

OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY
PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS – 2017

Prepared by:



Alberta Conservation
Association

Todd N. Zimmerling, M.Sc., PhD., P.Biol.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2008, Alberta Conservation Association commissioned a phone survey of Albertans aged 18+ to determine recognition of ACA and ACA member groups, as well as Albertan's support for, and participation in a variety of outdoor recreational activities. ACA has continued to commission a similar survey every three years (2008, 2011, 2014 and 2017) to provide trend data related to ACA activities. This report provides the results of the 2017 public survey.

Recognition of active conservation groups in Alberta was found to be low, with 61% of Albertans unable to name a single conservation organization active in the province.

Catch and release fishing, and catch and keep fishing, maintained a high level of support amongst Albertans (83% and 75%, respectively). In addition, over half of Albertans supported gamebird hunting (56%) and big game hunting (55%), while trapping continued to see an increasing trend in support with 46%.

Licensed hunters make up approximately 5% of Albertans aged 18+, yet the 2017 survey results show a much higher participation rate in hunting (9% for urban respondents and 21% for rural respondents). A similar phenomenon was seen with fishing, where 9% participation would be expected based on license sales; however, 26% of urban respondents and 42% of rural respondents indicated they had participated in fishing in the previous 12 months.

We speculate that many people are self-associating as “participating” in hunting or fishing when they have accompanied a hunter or angler or perhaps participated in processing wild game or fish. This self-association with hunting and fishing is an outcome that may indicate people do not have to be fully engaged in the activity to feel they are part of the activity. It also may indicate that hunting and fishing as an activity are enjoyed by a much larger percentage of the population than would be expected by license sales alone. This self-association with hunting may be further promoted by the fact that 41% of Albertans indicate they have eaten hunter harvested game-meat in the past 12 months. This result can be thought of as every licensed hunter providing at least one meal to seven additional people in the province.

The survey found that 35% of Albertans have participated in hunting and 80% have participated in fishing at some time in their life. However, a large proportion of these people have not participated in the last 12 months. Lack of time/Lost interest were identified as the most frequent reasons for non-participation; whereas, “cost” and “not knowing where to go” contributed least to the decision to not participate in the last 12 months.

INTRODUCTION

In June 2008, Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) initiated a public survey to determine Albertan's recognition of ACA and ACA member groups, as well as Albertan's support for, and participation in a variety of outdoor recreational activities. ACA has continued to commission a similar survey every three years (2008, 2011, and 2014) to provide trend data related to ACA activities. In June 2017, Trend Research Inc. was contracted by ACA to continue the public surveys and provide the fourth dataset in this series.

The results of this survey are used by ACA to help direct programming, public education and marketing activities. As such, although a variety of recreational activities were covered in the survey, such as bird watching, canoeing, hiking, etc., of most importance to ACA are the responses collected around hunting, fishing and trapping. Although some analysis and discussion are provided around each question, the reader will find that hunting, fishing and trapping questions have received a greater level of detail in the analysis and discussion. The tabular results are provided for all questions to allow readers to run more detailed analysis on questions where this report has not.

METHODOLOGY

A total of 1,200 telephone interviews were completed by Trend Research Inc. between June 28th and July 11th, 2017, with randomly selected Albertans aged 18+. The telephone surveys were split geographically into 300 in the Urban North (Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) as defined by Statistics Canada), 300 in the Urban South (Calgary CMA, as defined by Statistics Canada), 300 Rural North (north of Highway 16 excluding Grande Prairie and Ft. McMurray) and 300 Rural South (south of Highway 16, excluding Red Deer, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat). Within each geographic area 150 women and 150 men were surveyed.

Trend Research Inc. purchased a random, representative sample of phone numbers for the survey, and included cell phone numbers as 25% of the sample. All interviews were conducted from Trend Research's Edmonton call centre. All interviews were supervised and monitored, and the survey was registered with the Marketing Research & Intelligence Association (MRIA) to ensure best practices were being adhered to.

All interviewers were trained on the specific survey questions and a pretest of 30 interviews was conducted prior to commencing the full survey.

Statistical Reliability

Overall results, at a sample size of 1,200, are accurate to within ± 2.8 percentage points, 19 times out of 20 (Canadian Advertising Research Foundation, Media Research Standards Procedures, 1984).

Regional results, at a sample size of 300 in each Urban North (Edmonton CMA), Urban South (Calgary CMA), northern rural Alberta, and southern rural Alberta, are accurate to within ± 5.7 percentage points, 19 times out of 20 (Canadian Advertising Research Foundation, Media Research Standards Procedures, 1984).

Sex-biased results, at a sample size of 150 are accurate to within ± 8.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20 (Canadian Advertising Research Foundation, Media Research Standards Procedures, 1984).

RESULTS

Although these results are considered statistically valid within the limits identified in the methods section, caution should be used when looking at the results of “respondents” that combine rural and urban respondents. Although these respondent results are comparable to respondent results on previous surveys, combining rural and urban together to produce an “Alberta” result can only be done if the urban and rural results are weighted to represent the relative percentage of Albertans 18+ years living in the rural versus urban areas (roughly 26:74, based on 2016 census data). Weighting of the results is identified in the results section when a “weighted response” is identified.

