

Skeena steelhead regulation changes - frequently asked questions
Effective April 1, 2012

1. What is the purpose of the new steelhead regulations?

The new regulations are intended to address longstanding concerns regarding the management of anglers in the Skeena recreational steelhead fishery. Key issues identified were crowding, illegal guiding, licencing consistency and the management of angling guides and tourist anglers. These changes reflect social choices on how to maintain a world class angling opportunity in balance with the interests of resident anglers, angling guides and the regional business and tourism sector.

2. What is the definition of a B.C. resident, a non-resident Canadian and a non-resident alien angler?

The definition section of the Freshwater Fishing Regulations Synopsis (see link below) states a resident “means your primary residence is in B.C., AND a) you are a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant, AND have been physically present in B.C. for the greater portion of each of six calendar months out of the immediately preceding 12 calendar months, OR b) you are NOT a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant, but have been physically present in BC for the greater portion of each of the immediately preceding 12 calendar months.

A non-resident Canadian “means you are not a B.C. resident, but a) you are a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant, OR b) your primary residence is in Canada, AND you have resided in Canada for the immediately preceding 12 months. A non-resident alien means you are neither a B.C. resident nor a non-resident Canadian.

http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/fish/regulations/docs/1113/fishing-synopsis_2011-13.pdf

3. Do the new regulation changes affect non-resident Canadian anglers?

Yes. Regulation changes that apply to non-resident Canadians include extensions to Classified Waters period and mandatory steelhead stamp requirement (Lakelse River, Zymoetz River Class 1 and Class 2 sections, Kitsumkalum River and Skeena River Section 4) and changes from Class 2 to Class 1 designation (Lakelse River and Suskwa Rivers). In these instances, non-resident Canadians will be required to purchase a Classified Waters license and a steelhead stamp during the new times and also pay a higher fee (\$40/day) for a Classified Waters licence where rivers have been changed from a Class 2 to Class 1 designation.

It is important to note that the new Canadian resident-only times and zone restrictions do not apply to B.C. resident and non-resident Canadian anglers.

4. Are Canadian citizens not currently residing in Canada restricted during the new Canadian resident-only times and zones?

Yes. Only Canadian residents (either a B.C. resident or non-resident Canadian) may fish during the Canadian resident-only times and zones. Some exceptions apply where guiding is allowed. See Questions 5 and 6 below for more information.

5. Are non-resident alien anglers required to hire a guide during the Classified Waters Period?

No, but there are limitations. If a non-resident alien angler desires to fish during restricted times i.e. Canadian resident-only times and zones, they may do so by hiring a guide in some cases. This is permitted on rivers where guiding is allowed during Canadian resident-only times and zones. See Table 1 below for more information.

Table 1. Locations and effective dates for Canadian resident-only times and zones.

River	Canadian resident-only time	Effective Date (Classified Waters period)*	Zone	Is Guiding Allowed?
Bulkley	Weekend	Sept 1 - Oct 31	Entire River	Yes
Telkwa	All Week	Sept 1 - Oct 31	Entire River	No
Morice	Weekend	Sept 1 - Oct 31	Entire River	Yes
Babine	Weekend	Sept 1 - Oct 31	Nilkitkwa Lake outlet (smolt fence) to Nilkitkwa River confluence	No
Kispiox	Weekend	Sept 1 - Oct 31	Entire River	Yes
Kitwanga	Weekend	Apr 1 - Mar 31	Entire River	No
Kitseguecla	Weekend	Apr 1 - Mar 31	Entire River	No
Suskwa	Weekend	Apr 1 - Mar 31	Entire River	No
Skeena Section 4*	Weekend	Jul 1 - Dec 31	Two zones:	
			1) Shegunia River confluence to Sedan Creek confluence	Yes
			2) Chindemash Creek confluence to 1.5 km above Zymoetz River confluence	No
Zymoetz (Class 1)	Fri to Sun	Jul 24 - Dec 31	Entire Class 1 Section	Yes
Zymoetz (Class 2)	Friday	Jul 24 - May 31	Entire Class 2 Section	Yes
	Saturday	Jul 24 - May 31	Entire Class 2 Section	Yes, from Mattson Creek confluence downstream to Skeena River confluence only
	Sunday	Jul 24 - May 31	Entire Class 2 Section	No
Lakelse	All Week	Apr 1 - Mar 31	Lakelse Lake outlet to powerline crossing, located 3.5 km upstream of the Lakelse confluence with the Skeena River	No
Kitsumkalum	Saturday	Apr 1 - Mar 31	Kitsumkalum Lake outlet to Glacier Creek confluence	No
	Sunday	Apr 1 - Mar 31	Entire River	No

* Note – The Skeena River Section 4 extends from 1.5 km above the Zymoetz River confluence to the headwaters.

