

Single Barbless Hooks Mandatory in All B.C. Streams

B.C. Streams go Barbless

The use of single barbless hooks is now mandatory in all B.C. streams. With the addition of the streams of the West Kootenays and of the Arctic drainage in northern B.C., the requirement for single barbless hooks is now uniform across the province. In general, this regulation is intended to support management efforts by reducing hooking injuries and stress that may have sub-lethal impacts on released fish and sometimes lead to mortalities.

There are many situations where an angler must release fish caught. This is true of the most wild steelhead fisheries across the province, where catch and release is required. In many other fisheries there is a restricted harvest that involves the release of fish that are either outside the allowable size limit, are a non-target species, or are over and above the daily quota. In addition, more anglers are



Photo: Vance Hanna

now voluntarily choosing to practice catch and release in general.

Many anglers recognize that the use of single barbless hooks helps to minimize injury to released fish by allowing for easier removal of the hook. Being able to quickly remove the hook significantly reduces the amount of time a fish is handled and kept out of water, which in turn reduces problems associated with scale and mucous loss, stress and lack of oxygen. Single barbless hooks are also much less likely than barbed or triple hooks to become entangled in the mesh of a net if one is used to help land a fish.

There are many other jurisdictions across North America that have implemented similar management practices in their fisheries. The adoption of this regulation brings a degree of consistency to all river and stream fisheries in British Columbia.