

Snootli Hatchery Tours

The Snootli Hatchery, operated by the federal department of Fisheries and Oceans, is located a quick five-minute drive west of Hagensborg on Hwy. 20. It serves an area of approximately 19,000 sq. miles/31,000 sq. km, and 62.14 miles /100km radius around, extending from Bella Bella to the west, Smith Inlet to the south, Kimsquit in the north, and to Chilko Lake in the Chilcotin in the east.



Photo courtesy Michael Wigle

Originally the goal was to work with 10 million eggs, increasing the adult chum salmon that return to the Bella Coola River. Over the years expansions have

helped increase the capacity to over 12 million eggs and not just chum are hatched. Chinook, Coho and Sockeye are raised in cycle. All the eggs are harvested by the staff, catching the spawning wild pacific salmon, milking the eggs and sperm, and leaving the spent adults to nurture the ecosystem as they have for tens of thousands of years.



Photo courtesy Michael Wigle

Snootli Hatchery staff work year round harvesting the eggs, feeding the tiny fry, and eventually releasing the young fish back into the very waters the eggs were gathered from. A guide at the hatchery will explain how they time their release to coincide with the travels of the wild fry and how they mark them to be able to tell them apart from the wild when they return a few years later.

Tours:

Guided tours are available on a drop in basis Monday to Fridays and there is

no charge for the tours. Depending on the timing of the trip to the valley, visitors may have an opportunity to watch a harvest in the rivers, feed the fry, and learn about the hatchery and its purpose. Experience up close, and personal, the life cycle of this miraculous fish spawning in the mid coast watersheds.

The Visitor Information Center in Bella Coola can provide dates and hours of operation for the Snootli Hatchery and information about the annual fish count within Tweedsmuir Park.



Photo courtesy Michael Wigle

Did you know?

Chinook, also known as "Spring" and "Tyee", or "King" in the USA, can grow to over 45kg/100lbs! The world record stands at 57.27 kg/126lbs.) Not all salmon are high in fat. Chum have low oil content. Most Salmon can swim about 8.6miles/14 km per hour.

Snootli Hatchery Tours are sponsored by:

Bella Coola Valley Learning Society

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