

OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS – 2020



Prepared by:



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2008, Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) has commissioned a phone survey of Albertans aged 18+ to determine recognition of ACA and its member groups, as well as Albertans' support for and participation in a variety of outdoor recreational activities. This survey is commissioned every three years (2008, 2011, 2014, 2017, and 2020) to provide trend data related to ACA activities. This report provides the results of the 2020 public survey.

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

Catch and release fishing, and catch and keep fishing, maintained a high level of support amongst Albertans (87% and 82%, respectively). In addition, over two-thirds of Albertans supported gamebird hunting (67%) and 58% supported big game hunting, while trapping continued to see an increasing trend in support with 55%.

Licensed hunters make up approximately 5% of Albertans aged 18+, yet the 2020 survey results show a much higher participation rate in hunting (7% for urban respondents and 20% for rural respondents). A similar phenomenon was seen with fishing, where 9% participation would be expected based on licence sales; however, 18% of urban respondents and 36% 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 activities are enjoyed by a much larger percentage of the population than would be expected by licence sales alone. This self-association with hunting may be further promoted by the fact that 37% 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 six additional adults in the province.

The survey found that 38% of Albertans have participated in hunting and 82% have participated in fishing at some time in their life. However, a large portion of respondents have not participated in the last 12 months. “Lack of time” and “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 Albertans' recognition of ACA and its member groups, as well as Albertans' support for, and participation in various outdoor recreational activities. ACA commissions a similar survey every three years (2008, 2011, 2014, 2017, and 2020) to provide trend data related to ACA activities. In June 2020, ACA contracted Trend Research Inc. to continue the public surveys and provide the fifth dataset in this series.

ACA uses the results of this survey to help direct programming, public education, and marketing activities. Though a variety of recreational activities, including bird watching and off-highway vehicle use, were covered in the survey, ACA found the most value in the responses regarding hunting, fishing, and trapping, and thus more detail regarding these responses has been provided in the analysis and discussion sections. The tabular results are provided for all questions to allow readers to run more detailed analysis on questions where this report has not.

METHODOLOGY

Between June 29 and July 22, 2020, a total of 1,200 telephone interviews were completed with randomly selected Albertans aged 18+ by Trend Research Inc. 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 50% 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. These respondent results are comparable to respondent results on previous surveys; however, 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	
ABA	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3	0.25
ACA	11	6	7	4	11	4	7	13	63	5.25
AFGA	16	11	7	8	21	8	5	5	81	6.75
AHEIA	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	10	0.83
ATA	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	0.25
APOS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
NA	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	11	12	1.00
PF	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	0	6	0.50
TUC	1	0	0	1	5	0	4	3	14	1.17
WSFA	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	0.33
DUC	57	45	52	47	60	58	47	31	397	33.08
HFT	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.08
NCC	3	3	5	12	7	4	4	8	46	3.83
WWF	10	10	14	12	3	3	10	11	73	6.08
Other	35	23	36	29	34	24	38	27	246	20.50
Could Name No Group	62	77	69	77	63	73	68	89	578	48.16

(ABA – Alberta Bowhunters Association, 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, WWF – World Wildlife Fund)

RESULTS: Unaided (no mention of name) recognition for ACA was 5.3% of respondents, which compares to 3.8% in 2017, 2.25% in 2014, 2% in 2011 and 2% in 2008. Weighted responses

show 5.2% 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
ABA	57	62	43	33	64	63	46	27	395	3	33.17
ACA	84	90	60	76	84	88	68	64	614	63	56.42
AFGA	129	135	117	123	116	133	118	117	988	81	89.08
AHEIA	87	76	48	45	78	76	47	24	481	10	40.92
ATA	102	97	48	46	89	68	42	18	510	3	42.75
APOS	75	58	42	36	66	53	33	34	397	0	33.08
NA	32	43	33	40	36	44	25	35	288	12	25.00
PF	20	8	10	7	25	22	11	7	110	6	9.67
TUC	44	29	39	29	60	54	75	62	392	14	33.83
WSFA	33	14	14	14	28	20	16	9	148	4	12.67
DUC	91	101	79	88	83	87	88	106	723	397	93.33
HFT	18	10	10	8	19	8	10	5	88	1	7.42
NCC	68	58	51	64	67	69	65	71	513	46	46.58
WWF	122	120	122	131	130	130	125	123	1003	73	89.67

