

The Stamp River

VAN ISLE · MANAGEMENT UNIT 1-7 · THE SOMASS SYSTEM · RULES AS OF 25 OCT 2026

The Stamp comes out of Great Central Lake and runs northwest through Stamp River Provincial Park. At Port Alberni it meets the Sproat and the two form the Somass, and the tide begins on the Somass, at the Papermill Dam boundary the province names itself. The Stamp is fresh water the whole way you can fish it. **SOURCED**

Most of the rulebook that matters here sits in a handful of lines almost nobody reads. This is that handful, dated. Every line carries a label: **sourced** (the document is listed at the bottom), **local** (local pattern, with a name on it), **inferred** (worked out from what the record does not say), **gap** (the record does not answer it).

WHAT YOU CAN KEEP

FISH	DAILY	THE PART THAT BITES
Trout	4 on paper	Not more than 1 over 50 cm. Not more than 2 from streams, and those must be hatchery. Every stream in Region 1 releases all wild trout all year, and neither agency's stocking record shows trout put in the Stamp, so expect to release. SOURCED INFERRED
Chinook	2	Aug 25–Dec 31. Only 1 may be over 77 cm. SOURCED
Coho	2	From 3 Oct through Dec 31 both may be unmarked. The hatchery-only rule lifted on 3 October. SOURCED
Sockeye, chum, pink	0	The default limit in Region 1 is zero unless the table says otherwise, and the Stamp table does not list them. SOURCED INFERRED
Steelhead	0 in practice	Wild steelhead are release-only everywhere in BC. A hatchery fish counts inside the trout quota, capped at 10 a year province-wide. Whether any are released into the Stamp now is not answered by either stocking record, so treat an unclipped fish as wild. SOURCED GAP

Across all salmon: 4 per day from tidal and fresh water combined. Possession is twice the daily limit and never more than 8 salmon total — so 4 chinook at 2 a day, not 8. Plus 10 chinook over 50 cm a year from all fresh waters. Minimum size 30 cm chinook and sockeye, 25 cm coho, nose to tail fork. **SOURCED**

WHAT YOU MUST RELEASE

RELEASE All wild steelhead. All wild trout from any stream. All char, Dolly Varden included. A healed scar where the adipose fin was is the only sign of a hatchery fish.

SOURCED

CLOSED, AND OPEN AGAIN

Every closure on the Stamp is a named section with a window on it, not the whole river. There is no river-wide season here. The region's Jul 15–Aug 31 stream closure covers Management Units 1-1 to 1-6; the Stamp is in 1-7. **SOURCED**

SECTION, CLOSED TO ALL FINFISH	WINDOW	AS OF 25 OCT
200 m above to 500 m below the Stamp Falls fishway	Jun 15–Nov 15	Closed
Hatchery lagoon inlet down to the lagoon outlet (Robertson Creek)	Aug 25–Oct 31	Closed
Powerline crossing down ~500 m to the lagoon inlet	Oct 1–Oct 14	Reopened 15 Oct
Ash River confluence up to the Great Central Lake dam	Jan 1–Apr 30	Open

The stretch above the tidal boundary is a different table, and mostly shut. The Somass is closed from the Papermill Dam boundary upstream, Aug 25–Nov 15, with a bait ban Jun 1–Aug 24 and a 7.5 kW engine cap. **SOURCED** How far that runs depends on which agency you read: the province says about 1.0 km, to signs at the Falls Road gravel pit and the south end of the Collins Farm; DFO says about 0.5 km, to the northeast corner of Collins Farm. The signs are the line, the distances are descriptions.

BAIT AND ROE: THE PLAIN ANSWER

Above the "Girl Guide Falls" boundary signs: bait banned all year, no exceptions. **Below those signs:** bait banned June 1 to August 24 only. As of 25 Oct 2026 roe is legal below the signs, illegal above them, and pointless inside the closed sections. **SOURCED**

DFO puts the signs about 275 m upstream of Beaver Creek's mouth; the province says 250 m. The signs are the boundary, the distance is a description. Single barbless hook, every stream in Region 1, all year.

SOURCED

WHAT YOU NEED TO FISH HERE

BC freshwater angling licence for any species in non-tidal water: annual \$41.15 resident / \$62.87 non-resident / \$91.44 non-resident alien; 8-day \$22.86 / \$41.15 / \$57.14; 1-day \$11.43 / \$22.86 / \$22.86. Licence year 1 Apr–31 Mar. Buy it online in WILD or in person at a vendor, FrontCounter

BC or Service BC; there is no residency rule about who may buy, only a fee difference. A free Fish and Wildlife ID (FWID) comes first, and the old angler numbers retired after 31 March 2026.