Question 1. Please name as many active conservation organizations as you can, that operate in Alberta.

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total	%
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n= 1200	
ACA	8	4	11	5	7	5	4	2	46	3.83
AFGA	17	9	17	7	12	12	7	3	84	7.00
AHEIA	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	1	5	0.42
ATA	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.08
APOS	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.08
NA	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.08
PF	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	5	0.42
TUC	0	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	9	0.75
WSFA	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.08
DUC	37	48	36	30	53	43	31	29	307	25.58
HFT	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0.16
NCC	1	2	4	2	6	10	1	5	31	2.58
WEF	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.16
WWS	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	6	0.50
WWF	3	4	5	10	5	8	6	19	60	5.00
Other	14	19	21	12	22	19	22	21	150	12.5
Could Name No Group	85	87	86	102	75	81	92	103	711	59.25

(ACA – Alberta Conservation Association, AFGA – Alberta Fish and Game Association, AHEIA – Alberta Hunter Education Instructors’ Association, ATA – Alberta Trappers’ Association, APOS – Alberta Professional Outfitters Society, NA – Nature Alberta, PF – Pheasants Forever, TUC – Trout Unlimited Canada, WSFA – Wild Sheep Foundation, Alberta, DUC – Ducks Unlimited Canada, HFT – Hunting For Tomorrow, NCC – Nature Conservancy Canada, WEF – Wild Elk Federation, WWS – Willmore Wilderness Society, WWF – World Wildlife Fund)

RESULTS: Unaided (no mention of name) recognition for ACA was 3.8% of respondents, which compares to 2.25% in 2014, 2% in 2011 and 2% in 2008. Weighted responses show 3.8% of Albertans identified ACA and 61% could not name an active conservation group in Alberta.

Question 2. Have you heard of the following conservation groups? (group was mentioned if not identified in Question 1)

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total Q. 2	Total Q.1	% Total 1+2
											n=1200
ACA	76	84	57	68	72	84	53	62	556	46	50.16
AFGA	119	120	111	117	128	132	104	117	948	84	86.00
AHEIA	72	65	54	21	74	67	42	20	415	5	35.00
ATA	82	77	53	26	65	49	46	16	414	1	34.58
APOS	55	45	42	21	45	54	38	26	326	1	27.25
NA	18	39	25	36	37	48	20	29	252	1	21.08
PF	15	11	16	6	20	17	13	8	106	5	9.25
TUC	25	30	38	21	56	38	50	56	314	9	26.92
WSFA	28	18	22	10	26	15	13	11	143	1	12.00
DUC	99	85	77	75	85	99	84	96	700	307	83.92
HFT	16	9	20	9	20	5	9	6	94	2	8.00
NCC	55	61	46	61	59	68	55	71	476	31	42.25
WEF	23	27	25	22	26	24	15	18	180	2	15.60
WWS	37	29	32	22	35	20	19	12	206	6	17.67
WWF	120	127	111	122	129	118	112	118	957	150	92.25

RESULTS: Total recognition of ACA (unaided plus aided) was 50% of respondents compared to 56% in 2014, 59% in 2011 and 43% in 2008. Weighted responses showed 47% of Albertans have heard of ACA.

Question 3. Using a one to seven scale where one means DO NOT SUPPORT AT ALL, four means SUPPORT and seven means COMPLETELY SUPPORT, rate your level of support for the following activities.

Question 3A. Catch and release fishing

	Rural North Male n=150	Rural North Female n=150	Urban North Male n=150	Urban North Female n=150	Rural South Male n=150	Rural South Female n=150	Urban South Male n=150	Urban South Female n=150	Total 1200	%
1 Do not support at all	12	13	14	17	8	12	8	13	97	8.08
2	2	6	3	5	5	4	2	3	30	2.50
3	13	4	15	7	6	10	9	8	72	6.00
4 Support	15	21	11	24	23	17	21	23	155	12.92
5	31	21	22	20	21	21	17	16	147	12.25
6	16	23	18	19	15	22	23	26	162	13.50
7 Completely support	61	62	67	58	72	64	70	61	515	42.92

RESULTS: 82% of respondents “support” (4,5,6,7) catch and release fishing compared to 83% in 2014, 82% in 2011, and 82% in 2008. When broken down into urban versus rural, 83% of urban respondents indicated support compared to 84% of rural respondents. When the urban and rural are combined, the weighted response is 83% support from Albertans.

Question 3B. Catch and keep fishing

	Rural North Male n=150	Rural North Female n=150	Urban North Male n=150	Urban North Female n=150	Rural South Male n=150	Rural South Female n=150	Urban South Male n=150	Urban South Female n=150	Total 1200	%
1 Do not support at all	13	12	16	13	15	20	17	18	124	10.33
2	5	3	7	12	6	5	7	6	51	4.25
3	9	13	11	19	9	15	16	20	112	9.33
4 Support	15	32	27	36	22	36	29	30	227	18.91
5	30	26	29	29	23	25	26	24	212	17.67
6	21	14	12	13	27	16	22	22	147	12.25
7 Completely support	57	50	48	28	48	33	33	30	327	27.25

RESULTS: 76% of respondents “support” (4,5,6,7) catch and keep fishing compared to 76% in 2014, 70% in 2011 and 66% in 2008. When broken down into urban versus rural, 73% of urban respondents indicated support compared to 79% of rural respondents. When the urban and rural are combined, the weighted response is 75% support from Albertans.