RESULTS: Total recognition of ACA (unaided plus aided) was 56% of respondents compared to 50% in 2017, 56% in 2014, 59% in 2011 and 41% in 2008. Weighted responses showed 53% 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	14	12	7	7	6	12	8	11	77	6.42
2	4	4	5	1	2	3	2	5	26	2.17
3	7	5	11	8	8	3	7	9	58	4.83
4 Support	20	29	14	23	22	23	22	27	180	15.00
5	24	23	20	18	20	21	20	12	158	13.17
6	24	14	19	25	19	24	25	20	170	14.17
7 Completely support	57	63	74	68	73	64	66	66	531	44.25

RESULTS: 87% of respondents “support” (4,5,6,7) catch and release fishing compared to 82% in 2017, 83% in 2014, 82% in 2011, and 82% in 2008. Both urban and rural respondents had similar responses (87%). When the urban and rural are combined, the weighted response is 87% 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	7	8	8	9	11	10	13	12	78	6.50
2	4	5	8	4	11	3	8	5	48	4.00
3	9	7	10	11	3	11	9	15	75	6.25
4 Support	28	27	35	43	33	31	40	40	277	23.08
5	26	25	30	27	27	28	38	28	229	19.08
6	24	18	15	25	20	25	16	15	158	13.17
7 Completely support	52	60	44	31	45	42	26	35	335	27.92

RESULTS: 83% of respondents “support” (4,5,6,7) catch and keep fishing compared to 76% in 2017, 76% in 2014, 70% in 2011 and 66% in 2008. When broken down into urban versus rural, 81% of urban respondents indicated support compared to 85% of rural respondents. When the urban and rural are combined, the weighted response is 82% support from Albertans.

Question 3C. 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	7	3	2	3	7	2	7	0	31	2.58
2	5	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	10	0.83
3	9	2	7	1	5	2	2	3	31	2.58
4 Support	17	12	13	3	19	2	21	8	95	7.92
5	12	6	5	8	20	4	10	6	71	5.92
6	14	8	10	9	10	9	12	3	75	6.25
7 Completely support	86	117	112	126	89	130	97	130	887	73.92

RESULTS: 94% of respondents “support” (4,5,6,7) bird watching compared to 90% in 2017, 88% in 2014, 86% in 2011 and 90% in 2008. When broken down into urban versus rural, 96% of urban respondents indicated support compared to 93% of rural respondents. When the urban and rural are combined, the weighted response is 95% support from Albertans.

Question 3D. 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	17	25	28	51	23	32	36	58	270	22.50
2	6	6	14	12	7	12	15	23	95	7.92
3	9	16	17	13	20	19	20	13	127	10.58
4 Support	20	29	40	32	25	30	30	33	239	19.92
5	21	26	22	21	22	22	19	12	165	13.75
6	22	13	12	10	13	18	9	3	100	8.33
7 Completely support	55	35	17	11	40	17	21	8	204	17.00

RESULTS: 59% of respondents “support” (4,5,6,7) trapping compared to 52% in 2017, 50% in 2014, 42% in 2011 and 41% in 2008. When broken down into urban versus rural, 50% of urban respondents indicated support compared to 68% of rural respondents. When the urban and rural are combined, the weighted response is 55% support from Albertans.

Question 3E. 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	12	28	14	36	14	19	24	49	196	16.33
2	5	7	18	13	5	10	10	12	80	6.67
3	7	9	18	17	10	18	14	16	109	9.08
4 Support	31	22	29	30	25	27	31	29	224	18.67
5	20	30	18	18	31	28	29	20	194	16.17
6	17	12	20	15	20	13	14	8	119	9.92
7 Completely support	58	42	33	21	45	35	28	16	278	23.17

RESULTS: 68% of respondents “support” (4,5,6,7) gamebird hunting compared to 59% in 2017 and 2014, 52% in 2011 and 50% in 2008. When broken down into urban versus rural, 63% of urban respondents indicated support compared to 76% of rural respondents. When the urban and rural are combined, the weighted response is 67% support from Albertans.

