

**Alberta Conservation Association  
2022/2023 Project Summary Report**

**Project Name:** Kids Can Catch Program

**Information, Education and Communications Program Manager:** Don Myhre

**Project Leader:** Ken Kranrod

**Primary ACA staff on project:** Charmaine Brunes, Rhonda Eidick, Colin Eyo, Cassandra Hewitt, Tara Holmwood, Sabrina Hotton, Ken Kranrod, Don Myhre, and Laura Volkman

**Partnerships**

Alberta Agriculture, Forestry & Rural Economic Development	Canadian National Railway Company
Alberta Environment and Parks	Canadian Tire
Alberta Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch	Canadian Tire - Hinton
Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association (AHEIA)	Canadian Wildlife Federation: WILD Outside Program
Alberta Parks	Cargill Meats
AltaLink	Castor & District FCSS
Backroads Mapbooks	Castor Elks Club
Barrow Safety Services, Inc.	City of Beaumont
Bass Pro Shop and Cabela's Outdoor Fund	City of Fort Saskatchewan
BGC Airdrie Club	City of Lacombe
Big Bird BBQ	CN Police Service
Big Chief Jerky	Coronation Elks Club
Big Lakes County FCSS	County of Grande Prairie Parks and Recreation Department
Bow River Fly Fishing Company	D & M Concrete
Braces Plus Orthodontics	David Robson
Buy-Low Foods Westeros	deSIGNS by Tam
Cabela's	Dow
	Edmonton Old Timers Club

Edmonton Trout Fishing Club  
Edson Fish and Game Association  
EQUUS  
Fort Lions Club  
Fort Saskatchewan Naturalist Society  
Fortis Alberta  
Fountain Tire  
Fresh Live Bait  
Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of  
Commerce  
High Calibre Sports  
Home Hardware: Wabamun  
Innisfail Fish & Game Association  
Joussard Community Association  
Lacombe Co-Op  
Lake Chaparral Residents Association  
Lamont Fish & Game Association  
Larry & Janis Schmidek (Pond Owner)  
Len Thompson Fishing Lures  
Len Thompson Lures  
Lesser Slave Forest Education Society  
Lesser Slave Watershed Council  
Lil Bettas Swim School  
MNP  
NFP  
Northern Lights Fly Fishers  
Okotoks and District Fish and Game  
Association  
Onoway Fish and Game Association  
Parkland Citizen Patrol

Parkland County  
Parkland County Emergency Services  
Pigeon Lake Watershed Association  
Pinto Ice Shack Rentals  
Real Canadian Superstore  
Resident Care Foundation – Hinton  
Rig-A-Jig Bait Shop  
Servus Credit Union  
Stony Plain Fish and Game Association  
Sunny 94  
Superfly  
Sylvan Lake Wranglers Jr B Hockey Club  
Taber Fish & Game  
Terry's Lease Maintenance  
The Fishin' Hole  
Thermal Shack Rentals  
Thompson Pallister Bait Co.  
Town of Gibbons  
Town of Hinton  
Town of Sylvan Lake  
Town of Taber  
TransAlta  
Village Emporium Lifestyle Boutique  
Wabamun Watershed Management Council  
Walleye Master Tackle & Bait Ltd.  
Wes David and Fishing the Wild West TV  
West Parkland Gas  
Wolf Midstream  
Yellowhead County Parks and Recreation  
Zebco Tackle

## **Key Findings**

- Nearly 4,400 adults and children came out to fish at 23 Kids Can Catch events across Alberta.
- 93 organizations, partners, and sponsors made Kids Can Catch events possible through financial, in-kind, and volunteer contributions.
- Dow, Northern Lights Fly Fishers, and Backroads Mapbooks partnerships helped ACA continue the program for communities across Alberta. Other organizations such as Cabela's, CN, EQUUS, and TransAlta substantially sponsored individual events.
- We had a record year with a total of 24 events, 4 of them brand new, and the most participants ever seen throughout a year.
- A private (not open to the public) 24<sup>th</sup> event, which was the first of its kind, took participants from the Africa Centre in Edmonton onto boats on Wabamun Lake, which gave them a unique angling opportunity.
- Our two ACA-hosted events at Fort Lions Community Fish Pond at West River's Edge and at Wabamun Lake took place after two-year hiatuses due to the COVID-19 pandemic and were widely appreciated.