Question 3C. Hiking

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total	%
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	1200	
1 Do not support at all	6	6	6	2	4	4	4	4	36	3.00
2	3	1	1	0	2	2	2	1	12	1.00
3	3	1	0	2	4	2	2	4	18	1.50
4 Support	9	10	14	8	16	7	10	9	83	6.92
5	11	10	13	18	16	17	15	11	111	9.25
6	20	15	19	7	16	15	18	17	127	10.58
7 Completely support	98	107	97	113	92	103	99	104	813	67.75

RESULTS: 95% of respondents “support” (4,5,6,7) hiking compared to 92% in 2014, 93% in 2011 and 93% in 2008.

Question 3D. Bird watching

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total	%
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	1200	
1 Do not support at all	15	8	5	6	7	2	7	2	52	4.33
2	3	3	2	2	6	1	3	1	21	1.75
3	6	4	7	2	7	3	9	2	40	3.33
4 Support	15	17	20	18	14	13	18	11	126	10.5
5	18	7	19	11	22	11	10	13	111	9.25
6	14	10	15	7	13	9	22	19	109	9.08
7 Completely support	79	101	82	104	81	111	81	102	741	61.75

RESULTS: 90% of respondents “support” (4,5,6,7) bird watching compared to 88% in 2014, 86% in 2011 and 90% in 2008.

Question 3E. Canoeing

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total	%
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	1200	
1 Do not support at all	10	6	13	10	5	5	6	8	63	5.25
2	0	1	0	1	3	2	1	1	9	0.75
3	3	4	3	3	6	2	2	8	31	2.58
4 Support	12	13	19	13	17	11	14	8	107	8.92
5	19	10	17	9	23	15	18	7	118	9.83
6	21	19	15	10	13	20	22	23	143	11.92
7 Completely support	85	97	83	104	83	95	87	95	729	60.75

RESULTS: 91% of respondents “support” (4,5,6,7) canoeing compared to 85% in 2014, 88% in 2011 and 88% in 2008.

Question 3F. Nature photography

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total	%
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	1200	
1 Do not support at all	9	7	5	5	4	3	4	5	42	3.50
2	3	2	2	0	3	0	2	2	14	1.17
3	6	1	2	0	3	1	3	1	17	1.42
4 Support	9	11	20	12	14	10	21	10	107	8.92
5	14	10	12	11	18	6	13	8	92	7.67
6	19	9	14	11	19	15	16	16	119	9.91
7 Completely support	90	110	95	111	89	115	91	108	809	67.42

RESULTS: 94% of respondents “support” (4,5,6,7) nature photography compared to 91% in 2014, 89% in 2011 and 92% in 2008.

Question 3G. Trapping

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total	%
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	1200	
1 Do not support at all	22	34	41	60	35	50	36	63	341	28.42
2	3	5	12	23	6	12	23	22	106	8.83
3	9	21	19	21	14	14	20	17	135	11.25
4 Support	32	31	32	19	26	28	31	28	227	18.92
5	22	20	17	7	28	21	21	10	146	12.17
6	18	10	13	6	10	13	6	4	80	6.67
7 Completely support	44	29	16	14	31	12	13	6	165	13.75

RESULTS: 52% of respondents “support” (4,5,6,7) trapping compared to 50% in 2014, 42% in 2011 and 41% in 2008. When broken down into urban versus rural, 41% of urban respondents indicated support compared to 63% of rural respondents. When the urban and rural are combined, the weighted response is 46% support from Albertans.

Question 3H. Motorized watercraft use

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total	%
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	1200	
1 Do not support at all	11	14	5	15	14	16	13	18	106	8.83
2	5	6	8	10	10	6	10	16	71	5.92
3	9	13	11	9	14	16	14	12	98	8.17
4 Support	20	30	34	35	25	36	32	38	250	20.83
5	26	31	37	33	25	31	27	29	239	19.92
6	17	11	23	18	18	13	17	14	131	10.92
7 Completely support	62	45	32	30	44	32	37	23	305	25.42

RESULTS: 77% of respondents “support” (4,5,6,7) motorized watercraft use compared to 72% in 2014, 65% in 2011 and 56% in 2008.

Question 3I. Horseback riding

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total	%
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	1200	
1 Do not support at all	9	6	7	6	10	7	6	5	56	4.67
2	2	1	0	2	4	0	4	2	15	1.25
3	5	1	5	5	5	3	6	2	32	2.67
4 Support	18	12	30	17	20	4	25	14	140	11.67
5	16	10	15	14	15	18	21	14	123	10.25
6	16	25	23	17	18	18	15	30	162	13.50
7 Completely support	84	95	70	89	78	100	73	83	672	56.00

RESULTS: 91% of respondents “support” (4,5,6,7) horseback riding compared to 88% in 2014, 85% in 2011 and 86% in 2008.