Question 3F. 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	16	34	30	46	21	23	35	66	271	22.58
2	3	7	15	13	6	6	19	10	79	6.58
3	8	6	15	14	6	17	13	15	94	7.83
4 Support	20	19	28	25	19	22	28	25	186	15.50
5	13	22	14	21	18	28	19	14	149	12.42
6	23	16	15	15	25	9	10	5	118	9.83
7 Completely support	67	46	33	16	55	45	26	15	303	25.25

RESULTS: 63% of all respondents “support” (4,5,6,7) big game hunting compared to 59% in 2017 and 2014, 50% in 2011 and 47% in 2008. When broken down into urban versus rural, 52% of urban respondents indicated support compared to 75% of rural respondents. When the urban and rural are combined, the weighted response is 58% support from Albertans.

Question 3G. 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	18	23	22	25	24	28	27	37	204	17.00
2	13	8	10	12	15	17	18	20	113	9.42
3	16	13	27	17	18	16	24	21	152	12.67
4 Support	30	42	26	35	27	26	27	39	252	21.00
5	15	22	20	24	26	23	21	17	168	14.00
6	16	5	15	12	6	19	14	9	96	8.00
7 Completely support	42	37	30	25	34	21	19	7	215	17.92

RESULTS: 61% of respondents “support” (4,5,6,7) off-highway vehicle use compared to 60% in 2017, 53% in 2014, 49% in 2011 and 40% in 2008. When broken down into urban versus rural, 42% of urban respondents indicated support compared to 65% of rural respondents. When the urban and rural are combined, the weighted response is 59% support from Albertans.

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	50	78	85	82	73	82	82	89	621	51.75
Lack of wildlife research	24	16	17	21	23	18	11	12	142	11.83
Over hunting	23	17	18	20	4	14	17	15	128	10.67
Wildlife diseases	38	26	24	20	38	30	31	26	233	19.42
Don't know	15	13	6	7	12	6	9	8	76	6.33

RESULTS: 52% of respondents ranked loss of native wildlife habitat as the biggest issue compared to 52% in 2017, 56% in 2014, 60% in 2011 and 59% in 2008. Wildlife disease was the second most popular answer with 19% compared to 17% in 2017, 14% in 2014, 11% in 2011 and 16% in 2008.

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	19	14	18	15	22	21	26	19	154	12.83
Lack of fisheries research	25	9	26	6	22	15	13	10	126	10.50
Overfishing	35	16	25	16	25	15	20	8	160	13.33
Pollution of lakes and rivers	59	102	76	107	68	88	83	101	684	57.00
Don't know	12	9	5	6	13	11	8	12	76	6.33

RESULTS: 57% of respondents ranked pollution of lakes and rivers as the biggest issue compared to 61% in 2017, 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	49	16	15	5	38	15	16	3	157
%	32.7	10.7	10.0	3.3	25.3	10.0	10.7	2.0	13.1

RESULTS: 13% of respondents indicated they had participated in hunting in the last 12 months, compared to 15% on 2017, 13% in 2014, 13% in 2011 and 9% in 2008. Participation rates in hunting varied between 7% for urban respondents and 20% for rural respondents. The overall weighted response shows 10% participation from Albertans overall. These participation rates are consistent with results from previous years' surveys.

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	76	43	38	30	67	29	32	12	327
%	50.7	28.7	25.3	20.0	44.7	19.3	21.3	8.0	27.3

RESULTS: 27% of respondents indicated they had participated in fishing in the last 12 months, compared to 34% in 2017 and 2014, 33% in 2011 and 26% in 2008. These results show 18% participation for urban respondents and 36% for rural respondents. The overall weighted response shows 23% participation from Albertans overall.

