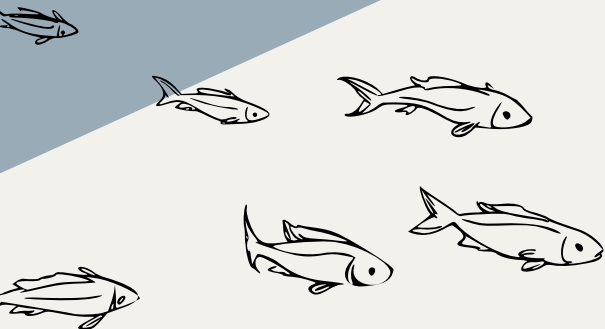


Recreational Fishing

Licensing in BC:

A missed educational opportunity



The Major Risks of Recreational Fishing:

01

Overfishing

- fishing limits are made diligently to preserve local fish stocks, a lack of limit knowledge can lead to overfishing³

02

Barotrauma

- For many fish species, the barotrauma caused by being pulled to the surface can be lethal⁴.

03

Catch and Release Mortality

- Without proper knowledge of fish handling, the trauma caused by catch and release can leave fish with little chance of survival⁵.



Executive Summary:

BC Pacific and freshwater fishing licensing requires no proof of fishing regulation or best practice knowledge². This process could be used as an opportunity to educate recreational fishers about conservation and to improve voluntary adherence to the fishing regulation put in place by the governing bodies in BC such as the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

The Problem

Obtaining a fishing license in BC is an extremely quick and easy transaction. The process takes only minutes and requires no concrete evidence that the individual acquiring the license has any understanding of fishing best practices².

Recreational fishing is a major contributor to the local economy and as such its regulation is of utmost importance. It is critical that licensing is accessible. Conversely, with the current licensing system, a major opportunity for education and improved self-derived adherence to regulations is being ignored, creating opportunity for ecological harm. One of the main reasons for fishing violations is a lack of knowledge of current regulations³.

Hunting licensing in BC requires a comprehensive test to ensure that rules and regulations are well understood¹. A similar program could yield similar results among recreational fishers, informing them about how to fish ethically with minimal effort required of the licensing organization⁵.



An Education Success Story:

In 2019, a study was published outlining the success of a new fisheries education program implemented to enhance fishery regulation compliance⁵. The course was offered to those who violated regulations in return for a reduced fine and to members of the general public⁵. After attending this 3.5 hour class, attendees demonstrated a better understanding of fishery rules and regulations and improved their self efficacy when it came to implementing the rules going forward⁵.

Call to Action:

Current Licensing Process²:

1. Registration through the National Recreational Licensing System
2. Selection of License type (additional fee for salmon stamp)
3. Payment

Suggested Added Step:

Access to current fishing regulations relevant to the selected license type followed by a short multiple choice open note quiz covering catch limits and fish handling best practices.

Looking to the Future:

The easy access to accurate up to date best fishing practices upon acquiring a fishing license will hopefully improve the self efficacy of fishers with regard to regulation adherence⁵. This improvement should result in less overfishing violations and better outcomes for fish involved in catch and release.

02

Created by Sofia Levy

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