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Plus a steelhead conservation stamp if you fish for steelhead at all, keep or release: \$28.57 resident, \$68.57 non-resident. BC requires it anywhere in the province, and it is not a Classified Waters question, and one stamp covers you for the licence year however many short-term licences you buy. SOURCED

Plus a non-tidal salmon conservation stamp if you keep a salmon: \$17.14 resident, \$34.29 non-resident, tax not included, valid to 31 March. DFO says the tidal and non-tidal salmon stamps are not interchangeable, so the one you bought for the inlet does not carry up the river. SOURCED

Carry your Fish and Wildlife ID and photo ID while fishing, and an unmodified paper copy of the licence when a conservation stamp and a retention record are required. SOURCED

WHAT IS ACTUALLY PLANTED HERE

The provincial stocking report shows no releases at the Stamp in the last five years. SOURCED

The federal record says something different, and both are the record. Across the nine published DFO enhancement reports for brood years 2014–2022, **one row names the Stamp as a release site**: brood year 2020, coho, 179,630 smolts. SOURCED The rest of the Robertson Creek project's output goes to Robertson Creek itself, to seapens in Alberni Inlet, or to the Nahmint — 5.4 to 6.3 million chinook a year among them, in the three years where the column is a release count. SOURCED

Two records, two agencies, one watershed, and they do not agree. Neither one is complete on its own: a missing row is not a zero. And every figure above is a smolt leaving for the sea. It is not the fish you meet in October — those came back on their own.

THE RUN, AND WHERE THE RECORD STOPS

The forecast. The 2026 pre-season expectation was a high-abundance year. One number is in public and dated: "700,000 to 1,000,000" (Ha-Shilth-Sa, 8 Jul 2026, quoting the Hupacasath fisheries manager). DFO's own 2026 Outlook publishes no figure for Great Central or Sproat — both read "forecast currently unknown". SOURCED GAP no second dated forecast figure for this system is in the record.

The count. By end of 29 June 2026, 99,632 adult sockeye had passed the Stamp fishway and 35,289 the Sproat. That is a count at a date, not a season total. SOURCED

The final return is not published yet. That number closes after the season and DFO publishes it on a lag. GAP

LOCAL PATTERN

WINDOWS	Chinook late summer, peaking Sep–Oct. Coho Sep–Dec. Sockeye Jun–Aug, release only. Steelhead Nov–Mar. Resident trout year round. LOCAL Credited to Bea, 21 Oct 2026. BC Parks agrees on the fall: sockeye begin running in August, then coho and chinook "right into December". SOURCED
ACCESS	Roadside access is easy, so pressure sits at the short walks. BC Parks writes, in one sentence, "Do not swim, use floating devices or boat in this park and above the waterfalls (a boat pull out is available approximately 500 m upstream of the falls adjacent to the campground)". The pull-out named there sits upstream of the falls, which is the direction the same sentence says not to boat. Ask at the park before planning a run above the falls; the record does not say whether that pull-out is a launch or just a bank. No motorized vehicle access on the trail network or in the day-use area. SOURCED GAP

SOURCES AND METHOD

- BC Freshwater Fishing Regulations Synopsis 2025–2027, Region 1 table, MU 1-7, rows Stamp / Somass / Sproat.
- DFO, Region 1 freshwater recreational salmon limits, openings and closures (page dated 5 Oct 2026); notices FN1069, FN1013, FN0504.
- DFO, licence requirements and 2026/27 fees. BC, recreational freshwater licences (page updated 22 Oct 2026) and BC Conservation Surcharges (steelhead and salmon stamp rules and fees).
- DFO Salmonid Enhancement Program, Post-Season Reports, brood years 2014–2022.
- Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC, Fish Stocking Reports, waterbody "STAMP RIVER".
- BC Parks, Stamp River Park. BC Geographical Names, Stamp / Sproat / Somass entries.
- Ha-Shilth-Sa, 8 Jul 2026; DFO Pacific Salmon Outlook 2026.

Read and re-checked 25 Oct 2026. Gaps are named, never estimated. Where two agencies describe the same line differently, both descriptions are printed. Recent DFO release totals beyond the reports above are held in SEP records and are not quoted here. Full revision history: [changelog](#).

Tell me which water you're headed for →

info@thetiderip.com · Planning a trip, or about to fish water you haven't fished before? Write and tell me which one. I'll tell you what the record says about it, and what it doesn't. If you want the whole thing pulled fresh for your own dates, that's the custom sheet, and I'll say what it costs before you decide anything.