

**Alberta Conservation Association
2019/20 Project Summary Report**

Project Name: ACA Fish Stocking Project

Fisheries Program Manager: Peter Aku

Project Leader: Diana Rung

Primary ACA staff on project: Andy Murphy and Diana Rung

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks

Aquality Environmental

Canadian Tire

City of Medicine Hat

Complete Crossings

County of Saddle Hills

Nutrien Agrium Inc.

SysGen Solutions Group

Town of Cochrane

Key Findings

- The ACA Fish Stocking Project provided anglers opportunities to catch and harvest rainbow trout, brown trout, and brook trout in regions of Alberta where angling opportunities are limited.
- Stocked 61 waterbodies with total of 103,255 trout composed of 95,995 rainbow trout, 2,500 brown trout, and 6,760 brook trout.
- We installed signage at seven waterbodies.

Abstract

The ACA Fish Stocking Project provides anglers with increased opportunities to catch and harvest rainbow trout, brown trout, and brook trout in regions of Alberta where angling opportunities are limited. Recipient waterbodies are prone to winterkill and require annual stocking of fish to maintain angling opportunities. We stocked 61 waterbodies. We stocked two waterbodies with brook trout only and 59 waterbodies with rainbow trout. We supplemented eight of the 59 rainbow trout-stocked ponds with brown trout and nine of the 59 rainbow trout-stocked ponds with brook trout. We stocked 93,995 rainbow trout, 2,500 brown trout, and 6,760 brook trout for a total of 103,255 trout. Four ponds normally on our stocking list were not stocked this year: 1) Hermitage Pond was being assessed by Alberta Environment and Parks for whirling disease risk; 2) Fort Lions Community Pond at West River's Edge still had yellow perch in it from a previous stocking; 3) Kinsmen Lake was dredged in 2019 to improve water quality; and 4) the water quality at Pro Alta Pond was deemed unsuitable for trout. We installed signage at seven waterbodies.

Introduction

Stocked fish populations are an important part of Alberta's recreational angling experience. The primary objective of the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) Fish Stocking Project is to provide Albertans with increased recreational angling opportunities, particularly in areas of the province where such fishing opportunities do not otherwise exist. Recipient waterbodies are prone to winterkill and require annual stocking of fish to maintain angling opportunities. We stock catchable-sized (20 cm total length) rainbow trout, brown trout, and brook trout into ponds to create put-and-take fisheries where anglers can harvest up to five trout per day. To prevent interaction with native salmonids, trout stocking occurs only in the White Zone of Alberta (settled area of the province) and in waterbodies that frequently winterkill. Most stocked ponds are close to or in towns and cities, making them popular family destinations and ideal for the recruitment of new anglers.

Methods

ACA completed trout stockings through two contracts: one with a private grower and one with the Government of Alberta (GoA) fish hatchery. We negotiated the stocking contracts several months before stocking.

Spring stockings occurred between the last week in April and the May long weekend, and early summer stockings occurred by the third week in June. We monitored the private grower contracts closely to ensure that the appropriate number and size (20 cm total length) of triploid rainbow trout were stocked. Once growers were ready to transport the rainbow trout, a stocking date was arranged with a load-out monitor and a lake contact. The load-out monitor travelled to the grower's operation to inventory the fish being shipped and to measure a random subsample (30 to 40 fish) to confirm that fish were of adequate size. We implemented a penalty system to deter growers from stocking undersized fish. The load-out monitor also assessed overall wellbeing of the fish by checking condition factor and obvious signs of disease and deformity. Once the correct number of trout were loaded into transport containers, the load-out monitor and grower signed a form documenting the number and size of fish. At the receiving waterbody, a volunteer lake contact monitored the stocking process to determine if there were stocking- or transport-related mortalities. Fish stocked by GoA (i.e., rainbow, brown, and brook trout) did not require monitoring.

Results

In 2019/20 we stocked 61 waterbodies. We stocked two waterbodies with brook trout only and 59 waterbodies with rainbow trout. We supplemented eight of the 59 rainbow trout-stocked ponds with brown trout and nine ponds of the 59 rainbow trout-stocked ponds with brook trout. We stocked 93,995 rainbow trout, 2,500 brown trout and 6,760 brook trout for a total of 103,255 trout. Approximately 60% of the stockings were completed before the May long weekend, 35% were completed in June, and 5% were completed in September. The private grower stocked 64,915 trout and the GoA stocked 38,340.

Four ponds normally on our stocking list were not stocked this year: 1) Hermitage Pond was being assessed by Alberta Environment and Parks for whirling disease risk; 2) Fort Lions Community Pond at West River's Edge still had yellow perch in it from a previous stocking; 3) Kinsmen Lake was dredged in 2019 to improve water quality; and 4) the water quality at Pro Alta Pond was deemed unsuitable for trout.

We installed project signs at seven waterbodies (Table 1) to identify the waterbody as a site stocked by ACA and to identify new contributing partners.

Table 1. Waterbodies where ACA Fish Stocking project signs were installed in 2019.

Waterbody
Don Sparrow Lake
East Stormwater Pond
Gibbons Pond
Kinsmen Lake
Len Thompson Pond
Mitchell Pond
Tees Pond

Conclusions

The ACA Fish Stocking Project provided anglers with increased opportunity to catch and harvest rainbow trout, brown trout, and brook trout in regions of Alberta where angling opportunities do not otherwise exist. We stocked 61 waterbodies in 2019, while four waterbodies were not stocked, including Fort Lions Community Pond at West River's Edge, Hermitage Pond, Kinsmen Lake and Pro Alta Pond.

Communications

- A complete list of rainbow trout, brown trout, and brook trout stockings was posted on our website and updated frequently during trout stocking season.

Photos



Water quality testing prior to trout stocking. Photo: Diana Rung



Trout stocking at Midway Reservoir. Photo: Diana Rung



Gibbons Pond sign. Photo: Lance Engley