Question 3J. Gamebird hunting

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total	%
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	1200	
1 Do not support at all	23	28	27	46	25	42	19	58	268	22.33
2	3	12	8	22	10	11	18	16	100	8.33
3	13	17	19	15	8	19	17	19	127	10.58
4 Support	23	33	22	30	36	28	36	23	231	19.25
5	24	21	26	14	17	16	20	18	156	13.00
6	9	11	8	8	20	15	13	7	91	7.58
7 Completely support	55	28	40	15	34	19	27	9	227	18.92

RESULTS: 59% of respondents “support” (4,5,6,7) gamebird hunting compared to 59% in 2014, 52% in 2011 and 50% in 2008. When broken down by category, females living in urban areas are least supportive of gamebird hunting, with 38% of urban south females indicating support and 45% of urban north females indicating support. This compares to 64% and 64%, respectively for males living in the same areas. When all urban respondents are combined, 53% indicate support, while 65% of all rural respondents indicate support. When the urban and rural are combined, the weighted response is 56% support from Albertans.

Question 3K. Big game hunting

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total	%
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	1200	
1 Do not support at all	21	23	28	52	24	45	29	61	283	23.58
2	3	9	8	14	7	12	23	16	92	7.67
3	11	19	11	20	8	11	15	17	112	9.33
4 Support	17	28	30	24	29	21	35	22	206	17.17
5	21	27	19	14	20	26	15	16	158	13.17
6	17	11	21	7	24	12	7	7	106	8.83
7 Completely support	60	33	33	19	38	23	26	11	243	20.25

RESULTS: 59% of all respondents “support” (4,5,6,7) big game hunting compared to 59% in 2014, 50% in 2011 and 47% in 2008. When broken down by category, females living in urban areas are least supportive, with 37% of urban south females indicating support and 43% of urban north females indicating support. This compares to 55% and 69%, respectively for males living in the same areas. When all urban respondents are combined, 51% indicate support, while 68% of all rural respondents indicate support. When the urban and rural are combined, the weighted response is 55% support from Albertans.

Question 3L. Off-highway vehicle use

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total	%
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	1200	
1 Do not support at all	19	24	20	34	26	40	31	52	246	20.50
2	11	11	8	16	13	14	16	14	103	8.58
3	11	15	18	24	11	18	18	22	137	11.42
4 Support	27	35	38	30	33	22	31	25	241	20.08
5	20	19	23	14	19	22	26	19	162	13.50
6	16	8	10	14	14	10	6	9	87	7.25
7 Completely support	46	38	33	18	34	24	22	9	224	18.67

RESULTS: 60% of respondents “support” (4,5,6,7) off-highway vehicle use compared to 53% in 2014, 49% in 2011 and 40% in 2008. When broken down by category, females living in urban areas are least supportive, with 41.3% of urban south females indicating support and 50.7% of urban north females indicating support. This compares to 56.7% and 69.3%, respectively for males living in the same areas. When all urban respondents are combined, 54.5% indicate support, while 64.5% of all rural respondents indicate support.

Question 4. With respect to wildlife conservation, which of the following do you believe is the biggest issue in Alberta at this time?

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total	%
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	1200	
Loss of native wildlife habitat	58	61	73	94	65	89	85	95	620	51.67
Lack of wildlife research	18	18	14	10	23	12	18	4	117	9.75
Over hunting	24	30	21	22	14	19	13	24	167	13.92
Wildlife diseases	32	29	29	13	35	23	25	19	205	17.08
Don't Know	18	12	13	11	13	7	9	8	91	7.58

RESULTS: 52% of respondents ranked loss of native wildlife habitat as the biggest issue compared to 56% in 2014, 60% in 2011 and 59% in 2008. While the number of respondents considering habitat loss as the biggest issue continues to decline, the number that believe wildlife disease is the biggest issue has increased from 11% in 2011, 14% in 2014 to 17% in 2017.

Question 5. With respect to fish conservation, which of the following do you believe is the biggest issue in Alberta at this time?

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total	%
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	1200	
Reduced stream flows due to over allocation	15	10	18	10	17	23	19	18	130	10.83
Lack of fisheries research	19	10	12	6	16	8	20	13	104	8.67
Over fishing	34	16	18	9	24	12	24	15	152	12.67
Pollution of lakes and rivers	67	107	93	121	76	98	78	93	733	61.08
Don't Know	15	7	9	4	17	9	9	11	81	6.75

RESULTS: 61% of respondents ranked pollution of lakes and rivers as the biggest issue compared to 64% in 2014, 56% in 2011 and 65% in 2008.

