

Drainage FACTSHEET




BRITISH
COLUMBIA

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

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CANADA'S FISH HABITAT LAW



Scientific Excellence • Resource Protection & Conservation • Benefits for Canadians

CANADA'S FISH HABITAT LAW


**IF YOU ARE PLANNING WORK NEAR WATER,
BETTER CHECK THE FISHERIES ACT FIRST – AND
AVOID PROBLEMS LATER**

Anyone buying property or planning work that might have some impact on coastal waters, salt marshes, streams, river beds, lakeshores or marine offshore areas should first inquire how Canada's fisheries habitat protection laws could affect their plans.

Protection of fish and those natural environmental systems that support fish is provided for under the federal *Fisheries Act*. This Act dates back to Confederation and is a strong tool to ensure the sound management of this valuable resource. Responsibility for the enforcement of the Act is not only to Parliament, but also to the clients and users of the fishery, the people of Canada.

WHAT IS A "FISH HABITAT"?

While one way of conserving fish for the future is through direct management of the harvest, it is also critical that the natural systems that produce the fish be protected from



or indirectly in order to carry out their life processes."(Section 34(1))

In other words, the habitats include not only the water in rivers, lakes, streams and oceans, but also the quality of that water and the total surroundings in which plants and other life forms interact to make fish life possible.

MONEY IN THE BANK


Fish are an important part of Canada's renewable resource base. Commercial and recreational fisheries contribute an estimated \$7 billion annually to the national economy in 1988 dollars. Other less tangible social benefits, such as support for traditional lifestyles in small, remote communities, also flow from the fishery base. For these reasons, it is important that fish and their supporting habitat be protected.

One problem up to now has been that most people do not automatically recognize the value of fish habitat. It is easy to enlist

harm. These systems are referred to as "fish habitat" and this leaflet will describe the nature of the protection which the *Fisheries Act* provides.

The term "fish habitat" covers a great variety of environments where fish live. The *Fisheries Act* defines them as:

"Spawning grounds and nursery, rearing, food supply and migration areas on which fish depend directly

 Fisheries and Oceans Pêches et Océans

Canada

This publication contains information to anyone buying property or planning work that might have some impact on coastal waters, salt marshes, streams, river beds, lakeshores or marine offshore areas. Inquire how Canada's fisheries habitat protection laws could affect their plans. To obtain a copy, please contact:

FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA
Website: <http://inter01.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/wavesdocs/en/>