

Alberta Conservation Association
2020/21 Project Summary Report

Project Name: ACA Fish Stocking Project

Fisheries Program Manager: Peter Aku

Project Leader: Diana Rung

Primary ACA staff on project: Diana Rung

Partnerships

Alberta Environment and Parks

Aquality Environmental

Canadian Tire

CCI Inc.

City of Beaumont

City of Fort Saskatchewan

City of Lacombe

City of Medicine Hat

County of Saddle Hills

Nutrien

Shell

SysGen Solutions Group Ltd.

Town of Cochrane

Town of High River

Key Findings

- The Fish Stocking Project provides anglers with opportunities to catch and harvest trout in regions of Alberta where few angling prospects exist.

- Stocked 64 waterbodies with 95,695 rainbow trout, 2,500 brown trout, and 6,760 brook trout for a total of 104,955 trout.
- Approximately 65% of the stockings were completed before the May long weekend and 35% were completed in June.
- Re-stocked Hermitage Pond for the first time after trout stocking was suspended in 2017 due to presence of whirling disease.
- Installed signage at two waterbodies.
- Acquired four new corporate partners.

Abstract

The 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 64 waterbodies with 95,695 rainbow trout, 2,500 brown trout, and 6,760 brook trout for a total of 104,955 trout. We stocked one waterbody with brook trout only, one with brown trout only, and 62 with rainbow trout. We stocked the remaining 62 waterbodies with rainbow trout but supplemented seven with brown trout and nine with brook trout. Overall, we stocked 50 ponds with single species and 14 ponds with multiple species. Two of the three ponds that were not stocked last year were re-stocked this year. They include Kinsmen Lake which was dredged in 2019 and Hermitage Pond where stocking was suspended in 2017 due to the presence of whirling disease. ProAlta Pond was permanently removed from our stocking list due to poor water quality. We installed signage at two waterbodies and acquired four new corporate partners for our fish stocking project.

Introduction

Stocked trout ponds are an integral part of Alberta anglers' sportfishing experience. The primary objective of the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) Fish Stocking Project (FS) is to provide Albertans with sportfishing opportunities in areas of the province where fishing opportunities are limited. ACA-stocked ponds are prone to winterkill and require annual stocking of fish to maintain angling opportunities. We stock sterile, 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 near or in urban centers, making them accessible and popular for families and anglers of all ages.

Methods

We contracted two trout suppliers to grow and stock trout: Smoky Trout Farm, a private grower, provided rainbow trout only, while the Government of Alberta (GoA) fish hatchery provided three species: rainbow trout, brown trout and brook trout. We negotiated the stocking contracts more than one year prior to 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. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, ACA staff was unable to monitor the private grower trout deliveries as is usually done. Both Smoky Trout Farm and GoA ensured that the appropriate number and size (20 cm total length) of triploid trout were stocked into designated ponds. Fish were measured, weighed, and loaded into transport containers by hatchery staff. At the receiving waterbody, a volunteer lake contact monitored the stocking process to determine if there were stocking or transport related mortalities. Each stocking event was verified with appropriate documentation.

We negotiated with and confirmed four new corporate partners that will contribute funding to the fish stocking project annually for a three- to five-year period.

Results

In 2020/21 we stocked a total of 64 waterbodies with 95,695 rainbow trout, 2,500 brown trout, and 6,760 brook trout for a total of 104,955 trout. Approximately 65% of the stockings were completed before the May long weekend and 35% were completed in June. The private grower stocked 66,615 trout and the GoA stocked 38,340 trout. Two waterbodies were stocked with one species only: one with brook trout and the other with brown trout. We stocked all the remaining 62 waterbodies with rainbow trout but supplemented seven with brown trout and nine with brook trout. In total, we stocked 50 ponds with single species and 14 ponds with multiple species. Two

of the three ponds that were not stocked last year were re-stocked this year. They include Kinsmen Lake which was dredged in 2019 and Hermitage Pond where stocking was suspended in 2017 due to the presence of whirling disease. ProAlta Pond was permanently removed from our stocking list due to poor water quality.

We installed project signs at two waterbodies: County Sportsplex Pond and Radway Pond. We acquired four new corporate partners.

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.

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



Rainbow trout from Smoky Trout Farm. Photo: Max Menard



Angler at McVinnie Reservoir. Photo: Tyler Johns



Angler at Nuggent Pond. Photo: Diana Rung