Question 6. In the last 12 months have you participated in any of the following outdoor activities in Alberta:

Question 6A. Hunting

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	1200
Yes	51	22	28	6	41	12	19	1	180
%	34.00	14.67	18.67	4.00	27.33	8.00	12.67	0.67	15.00

RESULTS: 15% of respondents indicated they had participated in hunting in the last 12 months, compared to 13% in 2014, 13% in 2011 and 9% in 2008. There is an obvious disparity between rural vs. urban, north vs. south and male vs. female. In addition, licensed hunters make up approximately 5% of Albertans aged 18+, yet these results show a much higher participation rate in hunting, 9% for urban respondents and 21% for rural respondents. The overall weighted response shows 12% participation from Albertans overall.

Question 6B. Fishing

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	1200
Yes	81	68	56	31	66	34	51	20	407
%	54.00	45.33	37.33	20.67	44.00	22.67	34.00	13.33	33.91

RESULTS: 34% of respondents indicated they had participated in fishing in the last 12 months, compared to 34% in 2014, 33% in 2011 and 26% in 2008. There is a disparity between rural vs. urban, north vs. south and male vs. female; however, the differences are much less pronounced compared to hunting. In addition, licensed anglers make up approximately 9% of Albertans aged 18+, yet these results show a much higher participation rate in fishing, 26% for urban respondents and 42% for rural respondents. The overall weighted response shows 30% participation from Albertans overall.

Question 6C. Hiking

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	1200
Yes	103	98	116	103	107	101	117	102	847
%	68.67	65.33	77.33	68.67	71.33	67.33	78.00	68.00	70.58

RESULTS: 71% of respondents indicated they had participated in hiking in the last 12 months, compared to 65% in 2014, 72% in 2011 and 65% in 2008.

Question 6D. Bird watching

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	1200
Yes	71	73	75	77	71	96	55	86	604
%	47.33	48.67	50.00	51.33	47.33	64.00	36.67	57.33	50.33

RESULTS: 50% of respondents indicated they had participated in bird watching in the last 12 months, compared to 57% in 2014, 47% in 2011 and 42% in 2008.

Question 6E. Canoeing

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	1200
Yes	37	39	47	41	39	35	45	31	314
%	24.67	26.00	31.33	27.33	26.00	23.33	30.00	20.67	26.17

RESULTS: 26% of respondents indicated they had participated in canoeing in the last 12 months, compared to 23% in 2014, 25% in 2011 and 19% in 2008.

Question 6F. Nature photography

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	1200
Yes	55	79	66	82	63	80	70	82	577
%	36.67	52.67	44.00	54.67	42.00	53.33	46.67	54.67	48.08

RESULTS: 48% of respondents indicated they had participated in nature photography in the last 12 months, compared to 50% in 2014, 52% in 2011 and 42% in 2008.

Question 6G. Trapping

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	1200
Yes	11	4	3	2	6	3	1	0	30
%	7.33	2.67	2.00	1.33	4.00	2.00	0.67	0	2.5

RESULTS: 3% of respondents indicated they had participated in trapping in the last 12 months, compared to 2% in 2014, 1% in 2011 and 2% in 2008.

Question 6H. Berry picking

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	1200
Yes	79	98	57	70	69	86	35	57	551
%	52.67	65.33	38.00	46.67	46.00	57.33	23.33	38.00	45.92

RESULTS: 46% of respondents indicated they had participated in berry picking in the last 12 months, compared to 51% in 2014, 45% in 2011 and 22% in 2008.

Question 7A. Have you participated in hunting at any time in the past? (If answered NO to 6A, “Have you participated in hunting in the last 12 months?”)

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total	%
	n=99	n=128	n=122	n=144	n=109	n=138	n=131	n=149	1020	
Yes	54	35	38	22	49	27	48	17	290	28.43
No	45	93	84	122	60	111	83	132	730	

RESULTS: Of those that said they have not participated in hunting in the last 12 months 28% of respondents indicated they had participated in hunting at some time in the past, compared to 24% in 2014, 22% in 2011 and 22% in 2008. The results of 6A and 7A combined show a weighted response that 35% of Albertans have participated in hunting at some time.

Question 7B. What are some of the reasons you have not participated in hunting in the past 12 months?

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total	%
Lack of time	12	6	6	4	11	1	15	2	57	16.10
Cost	7	1	2	1	3	1	3	0	18	5.08
Reduced harvest opportunities	0	2	4	3	3	2	1	0	15	4.24
Don't know where to go	0	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	10	2.82
Regulations	7	2	3	1	8	1	5	0	27	7.63
Lost interest	16	9	16	11	17	11	18	7	105	29.66
Age (e.g. too old)	5	4	5	4	6	6	5	1	36	10.17
Health	6	2	4	1	4	1	0	3	21	5.93
Other	14	10	9	4	8	7	8	5	65	18.36
									354	

RESULTS: Many respondents provided multiple reasons. Lost interest, Lack of time, and Age were the top three reasons; however, many of the “other” category responses could also have been placed in Lost interest and Lack of time categories. Cost, Reduced harvest opportunities, Health, and not knowing where to go, were not significant factors contributing to why individuals who had hunted in the past had not hunted within the past 12 months.

Question 8A. Have you participated in fishing at any time in the past? (If answered NO to 6B, “Have you participated in fishing in the past 12 months?”)

