

Deka Lake Cabin February 22-24, 2018
Kokanee Ice Fishing Trip Report



My friend Adrian and his wife Sara own a lovely cabin at Deka Lake which is situated 30 minutes east of 100 Mile House on “The Fishing Highway”. Driving time from our homes in Kamloops to the cabin is approximately 2 hours and is most easily accessed via the Yellowhead Highway to Little Fort before turning west on highway 24. Adrian and I headed up there the morning of February 22 with plans to stay for 3 days and 2 nights. Deka Lake is stocked with Kokanee (landlocked Sockeye Salmon) and is one of the best water bodies in BC to fish for them. Kokanee are delicious to eat, as anyone who has ever had Sockeye can attest to. Ice fishing for Kokanee was the main focus of the trip.

The first order of business upon arrival was to dig out the cabin. The area had a considerable amount of snow and a path had to be shoveled out to unload our gear and provide access.

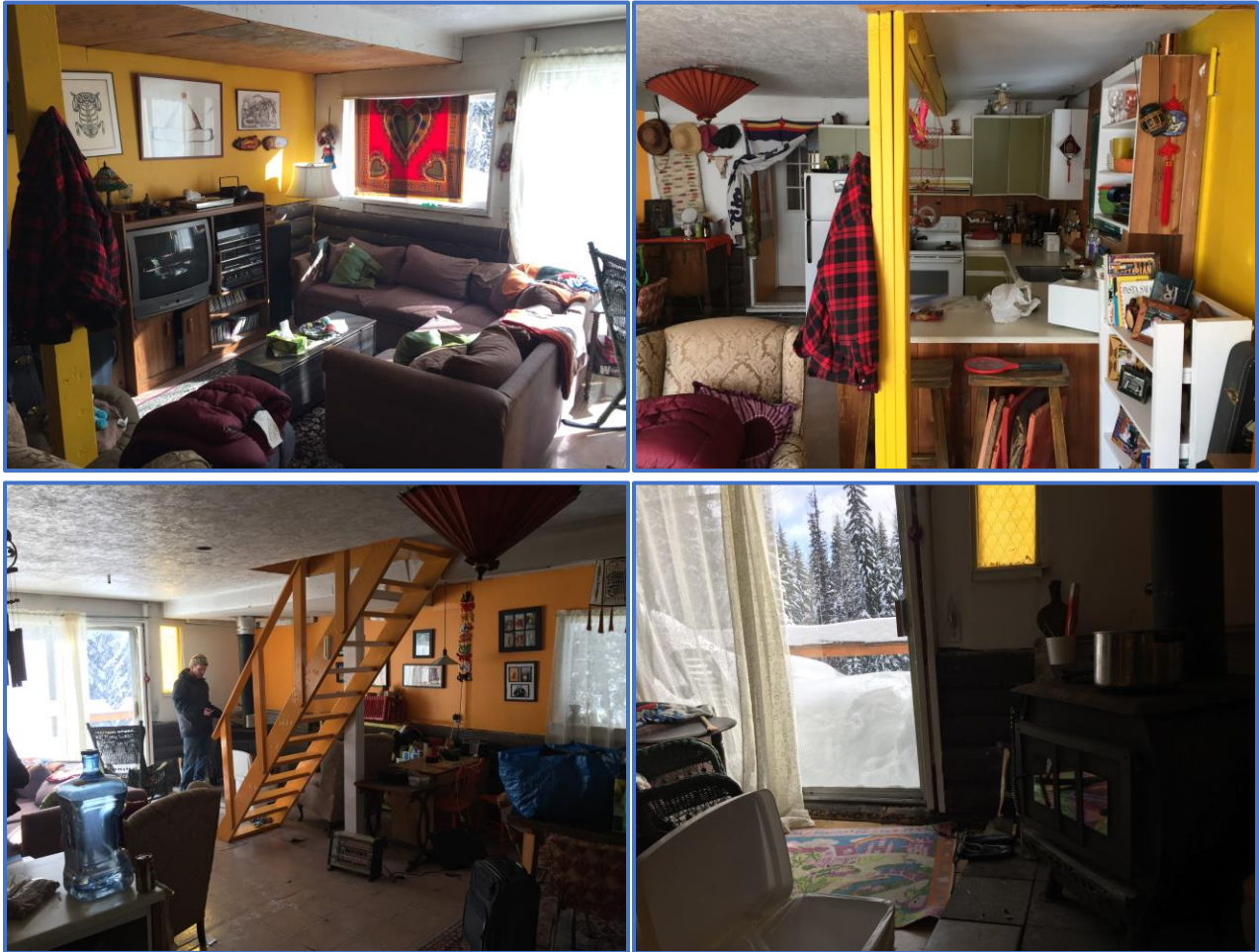


path cut in from the road



front of the cabin

cabin interior



The cabin is heated by a wood stove but has full electricity for powering a full kitchen. Water is accessed from an adjacent creek or packed in. A composting toilet and an outhouse are also installed. The main cabin sleeps 6-8 people and there is also a smaller detached guest cabin. The deck on the back of the cabin offers spectacular views of the private two-tiered backyard. A larger deck has been constructed near the creek with a firepit but there was 1 meter of snow on it when we were there. The lot is a rare find with forest on all sides. Although there are neighbouring lots and houses nearby, the property remains very private and secluded. What a fantastic 4 season getaway location only 2 hours out of town!

After a trail in was shoveled out, gear was unloaded, and a fire was lit to start heating up the interior, we decided to head out Kokanee fishing. After driving along the north side of Little Deka, we spotted a group out on the ice Kokanee fishing. When targeting Kokanee, it is important to have a fish finder to determine what depth they are feeding at. Kokanee often school together so finding where they are is crucial. Books and web sites will tell you they are often between 10-40 feet down. Being the first time targeting Kokanee at this lake, neither of us were sure where to start. Seeing a group already set up gave us a starting point and we walked out and introduced ourselves. As it was, these people were in the process of leaving so we were not only shown a good spot for Kokanee, we were also offered two freshly drilled holes! One of the people leaving had a 100+ year old full Buffalo coat purchased at a thrift store and pulled a firepit on skis behind his snowmobile. The locals know how to do it! We found out that this particular location was approximately 70 feet deep and near a drop off → a perfect Kokanee area. One of the people mentioned that they had caught one and had some bites at 15 feet in that location.



One of the people in a full Buffalo coat with his pull-behind firepit.

