were 115,000 PADI certified scuba divers living in British Columbia.

## Regulatory Dimension

Generally, scuba divers are regarded as environmentally responsible ocean users who have a minimal impact on the natural environment. However, one concern they pose is the damage to reef structures and reef ecology caused by their mooring of vessels through the use of traditional anchors. The UCBC, in cooperation with the ARSBC, the Underwater Archaeological Society (UASBC) and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) have initiated the Divers Mooring Buoy Project to install and maintain mooring buoys in order to protect the marine environment on popular dive sites in Pacific Canada .

The operators of diving vessels are required to comply with a range of waste disposal, general boating, and dive operation regulations that flow from the Canada Shipping Act, administered by Transport Canada and Canadian Coast Guard (a sector of DFO).

**The following list is offered as a source of further information.**

**THE UNDERWATER COUNCIL OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (UCBC)** is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting underwater safety, underwater environmental awareness and scuba diving in British Columbia.  
<http://www.ucbc.bc.ca>

**THE ARTIFICIAL REEF SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (ARSBC)** is a non-profit organization with the mission to create environmentally and economically sustainable “artificial reefs” in British Columbia and around the world for the enjoyment of scuba divers everywhere and for the protection of environmentally and historically sensitive marine habitats.  
<http://www.artificialreefs.bc.ca>

**THE UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (UASBC)** represents a two hundred member group of volunteer and vocational underwater archaeologists. The Society is the largest diving club in British Columbia, and one of the largest and most active heritage organizations in the province dedicated to conserving, preserving and protecting the maritime heritage laying beneath British Columbia’s coastal and inland waters.  
<http://www.uasbc.com>

**The other Backgrounders available in this series are: Sea Kayaking, Tidal Recreational Fishing, Recreational Boating and Whale Watching**

# Sea Kayaking

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*Increasing public interest in the outdoors, environment, and nature-related exercise has fuelled an increase in outdoor recreation activity by residents and visitors to the Canadian Pacific Coast. Sea kayaking has become a popular activity that enables tourists to experience the marine-terrestrial interface at a leisurely pace. Sea kayaking has grown in the last decade from an activity undertaken by a few outdoor adventure seekers to an activity that now attracts a wider range of users including families and retirees.*

**S**ea kayaking\* is comprised of two general user groups: (1) private or independent users and (2) guided kayakers, who kayak as part of an organized commercial tour or group. Kayaking experiences range from half a day to two weeks in duration for both user groups.

In 1991 about 3% of British Columbia residents participated in sea kayaking and by 1995 this number had more than doubled to 7%. It is estimated that since 1995 participation in sea kayaking has been growing at a rate of 20% per year<sup>2</sup>. In 1996, about 30,000 overnight kayakers engaged in recreation in Pacific waters,

accounting for an estimated 140,000 user days. It is estimated that the majority of kayakers in Pacific Canada are, in fact, British Columbia residents.

The growth of sea kayaking is also reflected in increased manufacturing sales, expansion of the number of retail outlets, and the emergence of more commercial operations and training schools providing kayaking related services. In 1989, there were about 15 sea kayaking providers on the Canadian Pacific Coast. In 2000, this number had risen to 250, although 100 were small enterprises or adjuncts of other operations whose primary activity was another tourism business (lodges etc). Of the remaining 150 operations, 30 to 40 are considered large sea kayaking providers who offer a wide range of services like rental, instruction, touring, and sales of associated equipment.

The current commercial sea kayaking sector in Pacific Canada consists of:

- 9 ocean kayak and kayak accessory manufacturers
- about 24 retail outlets
- about 150 guided kayak operations
- about 20 mother ship operations
- about 250 other operations that provide kayaks and associated products

## Main Areas of Operation

There are 11 distinct sea kayaking regions along the Pacific coast of Canada with the most popular regions being the Gulf Islands and Johnstone Strait followed by the Broken Islands and Clayoquot Sound.

### Kayakers and Kayaker User Days by Most Popular Areas, 1996

Area	Total	
	Kayakers	User Days
Gulf Islands	7,340	22,020
Johnstone Strait	3,430	20,580
Broken Islands	2,250	13,500
Clayoquot Sound	1,880	11,280
Nootka Sound	1,422	7,119
Broughton Archipelago	1,000	5,475
Kyuquot	615	6,150
Others	11,103	55,446
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,040</b>	<b>141,570</b>

## Economic Dimension

The increase in kayaking has had a positive economic impact on several coastal communities in British Columbia. About 50% of kayakers rent their equipment, substantially increasing business for established rental outlets and promoting the creation of new businesses. Telegraph Cove, Tofino, and Port Hardy are examples of coastal communities benefiting economically from the spin-off effects of recreational kayaking in the forms of pre and post trip

accommodations, food, and equipment rental. Furthermore, the increasing demand for sea kayaking related services has also created a range of seasonal employment opportunities along the coast.