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total	%
	n=69	n=82	n=94	n=119	n=84	n=116	n=99	n=130	793	
Yes	51	58	74	80	63	80	73	87	566	71.37
No	18	24	20	39	21	36	26	43	227	28.62

RESULTS: 71% of respondents that have not fished in the past 12 months indicated they had participated in fishing at some time in the past, compared to 75% in 2014, 64% in 2011 and 63% in 2008. The results of 6B and 8A combined show a weighted response that 80% of Albertans have participated in fishing at some time.

Question 8B. What are some of the reasons you have not participated in fishing in the past 12 months?

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total	%
Lack of time	20	19	28	19	24	14	29	18	171	24.93
Cost	3	2	2	4	3	2	3	5	24	3.50
Reduced harvest opportunities	2	6	4	10	4	10	4	3	43	6.27
Don't know where to go	1	2	2	5	6	2	1	5	24	3.50
Regulations	3	3	0	3	4	5	3	7	28	4.08
Lost interest	13	19	25	37	20	30	29	35	208	30.32
Age (e.g. too old)	3	5	2	7	5	14	4	8	48	7.00
Health	5	3	5	6	5	5	4	6	39	5.68
Other	11	9	16	15	9	17	9	15	101	14.72
									686	

RESULTS: Many respondents provided multiple reasons. Lack of time, Lost interest, and Other were the top three reasons; however, many of the “other” category responses could also have been placed in Lost interest and Lack of time. Cost and not knowing where to go were not significant factors contributing to why individuals who had fished in the past had not fished within the past 12 months.

Question 9. In the past 12 months have you eaten game-meat harvested through hunting activities?

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total	%
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	1200	
Yes	95	89	76	47	90	54	49	47	547	45.58
%	63.33	59.33	50.67	31.33	60.00	36.00	32.67	31.33		

RESULTS: Although only 15% of respondents indicated they had participated in hunting in the last 12 months (Q. 6A), 46% indicate they have eaten game-meat harvested through hunting. Even in the urban south female category where respondents indicated <1% participation in hunting in the last 12 months, 31% indicate they have eaten game-meat. The weighted response indicates 41% of Albertans have eaten hunter harvested game-meat in the last 12 months.

Question 10. Please provide your age range.

	Rural North Male	Rural North Female	Urban North Male	Urban North Female	Rural South Male	Rural South Female	Urban South Male	Urban South Female	Total	%
	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150	n=150		
18-25	11	17	18	13	14	6	21	14	114	9.51
26-35	26	23	37	39	18	17	24	17	201	16.78
36-50	37	36	29	37	34	33	34	38	278	23.20
51-64	37	44	40	35	47	45	44	48	340	28.40
65+	38	30	26	26	37	49	26	33	265	22.12
Did not answer	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	

RESULTS: The age distribution of respondents is relatively similar to Alberta's population of 18+ based on the 2016 census. Two age categories (26-35 and 36-50) were under represented by approximately 5% each compared to the census data; whereas the other three categories were slightly over represented.

DISCUSSION

Unaided recognition rate of ACA continues to show a rising trend over time, from 2% in 2008 up to 3.8% in 2017; however, even with the doubling of unaided recognition over the last 9 years, the number of people who name ACA as an active conservation group in Alberta is still within the margin of error of the survey. When looking at the results of Question 1, only one conservation group has an unaided recognition rate over 10% (DUC at 25%) and only three have recognition rates of 5% or higher (AFGA and WWF being the other two). Unfortunately, 61% of respondents could not name a single active conservation group in Alberta, which is a concern for conservation overall.

When provided prompting, 50% of respondents have heard of ACA. A number of ACA's member groups have very good aided recognition, including AFGA with the highest recognition at 86% (Q. 2).

Catch and release fishing and catch and keep fishing both maintain a high level of support amongst respondents, with catch and keep fishing seeing 82% support (Q. 3A) and catch and keep fishing seeing 76% support (Q. 3B); both showing almost identical levels of support from respondents as in 2014. Based on the limited difference seen between rural and urban respondents, it appears that recreational angling enjoys a high level of acceptance across Alberta. Weighted responses show that catch and release fishing has a slightly higher level of support from Albertans as compared to catch and keep fishing (83% and 75%, respectively).

Support for trapping is essentially unchanged from 2014 to 2017; however, there appears to be an increase in support compared to 2008 and 2011 (Question 3G). There is a distinct difference in the level of support shown between urban (41%) and rural (63%) with the weighted response showing 46% of Albertans supporting trapping.

For both gamebird hunting and big game hunting the level of support indicated from respondents is unchanged from 2014 to 2017 (Q. 3J and 3K). As may be expected, there is more support shown for hunting activities (gamebird and big game) in the rural respondents as compared to urban; however, somewhat surprisingly, the disparity between urban and rural was the same or less than the disparity between male and female (Q. 3J and 3K).