6. Where can non-resident alien anglers fish on weekends in the Skeena watershed?

There are a number of steelhead fishing opportunities where non-resident alien anglers can fish seven days a week without restriction. For example, the Skeena River can be fished seven days a week with the exception of two zones. The Skeena River tributaries below Terrace are also open seven days, including the Exstew, Zymagotitz, Exchamsiks, Ecstall, Gitnadoix, Kasiks and Khyex rivers. For anglers in the Terrace area, the Kitsumkalum River is open on Saturdays from Glacier Creek to its confluence with the Skeena River. Anglers looking for alternate fishing options may want to consider the Nass watershed. It offers fall steelhead fishing opportunities and a Classified Waters license is not required. For more information, refer to the brochure available at:

http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/fish/licences/docs/steelhead_regulation_skeena.pdf

While river fishing attracts considerable attention in the Skeena Region, there are a number of wild and stocked lakes that provide excellent fishing for a number of species. For individuals seeking alternate angling options, the following links may be of interest:

Skeena Region featured lakes guide - <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/skeena/fish/>

Region 6 Stocked lakes - <http://www.gofishbc.com/where-to-fish/location-map.aspx?regionID=6>

7. Can a non-resident alien fish lakes seven days a week during the Classified Water period?

Yes. Lakes are not Classified Waters and they have no licence restrictions aside from conservation measures (i.e. harvest limits, seasonal closures etc.) as identified in the Freshwater Fishing Regulations Synopsis (see link provided for question 1).

8. Why is a steelhead stamp mandatory as of July 1 on the Skeena River Section 4 Classified Water?

A steelhead conservation surcharge stamp (steelhead stamp) was formerly required July 1 if anglers were fishing for steelhead. This stamp is now mandatory regardless of species being targeted. This change was brought forward to reflect when steelhead enter the Skeena River and are available to the sport fishery.

9. Why must I purchase a steelhead stamp when I am not fishing for steelhead?

Some rivers require anglers to purchase a steelhead stamp, regardless of the species targeted. This is in place to support the conservation of this species and gather information on angler effort and catch (via the annual mail out questionnaire). It also assists with enforcement by preventing anglers that are targeting steelhead from claiming to be fishing for another species to avoid purchasing this licence.

10. Why did some rivers change from a Class 2 to a Class 1 designation?

This change was recommended to better recognize the high quality fishing experience these rivers offer. This change applies to the Lakelse and Suskwa rivers.

11. Is the Skeena River between the Kitsumkalum River and the Zymoetz River (including Ferry Island) still un-classified and are anglers required to purchase a steelhead stamp for this section?

The section designated as 1.5 km above the Kitsumkalum River to 1.5 km above the Zymoetz River (known as Skeena Section 3) is not a Classified Water and there are no restrictions for non-resident alien anglers in this area. A steelhead stamp is only required if anglers are targeting this species.

12. Why is the Canadian resident-only period three days long on the Zymoetz River?

This measure was recommended to provide B.C. resident anglers with improved opportunity for a quality angling experience on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. This change also addresses concerns regarding long term camping by non-resident alien anglers.

13. Can non-resident alien anglers fish the entire Skeena River seven days a week?

No, there are new restrictions. The following zones are closed on weekends to non-guided, non-resident alien anglers:

- Zone 1: Shegunia River confluence downstream to Sedan Creek confluence.
- Zone 2: Chindemash Creek confluence downstream to 1.5 km upstream from the Zymoetz River confluence.

Guiding is allowed in Zone 1 which permits non-resident alien anglers to fish this zone using the services of a licenced angling guide. See the following link for maps of these zones.

http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/fish/licences/docs/steelhead_regulation_skeena.pdf

14. Do the new steelhead regulations impact anglers who do not fish for steelhead?

Yes, in some instances. The Canadian resident-only times and zones restrict non-resident alien anglers from fishing, regardless of the species targeted. B.C. residents fishing for salmon on the Skeena River Section 4 Classified Water must also purchase a steelhead stamp as of July 1 when one was formerly not required. All classes of anglers fishing for salmon must also comply with the new time requirements for when a Classified Waters licence and steelhead stamp are required.

Non-resident alien anglers are encouraged to review river-specific regulations prior to purchasing a Classified Waters licence as all sales are final. If you are unsure of how the regulation changes affect your ability to fish, check with a Service BC Centre or a Licence Vendor or call the Fish and Wildlife regional office in Smithers at: 250-847-7260.

15. What changes were made to the e-licencing system to incorporate these new regulations?

The e-licencing system was updated with additional information to ensure anglers are aware of the changes. Specifically, when non-resident Canadian and non-resident alien anglers select a Classified Water to purchase a licence, a pop-up box appears. This indicates to the user what new regulations apply to the particular water so that a decision can be made prior to purchasing a licence. It is important to note that e-licencing was not designed to restrict licence sales. As such, non-resident alien anglers must ensure that they are aware of this to avoid purchasing a licence during a restricted time.