## Regulatory Dimension

Generally, kayakers are regarded as environmentally responsible ocean users who have a minimal impact on the natural environment. This includes both groups whereby the commercially led group is believed to have less impact on the environment than the independent group due to their adherence to established industry environmental codes of conduct. However, the sheer presence of the increasing numbers of kayakers, especially in popular kayaking areas, has raised concerns with respect to the impact of human waste and garbage disposal as well as vegetation damage. This is particularly a problem with the increase of overnight kayakers outnumbering the availability of developed campsites along the coast.

Johnstone Strait has been identified as the area of highest concern due to increased participation rates, insufficient number of campsites, and the lack of human waste facilities. Human waste from kayaking activities is believed by some to contribute to fecal coliform damage in shellfish beds.

Kayaking is generally covered under the Small Vessel Regulations of the Canada Shipping Act (CSA) administered by Canadian Coast Guard (a sector of Fisheries and Oceans Canada).

The kayaking guiding sector is expected to adhere to a range of industry standards, codes of conduct, and

certifications that not only comply with CSA regulations but also require them to obtain licenses or permits to operate in certain parks and forested lands. In response to the rapid growth of guided kayak tour operations, many guide associations were established in the 1990s.

**The following list is offered as a source of further information.**

**THE ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN SEA KAYAK GUIDES (ACSKG)** is an organization which advocates the highest standards of professional sea kayak guides and sea kayak guiding in Canada. Organized and run by and for those who work as tour leaders in Canadian coastal waters, the ACSKG promotes safety and responsibility in commercial sea kayak tours.  
<http://www.islandnet.com/~skguides/homepage.html>

**THE SEA KAYAK GUIDES ALLIANCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (SKGABC)** is a non-profit society which upholds high standards for professional sea kayak guides and operators in BC. Through ongoing professional development and certification, the Alliance strives to ensure safe practices on an industry-wide basis.  
<http://www.skgabc.com/>

**THE SEA KAYAKING SAFETY GUIDE** is currently published by Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The guide highlights best practices, principles and guidelines for the Saguenay-St. Lawrence marine park. The booklet was prepared in coordination with Park Canada. [http://www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca/sar/NIF/Current\\_Projects/Sea\\_kayaking\\_e.htm](http://www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca/sar/NIF/Current_Projects/Sea_kayaking_e.htm)

**THE BC MARINE TRAIL ASSOCIATION (BCMTA)** was created in 1993 to establish a paddling trail from Vancouver to Prince Rupert - a distance of about 900km. They have recently formed a partnership with the Washington Water Trails Association

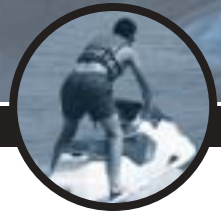
to link up Puget Sound - Olympia, WA to the San Juan Islands. This partnership creates a trail spanning virtually the whole Inside Passage, from south of Seattle/Tacoma, all the way to the Alaska panhandle.  
<http://members.tripod.com/~jralittle/bcmta.html>

**The other Backgrounders available in this series are: Scuba Diving, Tidal Recreational Fishing, Recreational Boating and Whale Watching**

# Recreational Boating

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*Tourism and recreation has been a growth industry in Canada with the marine environment drawing many of the visitors. Recreational boating is the largest category of ocean users on the Pacific coast of Canada as most marine tourism activities require the use of a vessel either as the primary attraction or as the mode of transportation for the attraction.*

**T**he recreational boating sector encompasses three sectors of private boat owners namely: power boating, sail boating, and human powered boating (kayaks, canoes, rowboats). The recreational boating industry consists of manufacturers of sailboats, powerboats, personal watercraft, and human powered boats as well as companies that manufacture marine equipment for boats of all sizes, docks, and mooring equipment, marine and safety clothing, maintenance products, cleaning and marina equipment.

## Main Areas of Operation

The coastal waters of British Columbia are considered to be amongst the finest boating destinations in the world, with over 27,000 kilometres of marine shoreline.