## **Abstract**

Kids Can Catch is a province-wide program in which ACA partners with community and corporate partners to create free family fishing events at lakes and ponds. We developed Kids Can Catch as a way to invite Albertans to fish at stocked and natural waterbodies and to hook new and young anglers on fishing, fish conservation, and responsible angling. In 2022, Kids Can Catch events across Alberta welcomed nearly 4,400 adults and children and 93 organizations, partners, and sponsors. A record 23 public events took place this year with a 24<sup>th</sup> private event in partnership with The Africa Centre. Four of these events were brand new to the program, while some others that had taken a hiatus, opened up their events again. After the COVID-19 pandemic forced families to spend more time outdoors together, we have seen an increased uptake in organizations wanting to host events and more people interested in them. We hope this trend continues!

## **Methods**

Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) manages the province-wide program, including promoting the program as an opportunity for local groups interested in fishing, conservation, youth, recreation, or tourism; connecting local organizers with resources and partners as they plan, promote, and host their Kids Can Catch events; providing web and communication services to profile each event on the Kids Can Catch website ([albertakidscancatch.com](http://albertakidscancatch.com)); and offering online registration services to event organizers.

ACA provides local organizers with tools and resources to help as they plan, promote, and host their events. These tools and resources include building them a webpage, promoting the event on our social media pages, handling online registration for them if requested, sending them brochures and promotional items to give away, providing helpful checklists for how to plan the event and what to expect, and more. Typically, one local organization takes the lead to plan the event and engages community and corporate event partners to help with it. Partners help in a variety of ways, such as volunteering at the events, providing in-kind donations, providing sponsorship, coordinating specific event activities, or promoting the event.

Each Kids Can Catch event is free, non-competitive, and family friendly, making fishing fun and accessible for new and young anglers. Some events are new; others are long-standing community fishing events or part of an annual festival. Some attract large numbers of participants; others attract smaller numbers. But what all the events share is a chance to fish and to learn about fishing, fish conservation, and responsible angling.

## **Results**

With help from our 93 partnerships and host organizations, Kids Can Catch had a record year with 24 summer and winter events, bringing in nearly 4,400 participants—the most events and participants in one fiscal year to date. Four of these events were new, and we hosted a special private event in partnership with the Africa Centre, where ACA staff took families in boats onto Wabamun Lake for a unique angling opportunity. There's nothing quite like seeing the smile on a child's face when they experience their first catch!

The two ACA-hosted flagship Kids Can Catch events in Fort Saskatchewan and Wabamun were able to take place this year after being cancelled due to pandemic restrictions. Kids Can Catch Fort Saskatchewan at Fort Lions Community Fish Pond at West River's Edge, our open water event, was a hit with nearly 800 participants, a hot dog lunch, fantastic exhibitors and mentors and too many fish caught to count. Kids Can Catch Wabamun Lake, our ice fishing event, hosted 820 participants, a hamburger lunch, a handful of new local exhibitors, the local fire department and at least four fish caught. Throughout both events we received a lot of positive feedback from happy participants. We are glad to be "back up and running" and hope to continue to grow these events.

Our Corporate Partners in Conservation—Backroads Mapbooks, Northern Lights Fly Fishers, and Dow make it possible for ACA to help local organizers source the supplies they need to host Kids Can Catch events. Other organizations such as Cabela's, CN, EQUUS, and TransAlta substantially sponsored individual events. Without partners such as these, Kids Can Catch would not be possible.

## **Conclusions**

Partnerships are key to the success the Kids Can Catch Program and each Kids Can Catch event. A special thank you to all our partnerships, sponsors, event organizers, and volunteers for giving kids and their families the opportunity to go fishing.

## **Communications**

- ACA website ([ab-conservation.com](http://ab-conservation.com)): ACA's main page promoted Kids Can Catch and events.
- Kids Can Catch Program website ([albertakidscancatch.com](http://albertakidscancatch.com)): one webpage was created for each event to promote the event and its sponsors. After the event, the webpage summarized the event and recognized all event organizers, partners, and participants.
- Constant Contact e-newsletter: ACA's e-newsletter promoted Kids Can Catch events.
- Social media: Posts were used to promote events, share stories, and thank organizers and event partners.

## Literature Cited

Not applicable

## Photos



Photo 1. Participants at the Chaparral Kids Can Catch event in July 2022.  
Photo: Lake Chaparral Residents Association



Photo 2. Educating participants at the Kids Can Catch event that partnered with the Africa Centre in August 2022. Photo: Rhonda Eidick



Photo 3. An ACA angling mentor, Troy Furukawa, assisting a participant with their first catch at the Kids Can Catch event in partnership with the Africa Centre.

Photo: Colin Eyo



Photo 4. Anglers abound at the Kids Can Catch ice fishing event at Wabamun Lake in February 2023 after a 2-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Photo: Isaac Haines