

Muddling Along January 31

I have had several people ask me about fishing the Nanaimo River and they were confused about where and when to fish and what fish they could retain. I think the regulations are unnecessarily confusing but I decided to attempt to clarify without muddying the “waters” any further!

Here goes nothing:

1. When you can fish

A. Freshwater portion

There are places to fish on the Nanaimo River system 365 days of the year. All tributaries are closed 365 days of the year.

From Boulder Creek (below First Lake) UPSTREAM is open all year with the only restriction being Artificial Fly only above Second Lake. (Artificial fly means that any kind of gear can be used as long as a single barbless fly is used. A float and weights may be added to the line).

From the Bore Hole (Power Line Crossing) downstream to the Hwy 1 Bridge is open June 1 to November 30. (i.e. closed December 1 to May 31)

From the Hwy 1 Bridge to the Duke Pt Hwy Bridge is open all year.

The section from the Cedar Bridge upstream to Duke Pt Hwy bridge is open from October 31 to September 14 (i.e. closed from September 15 to October 30)

B. Saltwater (Tidal) Portion

From Cedar bridge out to estuary, open from October 26 to July 14 EXCEPT closed for 400 m below Cedar Bridge (to white triangles) from October 25 to November 30.

2. What you can retain (all other fish are catch and release only).

B. Freshwater Portion

As for all Vancouver Island rivers, you may only retain hatchery marked rainbow and cutthroat trout. (no size limit). It is very unlikely that you will be able to find a marked trout in the Nanaimo system, so the only place you have a hope of keeping a trout would be in the lakes where the limit is 4 fish (one over 50 cm) no lower size limit. If you do catch marked trout in the river, the limit is two fish.

From October 15 to March 31 you may keep 1 jack coho (under 35 cm (14 inches)) anywhere in the Nanaimo River that is open to fishing EXCEPT the section below Firehall Pool to Cedar Bridge (see below)

From November 1 to 30 you may keep 2 chum salmon from the Cedar Bridge to the Firehall pool and one jack coho from November 1 to December 31 in the same area.

C. Saltwater Portion

From October 26 to July 14, you may retain 4 chum per day and from June 1 to December 31, two hatchery marked coho (don't hold your breath . . . the first coho being marked EVER on the Nanaimo River will be released in the spring of 2015 so will not be back for 2 years!)

Phew! That's a quagmire of potential fishing violations! If anybody sees any errors I have made, please let me know!