The Strait of Georgia, between the mainland and Vancouver Island, is protected from the rough Pacific Ocean by the 450-kilometre long island, providing sheltered waters for sailing and boating. The Gulf Islands, the majority of which lie in the rain-shadow of Vancouver Island, are extremely popular cruising destinations offering a temperate climate.

The most popular sailing and boating areas are: the Gulf Islands, the Inside Passage leading north from Vancouver Island to Prince Rupert, the Queen Charlotte Islands, and Douglas Channel in Northern BC.

Off the coastal mainland, Desolation Sound north of Powell River, Princess Louisa Inlet, Jervis Inlet and Howe Sound complete the list of the region's most popular destinations.

## Economic Dimension

In 1997, recreational boating was a \$2.5 billion dollar industry in Canada that employed 5,500 people and supported 650 Canadian-based repair and manufacturing businesses. In 2001, the BC Marine Trades Association estimated that there were 165 marinas with over 30,000 berths, generating revenues in excess of \$100 million and employing approximately 1,250 employees. In addition, recreational boaters in British Columbia pay in excess of \$18 million annually in fuel taxes.

In 2000, British Columbia's coast had about 19% of the total 3.5 million recreational boats in Canada with about 325,000 licensed recreational vessels and another 200,000 unlicensed boats. All recreational vessels under 15 gross tons and powered by an engine of 10 horsepower or higher require a license issued by Canadian Coast Guard (a sector of Fisheries and Oceans Canada). Unlicensed boat types range from relatively small car-toppers, canoes, and kayaks. Many of these boats have multiple users.

International travellers, particularly from the United States also participate in recreational boating along Canada's Pacific coast. In 2001 approximately 50,000 US travellers entered Canadian Pacific waters on a private boat. About 85% of these spend more than one day along B.C.'s coast.

## Regulatory Dimension

Even though pollution associated with recreational boating in the Canadian Pacific is minor compared with other coastal uses it is often concentrated near sensitive foreshore areas and confined bays, or in busy or poorly flushed anchorages. Sewage and pollution from boats contribute to other sources of marine pollution where the cumulative impacts are not yet fully understood.

The cumulative impacts of recreational boating in British Columbia are estimated to be higher than many other coastal areas in Canada as the temperate climate on the Pacific coast allows for year round boating. User days per boat in British Columbia are estimated to be 5 times higher than in other Canadian coastal areas.

The Georgia Strait Alliance has developed the Green Boating Guide to address major environmental impacts associated with boating in the Canadian Pacific waters and provides user recommendations.

In addition to informal boating procedures and voluntary codes of conduct, government legislation exists to regulate the recreational boating sector. Fisheries and Oceans Canada assumes responsibility for Canadian Coast Guard functions with respect to pleasure craft, search and rescue, receiver of wrecks, and pollution preparedness and response as well as non-pleasure craft regulations. These regulations are administered by the Canadian Coast Guard's Office of Boating Safety.

The following list is offered as a source of further information.

**THE BRITISH COLUMBIA SAILING ASSOCIATION** is the provincial representative of the Canadian Yachting Association and the International Sailing Federation. It is also a member of Sport BC.  
<http://www.bcsailing.bc.ca/>

**THE CANADIAN YACHTING ASSOCIATION (CYA)** was established in 1931, and is the national governing body for the sport of sailing. The Association promotes sailing and power boating through collaboration with other partners, the Provincial Sailing Associations, member clubs, schools, and many individual stakeholders.  
<http://www.sailing.ca/>

**THE GEORGIA STRAIT ALLIANCE (GSA)** aims to protect and restore the marine environment and promote the sustainability of Georgia Strait, its adjoining waters and communities. GSA's green boating program helps boaters, clubs and marinas ensure coastal waters are clean and enjoyable.  
<http://www.georgiastrait.org>

**THE BC MARINE TRADES ORGANIZATION (MTA)** aims to be the voice of the recreational marine industry in British Columbia. Working with other industry groups and all levels of government to provide a strong and consistent voice for the boating community. Its mandate is to promote recreational boating in BC and to ensure a positive atmosphere of growth for all members.  
<http://www.bcmta.com>

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# Recreational Fishing

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*Sport Fishing is one of the most popular outdoor recreational pastimes of Canadians and visitors alike.*

*Recreational fishing is a good way of increasing marine awareness towards conserving and protecting our natural resources.*

**T**alk to fish enthusiasts and recreational fishing experts and they will tell you that the Pacific coast of Canada is the place to be for an adventuresome and colourful fishing experience whether it be from standing on the shoreline or from a boat offshore. The Pacific coast of Canada is recognised as a world-class fishing destination due both to its quality of fishing and its breathtaking scenery. The sport fishing industry has a long history in British Columbia (B.C.) and has become a regional fabric that connects many coastal communities.