Urban females in both the north and south are the two categories of respondents that show the least amount of support for hunting (37% to 45%). In contrast, males in urban settings support hunting with 55% to 68% support. Clearly, determining what specific issues are resulting in the lack of support from female urbanites, and what changes can be made to gain their support, are important areas for future research. Overall, the weighted responses indicate that the majority of Albertans are supportive of hunting (56% gamebird (Q. 3J), 55% big game (Q. 3K)).

With respect to issues impacting wildlife conservation, loss of habitat is by far the most frequently identified issue (Q.4; 52% of respondents), continuing the trend that has existed since

the first survey in 2008. For fish conservation, pollution of lakes and rivers is identified as the biggest issue (Q. 5; 61% of respondents), which again continues a trend that began in 2008.

Question 6A and 6B show a positive trend in participation rates in hunting and fishing; however, the participation rates are much greater than would be expected based on license sales. Licensed hunters make up approximately 5% of Albertans aged 18+, yet these results show a much higher participation rate in hunting (9% for urban respondents and 21% for rural respondents). Selection bias would explain these results if the respondents were selected in a manner as to over sample hunters; however, the survey was conducted randomly and a similar result has occurred in each of the last four public surveys. As a result, it is unlikely selection bias is responsible. It is possible that people hunting outside the province are indicating participating in hunting, despite the question specifically stating “in Alberta”. Alternatively, respondents may be including accompanying a hunter as “participating in hunting.” For instance, if a respondent went with a friend to observe, but did not have a license or a gun. Although license sales would not count an observer as a hunter, this individual may consider that she/he had participated in hunting.

A similar explanation exists for the results of Question 6B where indicated participation rates for fishing are much higher (26% for urban respondents and 42% for rural respondents) than the approximate 9% that would be expected based on fishing license sales. For instance, a mother may take her children fishing at a stocked pond and, although she does not fish, she may consider herself “participating” in fishing as an activity. In addition, no license is required for people 65 years of age or older. As such, there are likely people who have directly participated by having a rod in hand, but had no legal reason for purchasing a license (22% of respondents were 65+ (Q. 10)).

This self-association with hunting and fishing is an outcome that may indicate people do not have to be fully engaged in the activity to feel they are part of the activity. It also may be an indication that hunting and fishing as an activity are enjoyed by a much larger percentage of the population than would be expected by license sales alone.

Question 9 adds to the argument that many more people are positively impacted by hunting than just licensed hunters. Despite approximately 5% of Albertans 18+ having hunting licenses, 41% indicated they have eaten hunter harvested game-meat in the past 12 months. This result can be thought of as every licensed hunter providing at least one meal to seven additional people in the province.

Despite 35% of Albertans indicating that they have participated in hunting at some time in their life, many have not participated in the last 12 months (Q. 7A). Interestingly, when asked why they no longer participate, “Cost” was identified as one of the least important issues (Q. 7B). Most respondents identified a “Lack of time” and/or “Loss of interest” (Q. 7B). This result provides an incentive for hunting organizations to determine how and where to provide new

hunting opportunities (to increase interest) and reduce the time required (locations closer to urban centres).

For fishing a similar trend exists compared to hunting. A large proportion of Albertans (80%) indicate that they have participated in fishing at some time in their life; however, 71% of respondents that did not fish in the past 12 months have fished in the past (Q. 8A). In the case of fishing, many more of the “fished in the past” responses may relate to fishing at some time in their childhood, which provides an opportunity for conservation groups to capitalize on those memories and promote a return to fishing. As with hunting, “Cost” was not identified as a major factor for lack of participation; and “Lack of time” and/or “Lost interest” were the top reasons why people did not participate. This is where increased stocking of urban ponds could bring a large number of people back to fishing if opportunities can be created closer to home.

Selection bias is always a concern in conducting public surveys. We attempted to control for some of these potential biases by providing a variety of questions relating to outdoor recreational activities, despite the fact that hunting, fishing and trapping were our main areas of focus. In addition, to reduce the potential for age bias selection, Trend Research Inc. ensured that 25% of all phone numbers used were cell phones. Question 10 provides the age distribution results of the respondents which compares favourably to 2016 census data for Alberta, showing no obvious age selection bias.

CONCLUSION

Overall the results are positive for hunting, fishing and trapping, with improving support trends for all three activities and more than 55%+ support from Albertans for hunting and 75%+ support for fishing. Future research around participation rates, and what Albertans consider to be “participation” in hunting and fishing would be beneficial. In addition, it is clear that more research into urban female’s support (or lack of support) for hunting and trapping would aid in the development of future programs that would appeal to this important and influential demographic.

APPENDIX 1: 2017 ACA RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY SURVEY QUESTIONS

ACA PUBLIC SURVEY – JULY 2017

Hello, my name is _____. I am calling you from Trend Research and we are conducting a survey to determine Albertans' feelings about various conservation groups and issues affecting our province. We are not selling or promoting anything and all results will be kept completely confidential.

The survey will take about 7 to 8 minutes. May I speak with someone in your household who is 18 years of age or older and able to participate at this time?

