

Alberta Conservation Association (ACA)

Date: 2014-2015

Project Name: Fish Stocking Expansion

Fisheries Program Manager: Peter Aku

Project Leader: Mike Rodtka

Primary ACA staff on project:

Peter Aku, Trevor Council, Kevin Fitzsimmons, Paul Hvenegaard, Mike Rodtka and Diana Rung

Partnerships

- Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development

Key Findings

- Developed prioritized list of fish stocking opportunities.
- Developed two new fish stocking expansion projects for implementation in 2015/16.

Introduction

With construction of the first hatchery in Banff National Park in 1913 and introduction of brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) to the Bow River system as early as 1910, Alberta has a long history of fish culture and stocking (Nelson and Paetz 1992). Fish (largely rainbow trout [*Oncorhynchus mykiss*]) stocking remains an important component of Alberta's recreational angling experience, with an estimated 45% of licensed anglers in a 2010 survey indicating that fishing at stocked trout ponds or lakes is important to them, which was more than twice as many as those who disagreed (Zwickel 2012). Through its role as a delegated administrative organization with extensive experience delivering the Enhanced Fish Stocking project, Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) is well-positioned to expand the scope of its fish stocking activities provincially to help meet this demand.

Methods

We completed a detailed review of the policy and position statements of ACA member groups and provincial angler survey data, and supplemented this review with a survey of ACA fisheries staff, to develop a prioritized list of potential fish stocking expansion opportunities for ACA to consider. Provincial and federal government policies and regulations related to fish stocking were consulted to assess the feasibility of opportunities with the broadest support. Results of this process were used to identify and develop ACA project proposals for 2015/16.

Results

We identified a variety of potential fish stocking expansion opportunities during our review. Two new projects planned for 2015/16, Fish Stocking Expansion – New Lakes and Fish Stocking Expansion New Species/Strains, were developed directly as a result of the Fish Stocking Expansion project, and several others have benefited indirectly. In addition, ACA fisheries staff and managers have a greater understanding of factors that promote fish stocking success.

Conclusions

Fish stocking programs often have ecological, social and political underpinnings that complicate their delivery. We evaluated these elements for a variety of stocking activities and developed related project proposals for the 2015/16 program year. These proposals support the broadening of our fish stocking activities across the province, creating more angling opportunities for Albertans.

Communications

- Presented project results to ACA fisheries staff and senior managers.

Literature Cited

Nelson, J.S., and M.J. Paetz. 1992. The fishes of Alberta. University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Zwickel, H. 2012. Sport fishing in Alberta 2010. Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Fisheries Management Branch, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.