

Alberta Conservation Association
2024/25 Project Summary Report

Project Name: Fish Stocking Expansion – Yellow Perch

Fisheries Program Manager: Peter Aku

Project Leader: Kevin Fitzsimmons

Primary ACA Staff on Project: Andrew Clough, Troy Furukawa, Kade McCormick, and Ariel Schlereth

Partnerships

Government of Alberta

Key Findings

- Transferred 640 yellow perch from Mons Lake to establish a recreation fishery in Legal Reservoir.
- Anecdotal information indicates that yellow perch are surviving and being caught by anglers.

Details

Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) stocks over 100,000 20-cm trout into over 60 ponds each year, creating “put-and-take fisheries.” Most ponds are near urban centres, making them popular family destinations. However, some ponds may not support trout survival beyond mid-summer due to low dissolved oxygen (DO) and high temperature. For such ponds, we proposed yellow perch as an alternative species that may tolerate lower water quality than trout.

Furthermore, anglers have shown strong interest in yellow perch stocked ponds. The goal of this project is to create self-sustaining yellow perch fisheries in ponds that perform poorly as trout fisheries. Candidate ponds were Two Hills and Legal reservoirs. Two Hills Reservoir was dropped due to insufficient water levels. Donor waterbodies were screened on proximity to recipient waterbodies, presence of perch, and free of diseases, parasites, and invasive species. On July 3, 2024, we transferred 640 yellow perch from Mons Lake into Legal Reservoir. Fish ranged

from 69 to 236 mm fork length (FL), with majority 90 to 170 mm FL range; age ranged from one to four years. We captured fish with beach seine nets and fyke traps. Captured fish were immersed in a 3% saltwater bath for ten minutes to reduce parasites and disease and transported to Legal Reservoir in oxygenated fish tank. A trail camera to monitor angler use at Legal Reservoir was damaged shortly after installation and did not record any angler use data. Anecdotal information from ACA staff and the public indicates that yellow perch are surviving, observable below the ice, and being caught by anglers.

Photos



Photo 1. ACA staff members Andrew Clough and Kevin Fitzsimmons setting a beach seine net at Mons Lake to capture yellow perch. Photo: Troy Furukawa



Photo 2. Yellow perch captured in Mons Lake for transfer to Legal Reservoir. Photo: Kevin Fitzsimmons