

Alberta Conservation Association 2009/10 Project Summary Report

Project Name: *Enhanced Fish Stocking Project*

Fisheries Program Manager: Peter Aku

Project Leader: Trevor Council

Primary ACA staff on project:

Trevor Council

Partnerships

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development

Key Findings

- The Enhanced Fish Stocking Project (EFSP) provides anglers with increased opportunity to catch and harvest Rainbow Trout in regions of Alberta where angling opportunities would not exist otherwise.
- In 2009, stocked a total of 61 waterbodies with 131,100 20-cm Rainbow Trout during 86 stocking events. Three private growers, operating under a total of ten contracts, supplied the 20-cm Rainbow Trout in May, June and September.
- We have stocked an average of approximately 131,700 Rainbow Trout (20 cm) annually since assuming responsibility for the EFSP.
- We have stocked approximately 1.58 million 20-cm Rainbow Trout through 1,039 stocking events since 1998.

Introduction

Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) assumed responsibility for the Enhanced Fish Stocking Project (EFSP) in 1998. The primary objective of the EFSP is to provide Alberta anglers with increased opportunity to catch and, wherever possible, harvest more fish while maintaining the integrity of Alberta's natural waters and fish populations. The focus of the EFSP is to provide larger Rainbow Trout (minimum 20 cm) to put-and-take ponds, thereby producing better returns for anglers. In addition, the EFSP provides opportunities for anglers to catch 20-cm Rainbow Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) in regions of Alberta where such angling opportunities would not exist otherwise. The majority of Rainbow Trout stockings occur in the 'white zone' of Alberta, east of Highway 2 and in waterbodies that frequently winterkill. To prevent interaction with native stocks, all waterbodies are outside the 'green zone' and generally require less than 4,000 Rainbow Trout.

Methods

We delivered all Rainbow Trout stockings through contracts with private growers. We sent out contracts for tender a year-and-half prior to the stocking date to give the private grower ample opportunity to grow the Rainbow Trout to the 20-cm minimum size limit. The majority of the Rainbow Trout stocking occurred prior to the May long weekend. We monitored contracts closely to ensure that the appropriate number and size of Rainbow Trout were stocked in the designated waterbodies within a set time frame. Once growers were ready to transport the Rainbow Trout, a stocking date was arranged with the load-out monitor and the lake contact. The load-out monitor traveled to the grower's operation to inventory the Rainbow Trout being shipped, as well as measured a random subsample (20 – 100 fish) to ensure that fish were of adequate size. A penalty system was in place and enforced to deter growers from stocking under-sized Rainbow Trout. The load-out monitor also assessed the condition of the fish by checking condition factor (plumpness) and obvious signs of disease and deformity. Once the correct number of fish were loaded into transport containers, the load-out monitor and grower signed a form documenting the number and size of the Rainbow Trout. Once the Rainbow Trout arrived at the receiving waterbody, a lake contact monitored the stocking process to determine if there were transport or stocking-related mortalities.

Results

In 2009, we stocked a total of 61 waterbodies with 131,100 Rainbow Trout (20 cm) during 86 stocking events. Three private growers, operating under a total of 10 contracts, supplied the Rainbow Trout. We completed approximately 60% of the Rainbow Trout stockings during the first stocking prior to the May long weekend, and completed the remainder as part of the June and September stockings.

A total of 1,039 Rainbow Trout stockings occurred within the EFSP since 1998 when ACA assumed responsibility of the EFSP (Table 1). We stocked approximately 1.58 million Rainbow Trout during this 12-year period. The number of waterbodies stocked with Rainbow Trout ranged from 81 in 1998 to 60 in 2008.

Table 1. Summary of Rainbow Trout stocking within Alberta Conservation Association’s Enhanced Fish Stocking Project from 1998 to 2009.

Year	Number of Waterbodies	Number of stockings	Number of Rainbow Trout
1998	81	100	144,000
1999	74	93	132,650
2000	68	86	131,300
2001	71	85	131,300
2002	67	84	132,100
2003	68	84	131,300
2004	67	85	131,300
2005	66	78	122,100
2006	64	85	131,100
2007	64	87	131,100
2008	60	86	131,100
2009	61	86	131,100
Total	811	1,039	1,580,450
Average	68	87	131,704

Conclusions

The EFSP provides anglers with increased opportunity to catch and harvest Rainbow Trout in regions of Alberta where angling opportunities would not exist otherwise. Private growers, administered through ten contracts, raised and delivered the Rainbow Trout to designated waterbodies in 2009. A total of 61 waterbodies were stocked with 131,100 20-cm Rainbow Trout during 86 stocking events in 2009.

Communications

- A complete list of Rainbow Trout stockings and respective numbers are located on the ACA website and are updated annually.
- Articles were published in local newspapers to promote the project and inform the public of the angling opportunities.

Literature Cited

n/a



Typical size (20 cm) for Rainbow Trout stocked in Alberta Conservation Association's Enhanced Fish Stocking Project. (Photo: Trevor Council)



A typical waterbody stocked in the Enhanced Fish Stocking Project. (Photo: Trevor Council)



Private Rainbow Trout grower stocking Rainbow Trout. (Photo: Trevor Council)



Anglers fishing a stocked pond. (Photo: Trevor Council)