

Coho Salmon- *Will they return?*

Bowker Creek used to be a perfect home for Coho Salmon. So why did they leave? In simple terms it was because of pollution, illegal dumping, and since Bowker Creek is 60% underground it makes it difficult for these Salmon to lay there eggs. The layout of Bowker Creek is no longer suitable for these Salmon. Though there are still things we can do to bring them back. For example, the 100 year layout plan for bowker creek shows the creek for the most part not in tunnels, and creating an ideal green watershed for coho salmon.

For the salmon to return to Bowker creek we need to first create an ideal water quality for the creek. Because of pollution the water quality of the creek has gone downhill creating an unsuitable environment for sensitive animals. This is a main reason for animals to leave bowker creek and one of the reasons that the coho salmon left. The temperature in November is on average 12-13 degrees celsius. Usually young or spawning coho salmon like low temperatures such as around 10 degrees celsius. These slightly higher temperatures can be due to lack of trees around bowker creek to shade the creek. Temperatures that are too high can result in health problems for the salmon and stop embryo development. Another important and necessary part of water quality is dissolved oxygen. Luckily bowker creek seems to be doing fine with that as of 2017. But we should keep a watch on it to prevent it from dropping below eight which is the ideal dissolved oxygen level for coho salmon.

Coho salmon require a healthy and safe creek, the CRD's 100 year plan, plans to identify water problems and causes. It also plans to meet or exceed provincial water quality guidelines for animals. If we can establish and maintain natural banks and protect the water quality, we can create a better and safer environment for the salmon and other native wildlife. However, pollution may not be entirely to blame for the decrease in these salmon. California has seen a major decrease in Coho salmon since mid-20th century. From loss of suitable habitat, overexploiting, and climate change has made a dent in this species. Coho Salmon have recently been declared an endangered species. So if we can get Coho salmon to return to the creek we may be able to help repopulate this species.

In conclusion, if we can make Bowker Creek a suitable place for salmon we should. Coho Salmon will contribute to the creek's ecosystem. The more species you have in an ecosystem the wider and bigger amount of plants that can grow and a higher amount of species can grow and thrive in Bowker Creeks riparian ecosystem.

Credits: Katie Mclaughlin,

https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs/default-source/es-watersheds-pdf/bowker-creek/blueprint/2012blueprint-4-principles-and-actions-for-watershed-management.pdf?sfvrsn=cb349fc9_2

<https://fishchoice.com/buying-guide/coho-salmon>