- 1 RESPONDENT ABLE TO COMPLETE SURVEY: CONTINUE
- 2 NOT AVAILABLE: ARRANGE CALLBACK

CONTACT INFORMATION IF REQUESTED:

Please contact Anastasia Arabia of Trend Research if you have any questions about the survey, at 780-485-6558.

A. Are you currently employed by any type of conservation organization?

- 1 Yes TERMINATE
- 2 No CONTINUE

B. Record Gender

- 1 Male
- 2 Female

1) Please name as many active conservation organizations as you can that operate in Alberta? [DO NOT READ, CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

1. ACA – Alberta Conservation Association
2. AFGA – Alberta Fish and Game Association
3. AHEIA – Alberta Hunter Education Instructors Association
4. ATA – Alberta Trappers Association
5. APOS – Alberta Professional Outfitters Society
6. PF – Pheasants Forever
7. TUC – Trout Unlimited Canada
8. DUC – Ducks Unlimited Canada
9. HFT – Hunting for Tomorrow
10. NA (FAN) – Nature Alberta (Federation of Alberta Naturalists)
11. NCC – Nature Conservancy of Canada
12. WEF – Wild Elk Federation
13. WSFA – Wild Sheep Foundation, Alberta
14. WWS – Wilmore Wilderness Society
15. WWF – World Wildlife Fund
16. OTHER (Please specify)

2) Have you heard of... [RANDOMIZE & READ]

A) 1. Alberta Conservation Association (ACA)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

DO NOT READ

Don't know

B) 2. Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

C) 3. Alberta Hunter Education Instructors Association (AHEIA)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

D) 4. Alberta Trappers Association (ATA)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

E) 5. Alberta Professional Outfitters Society (APOS)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

F) 10. Nature Alberta or Federation of Alberta Naturalists (NA or FAN)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

G) 13. Wild Sheep Foundation, Alberta (WSFA)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

H) 6. Pheasants Forever (PF)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

I) 7. Trout Unlimited Canada (TUC)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

J) 8. Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

K) 9. Hunting For Tomorrow (HFT)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

L) 11. Nature Conservancy Canada (NCC)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

M) 12. Wild Elk Federation (WEF)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

N) 14. Wilmore Wilderness Society (WWS)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

O) 15. World Wildlife Fund (WWF)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

3) Using a one to seven scale where ONE means DO NOT SUPPORT AT ALL, FOUR means SUPPORT, and SEVEN means COMPLETELY SUPPORT, rate your level of support of the following activities. [RANDOMIZE & READ]

A. catch & **release** fishing

1 - Do not support at all

2

3

4 - Support

5

6

7 - Completely support

[DO NOT READ] Don't Know

B. catch & **keep** fishing

C. hiking

D. bird watching

E. canoeing

F. nature photography

G. trapping

H. motorized watercraft use

I. horseback riding

J. game bird hunting

K. big game hunting

L. off-highway vehicle use

4) With respect to wildlife conservation which of the following do you believe is the biggest issue in Alberta at this time? [SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY]

- 1. __ Loss of native wildlife habitat
- 2. __ Lack of wildlife research
- 3. __ Over hunting
- 4. __ Wildlife diseases
- 9. __ Don't Know

5) With respect to fish conservation which of the following do you believe is the biggest issue in Alberta at this time? [SELECT ONE ANSWER ONLY]

- 1. __ Reduced stream flows due to over allocation of water
- 2. __ Lack of fisheries research
- 3. __ Over fishing
- 4. __ Pollution of lakes, and rivers
- 9. __ Don't Know

6) In the past 12 months have you participated in any of the following outdoor activities in Alberta. [RANDOMIZE & READ]]

A. hunting

1 Yes

2 No

DO NOT READ

Don't know

B. fishing

C. hiking

D. bird watching

E. canoeing

F. nature photography

G. trapping

H. berry picking

7A) Have you participated in hunting at any time in the past? [ASK IF Q6A = 2]

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

DO NOT READ

Don't know

7B) What are some of the reasons you have not participated in hunting in the past 12 months?

[ASK if Q7A = 1] [DO NOT READ, CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

- 1. Lack of time
- 2. Cost
- 3. Reduce opportunity to harvest
- 4. Don't know where to go
- 5. Regulations (Federal & Provincial)
- 6. Lost interest
- 7. Age (e.g. too old)
- 8. Health
- 9. Other [Please Specify] _____
- 99. DK/REF

8A) Have you participated in fishing at any time in the past? [ASK IF Q6B = 2]

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

DO NOT READ

Don't know

8B) What are some of the reasons you have not participate in fishing in the past 12 months?

[ASK if Q8A = 1] [DO NOT READ, CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]

- 1. Lack of time
- 2. Cost
- 3. Reduce opportunity to harvest
- 4. Don't know where to go
- 5. Regulations (Federal & Provincial)
- 6. Lost interest
- 7. Age (e.g. too old)
- 8. Health
- 9. Other [Please Specify] _____
- 99. DK/REF

9) In the past 12 months have you eaten game-meat harvested through hunting activities?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

10) Please provide your age range:

1. 18-25

2. 26-35

3. 36-50

4. 51-64

5. 65+

9. DK/REF