On the Canadian Pacific coast in 2000 an active population of resident and tourist anglers numbering about 243,000 participated in recreational fishing activities in tidal waters<sup>1</sup>. This represents about 1.1 million user days.

The focus of this recreational fishing industry has traditionally targeted the salmonid populations, of coho, chinook

and steelhead, however currently the fishery includes harvesting of a wider variety of fish and shellfish species.

This includes a growing interest in targeting sockeye, pink and chum salmon as well as several groundfish and shellfish species. Currently, the fastest growing segment of the tidal sport fishing sector is shoreline fly-fishing for halibut.

### Main Areas of Operation

Recreational fishing is popular all along the Canadian Pacific coast and some type of fishing activity occurs off almost every shoreline. The main concentrations of recreational fishing activity can be divided into four geographical areas of operation.

1. Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands are legendary with salmon anglers. The Islands are home to all five species of salmon. The peak of the salmon-fishing season occurs there in the late summer with halibut being the main target species in the winter months.
2. The marine waters around Vancouver and along the famed Sunshine Coast also offer salmon fishing, but the shelter offered from the North Pacific, and its mild coastal climate allows for fishing 12 months of the year.

3. The remote islands of B.C.'s Central Coast are argued to offer the most spectacular salmon runs in the province in terms of the numbers and size of the fish.

4. Finally, the Northern area of B.C. marks the beginning of the salmon run as the species heads south from their northern feeding grounds. Stewart, Prince Rupert, and the Queen Charlotte Islands are some of the first places they pass. The salmon found there are reportedly big and the halibut bigger.

### Economic Dimension

Nationally, the recreational fishery provides significant economic benefits for Canada. In 2000, for example, recreational fishers spent \$6.7 billion on trip-related expenditures with the per capita average spending amounting to about \$1,200 per year<sup>2</sup>.

Since the turn of the century, recognition of the importance of recreational fishing as part of the life and breath of the Canadian Pacific coast has grown steadily. Recreational fishing along this coast currently provides a wide variety of job opportunities for coastal communities and contributes nearly \$700 million annually to local and regional economies<sup>3</sup>.

Recreational fishing is one of the largest and highest revenue generators of all marine tourism sectors in Pacific Canada. Anglers' total expenditures wholly attributable to recreational fishing in B.C. tidal waters in 2000 was approximately \$487 million with an estimated average per angler being \$2,600. An additional \$228 million can be attributed to major purchases and investments for the purpose of recreational fishing.

## Regulatory Dimension

Under the federal Fisheries Act, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is responsible for the day-to-day management of tidal recreational fisheries. The department is also responsible for the protection of fish habitat.

In addition to the fishing regulations released by DFO on the current status of fish populations and quotas\* there is an overwhelming theme running through the recreational sector to ensure that 'fish come first'. On the Pacific coast specifically, there is a level of responsibility displayed by anglers and sport fishing businesses to work in cooperation with those who manage the fisheries to secure a future for the fish as well as the experience and livelihoods those fish provide. On the whole, it is reported that recreational fishers in Pacific Canada release two thirds of their catches.<sup>5</sup>

**The following list is offered as a source of further information.**

**THE SPORT FISHING INSTITUTE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA** was established to promote the sustainability and protection of fish stocks and the continued growth of anglers' expectations and opportunities to enjoy the resource. SFI is a non-profit society, governed by an elected Board of Directors. [www.sportfishing.bc.ca](http://www.sportfishing.bc.ca)

**SPORT FISHING B.C.** - British Columbia's sport fishing web site provides information on B.C. saltwater fishing, B.C. freshwater fishing, maps, fishing tackle news, sport fishing destinations, fishing tips and techniques, editorials, and articles. [www.sportfishingbc.com/index.htm](http://www.sportfishingbc.com/index.htm)

**B.C. TIDAL WATERS SPORT FISHING GUIDE** This online guide is intended for general uses. It provides information on fishing areas, species, licenses and general regulations. The B.C. Tidal Waters Sport Fishing Guide also provides up to date information on fishing quotas and shellfish closures as well as updated regulations for the sector. [www-comm.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/english/sfg/](http://www-comm.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/english/sfg/)

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