We had previously marked our fishing line at 10, 15, and 20 feet with a permanent marker to give us something to go by in terms of depth. On this afternoon, we fished for the first hour or so without setting up the shelter as the sun was out and made the cool -15 seem at least a little warmer. Within 15 minutes Adrian had one on and brought it in. Kokanee are gorgeous looking and tasting fish and it was a joy just to see one on top of the ice. We fished for an hour or so more and I caught one as well. In addition, we had enough bites to know this was a great Kokanee fishing location on the lake. As darkness settled in, we walked back to our vehicle and drove the short distance back to Adrian's cabin. Supper consisted of some sausage on the bbq and some deer meat (venison) from a deer Adrian had hunted late last year. Both were put on a bun and washed down with some Okanagan Spring Pale Ale. By the time we went to bed, the cabin had warmed to nearly 20 degrees and we enjoyed a comfortable sleep.

The next morning, I awoke and noticed one and then two Moose in his backyard across the creek. They seemed wary of me and bolted when I went to grab my cell phone camera. We believe it was a female and a calf. Adrian cooked eggs and sausage and then he suggested a quick snowshoe to see the moose tracks and check out the back area. The snow was deep and moving was energy draining but we did go have a look. Thankfully Adrian brought an extra pair because moving without them would have been almost impossible.



Adrian heading out on snowshoes



Moose tracks behind
Adrian's cabin

An area where the Moose had bedded
down. Difficult to see on this photo.



Breakfast is served!

Lunch was had at a restaurant in the area and then we set out for Kokanee fishing afternoon #2. This day proved more productive with 6 being caught. Photos of our shelter set up on Little Dekka Lake.



Some of the Kokanee caught that day



Supper consisted of sausage and venison followed by a drink at the nearby Wildman's Lounge. It was here that we heard about a fishing derby taking place on nearby Sheridan Lake for Rainbow Trout. With 8 Kokanee already in the bag and Rainbow Trout being more of our "bread and butter", we decided the \$1000 grand prize for the largest fish was too great of a lure to pass up. This saw us on Sheridan Lake shortly after sun rise on the morning of Feb. 24. After fishing there for around 3 hours without even seeing a fish, we left and packed up the cabin before an hour or so more on Deka Lake for Kokanee. It seemed that no one on Sheridan was having much luck. It struck me as a lake that had huge trout but which could only be caught by knowing the secrets of ice fishing that particular lake. In the end, we were happy with leaving the derby early and getting more time on Deka before leaving the area that afternoon. One more Kokanee was reeled in but bites were a plenty that afternoon.



In the end, we caught 9 Kokanee in several afternoons of fishing. What a treat to be able to catch this special fish that tastes so good in such a wonderfully natural setting.



A mini-van on Adrian's property show the snow level in the area. Snowshoes were an absolute necessity, especially walking out on the lake to the fishing area.



Our total catch

Kokanee cleaning/filleting

