

## Small Town, Big Fishing Problem!

by Ron Kirstein, edited by Lisa Cole

Port Renfrew is a small town **with a major fishing problem**. The problem is the sport fishing is great and only a few people know that.

We arrive in [Port Renfrew](#) in late afternoon. Captain Quigley greets us at the entrance to Osprey Cabins. Quigley and his family provide these comfortable cabins in a beautiful rural setting - and there's an outdoor hot tub to boot! Their place is one of the most popular accommodations in Port Renfrew, and their rates are very reasonable.



Lisa, Ron & Herb with their catch of the day...  
Photo by Ron Kirstein/Larry Quigley



Larry Quigley also operates these great self-contained cabins at Port Renfrew just a couple of minutes from the dock..

Photo by Larry Quigley



The super-size hot tub right by our cabin.  
Photo by Larry Quigley

The first one I catch is a screamer! They call it that because it grabs the bait and takes off. The line literally 'screams' as the fish runs. Quigley knows what to do. He puts the boat in gear and chases the fish. My eyes almost pop when I look down at the reel and there are only about 3 wraps of line left! In seconds, the fish had run almost 300 yards of line. I reel as fast as I can until the line's tight again and the fight's back on.

Non-stop excitement, boats all around us are getting strike after strike. On Quigley's radio, we can hear the guides sharing information about their catches - "Double strike, 40 feet down!" They all share their success so everyone else can succeed too.

Even when there's a lull, and the fish aren't biting, Captain Quigley is entertaining us. He teaches us his latest fish-luring chant and the accompanying dance: "Chinook, Chinook - Bite on my hook, my hook!" There is never a dull moment on board.

And when the fish are biting, Quigley is a very patient teacher: "Let him run! That's it... He's got the whole boat to play with. Let

Captain Quigley is one of the most skilled and knowledgeable guides we've ever met. We've been out with the affable "Capt'n Quig" before, at his other fishing operation in [Sooke, BC.](#) (45 minutes west of Victoria), so we know we're in good hands!

The alarm shatters our solid sleep at 5 a.m. We're on the water by 6:00. The sun is just coming up behind us as we speed westward, heading towards the mouth of the Port San Juan Inlet. Quigley's boat is fast and powerful. We hang on to our seats as we bounce over the big waves!



We started fishing at daybreak, the scenery was spectacular!  
Photo by Ron Kirstein

We stop just off [Camper's Bay](#), where the West Coast Trail from Port Renfrew meets the "Pacific Ocean" for the first time. The shoreline cliffs were spectacular and carved into numerous huge dark caves.

Captain Quigley points over the port side towards the open Pacific. "Next stop Hawaii, and that-away Japan!"

The water is as calm as it ever gets out here, but the rolling swells are huge. The sun is shining brightly now, but cool dark fog is already rising from the water,

him tire himself out..."



Larry Quigley our guide was always busy keeping the fish coming.  
Photo by Ron Kirstein

Later, Quigley tells us a story about the biggest fish ever landed on his boat. He had taken an elderly couple on an expedition, and it was turning out to be a disappointingly uneventful day - not one bite! Until they decided to turn back....

Then, all of a sudden, they got a nibble. It was a huge struggle, but with Quigley's help, they reeled it in - a 52 pounder! Now that's a really big salmon. It went on to win several categories in the fishing derby.

We catch our limit long before the charter's over and each fish is in the twenty-pound range. We have about 100lbs of fish on board, enough to feed us all winter! (We were fishing for spring salmon as the Coho and Sockeye fisheries were temporarily closed.) That night, back in Victoria, one filet fills the grill on my barbeque! I serve dinner to five hungry adults and afterwards, there's still 2/3 left over. We're talking serious salmon here, folks!

Small town, big fishing problem - right?

cloaking the cliffs. It looks like the trees are suspended in the air far above us.

Captain Quigley tells us we're sure to catch some big ones today. Swiftsure Bank, where Juan de Fuca Strait drops off into the deep blue Pacific, is where halibut and salmon are most plentiful. It's hard to believe we're fishing on the edge of the open Pacific Ocean.



Herb fighting a big one...  
Photo by Ron Kirstein

Now you know.

### **About the Author**

Ron Kirstein is the owner of a [Travel & Tourism Web site](#) (since 1995). Ron has traveled the length and breadth of Vancouver Island in search of adventures. For exciting additional information and color pictures of Ron's Island Fishing Adventure visit the [Travel Magazine](#). To connect with Larry Quigley visit [Quigley's Sportfishing and Osprey Cabins](#) and follow the links to "Recipes" to receive your **free monthly fish recipe** courtesy of Larry.

### **Special Fish Recipe:**

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Dredge fish pieces in corn starch, sprinkle with hot chilli pepper flakes and freshly grated ginger. In an ovenproof fry pan, heat enough canola oil to cover the bottom of the pan to very hot. Add a bit of sesame oil for flavor. Quickly saute 1 clove of minced garlic. Add the fish and sear on both sides very quickly in the hot oil. Place pan in a 400 degree oven for 10-20 minutes until fish is cooked through. Remove pan to stove top and sprinkle with 1-2 tablespoons of soya sauce to taste. Serve immediately and enjoy!

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