

REGULATIONS SIMPLIFICATION

In B.C., freshwater fishing regulations serve two main purposes: 1) to conserve and protect wild fish stocks and, where possible, 2) to optimize recreational fishing opportunities. Generally, the complexity of our regulations is a reflection of the diversity of fish species and freshwater habitats in the province. However, recent research has shown that overly complex regulations may reduce anglers' understanding and even deter participation. The Ministry of Environment, in partnership with the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC, is reviewing and, where warranted, simplifying all existing fishing regulations. This review will be a multi-year project.

Small lakes were chosen for the initial review because they have the most water-specific regulations in this Synopsis. The review of regulations on large lakes and rivers will follow later. **The three primary goals of the small lakes regulations review were to:**

1. Harmonize regulations between regions, where possible (i.e., regional daily catch quotas and general gear restrictions);
2. Develop regulatory categories with consistent management objectives for small lakes appearing in the Water-Specific Tables for each region; and
3. Reduce the number of small lakes appearing in the Regional Water-Specific Tables, where possible, by adopting the default regional regulations on more lakes. This is especially applicable to lakes stocked with hatchery fish.



Small lakes offer many surprises...not to mention great fishing!

📷 Kyle Ackles

Based on a detailed review of existing small lakes regulations, and with local consultation, the following **four regulatory suites** have been adopted for waters requiring special regulations beyond the regional defaults (i.e., for those lakes listed in the Water-Specific Tables). Each suite combines a set of regulatory actions to support a variety of management objectives and recreational opportunities.

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| <p>Small Lakes Regulatory Suite 1) Restrictions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trout/char daily quota = 2 | <p>Small Lakes Regulatory Suite 2) Restrictions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trout/char daily quota = 2, • bait ban, single barbless hook, and • winter closures, if necessary (regionally determined, but consistent across the region) |
| <p>Small Lakes Regulatory Suite 3 Restrictions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trout/char daily quota = 1, • bait ban, single barbless hook, • winter closures, if necessary (regionally determined, but consistent across the region), and • size restrictions, if necessary (regionally determined, but consistent across the region) | <p>Small Lakes Regulatory Suite 4 Restrictions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trout/char catch and release, • bait ban, single barbless hook, • seasonal closures, if necessary (regionally determined, but consistent across region) |

In circumstances where different or additional regulations are required to address specific management objectives, waters will continue to be assigned special unique regulations. Generally, the least restrictive regulations are used to meet the management objectives for each water.

Please note: the default regional regulations continue to apply to the vast majority of small lakes in the province. Many of these lakes, which are not listed in the REgional Water Specific Tables, provide excellent fishing opportunities that rival the angling experiences offered by the waters listed in the Tables.