

## Wild Fish Culture Program

**The wild fish culture program is an important component of the province's integrated approach to fisheries management.**

The five provincial hatcheries (Duncan, Abbotsford, Summerland, Clearwater, Fort Steele) stock about ten million fish each year into approximately 1000 lakes around the province as well as in a small number of coastal streams. Stocked waters attract anglers because they provide high quality angling on a consistent basis. About half of the freshwater angling in B. C. takes place on stocked lakes and these programs provide significant benefits for both rural and provincial economies.

The culture program is the envy of other jurisdictions in North America because it focuses primarily on wild native trout – rather than domesticated "farm fish". This emphasis helps to ensure that fisheries in B.C. will continue to be **"world-class"**.

Fish are transported in tanks of various sizes filled with water and supplied with a continuous flow of oxygen. Helicopters, float planes, ATV's and even backpacks are used to transport fish into lakes not easily accessible by truck.



Photo: Ray Billings



Photo: Brian Chan

Provincial fish culture staff are also providing "conservation fish culture" services in several stock restoration initiatives. For example, the "Living Gene Bank" for Vancouver Island steelhead will complete its third year of stocking and has seen the first adult returns back from the original stocking in 2000. Endangered sturgeon stocks on the Kootenay and upper Columbia rivers are also supported through conservation fish culture programs at the Kootenay Trout Hatchery (Fort Steele).

Of B.C.'s approximately 23000 lakes over 5 hectares in size, only about 770 have special fishing regulations and hence are included in the regional tables in this synopsis. Of these listed lakes, roughly 350 are currently being stocked (noted by the symbol ◀). Many other lakes not listed here are also part of the stocking program.

For information on individual waters, including species stocked, size of fish, numbers and release dates, go to <http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca> and click on "Fishing Regulations" under Popular Topics and follow the links.