Question 6C. 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	76	83	55	67	75	90	54	73	573
%	50.7	55.3	36.7	44.7	50.0	60.0	36.0	48.7	47.8

RESULTS: 58% of respondents indicated they had participated in bird watching in the last 12 months, compared to 50% in 2017, 57% in 2014, 47% in 2011 and 42% in 2008. Weighting the urban and rural responses gives 44% participation from Albertans overall.

Question 6D. 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 3% in 2017, 2% in 2014, 1% in 2011 and 2% in 2008. Weighting the urban and rural responses gives 2% participation from Albertans overall.

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=101	n=134	n=135	n=145	n=112	n=135	n=134	n=147	1043	
Yes	65	38	62	23	63	34	52	21	358	34.3
No	36	96	73	122	49	101	82	126	685	65.7

RESULTS: Of those who said they have not participated in hunting in the last 12 months, 34% of respondents indicated they had participated in hunting at some time in the past, compared to 28% in 2017, 24% in 2014, 22% in 2011 and 22% in 2008. The results of 6A and 7A combined show a weighted response that 38% of Albertans have participated in hunting at some time in their lives.

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	17	9	17	3	15	10	14	3	88	24.6
Cost	4	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	10	2.8
Reduced harvest opportunities	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	6	1.7
Don't know where to go	0	0	4	2	1	0	1	1	9	2.5
Regulations	5	2	4	0	3	1	2	1	18	5.0
Lost interest	22	10	23	12	27	15	25	11	145	40.5
Age (e.g., too old)	13	9	4	1	7	7	10	2	53	14.8
Health	3	2	2	0	3	3	0	1	14	3.9
Other	16	11	19	5	19	3	13	6	92	25.7
									435	

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 “Don’t know 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=74	n=107	n=112	n=120	n=83	n=121	n=118	n=138	873	
Yes	63	75	97	82	65	96	93	99	670	76.7
No	11	32	15	38	18	25	25	39	203	23.3

RESULTS: 77% of respondents who have not fished in the past 12 months indicated they had participated in fishing at some time in the past, compared to 71% in 2017, 75% in 2014, 64% in 2011 and 63% in 2008. The results of 6B and 8A combined show a weighted response that 82% 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	23	22	31	18	31	31	42	23	221	32.9
Cost	2	2	5	2	0	1	3	1	16	2.4
Reduced harvest opportunities	1	1	6	3	0	3	2	4	20	3.0
Don't know where to go	6	3	7	5	1	2	4	5	33	4.9
Regulations	6	3	6	0	1	1	3	1	21	3.1
Lost interest	24	31	38	45	24	46	36	56	300	44.7
Age (e.g., too old)	4	18	7	5	3	19	11	5	72	10.7
Health	3	4	1	3	2	6	5	2	26	3.9
Other	13	19	27	26	13	18	14	18	148	22.1
									857	

RESULTS: Many respondents provided multiple reasons. “Lost interest,” “Lack of time,” 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,” “Reduced harvest opportunities” and “Regulations” and “Health” 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	97	70	58	43	79	74	59	28	508
%	64.7	46.7	38.7	28.7	52.7	49.3	39.3	18.7	42.3

RESULTS: Although only 13% of respondents indicated they had participated in hunting in the last 12 months (Q. 6A), 42% indicate they have eaten game meat harvested through hunting. Even in the urban south female category where respondents indicated 2% participation in hunting in the last 12 months, 19% indicate they have eaten game meat. The weighted response indicates 37% 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	1	4	7	4	4	2	8	3	33	2.75
26-35	10	7	26	31	10	7	14	10	115	9.58
36-50	24	28	45	40	25	29	29	47	267	22.25
51-64	51	51	37	46	53	44	47	44	373	31.08
65+	64	58	35	29	58	68	52	45	409	34.08
Did not answer	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0.25

RESULTS: The age distribution of respondents is relatively similar to Alberta’s population of 18+ based on the 2016 census. The three youngest age categories were underrepresented by approximately 5-10% compared to the census data, whereas the two older categories were overrepresented.

DISCUSSION

Unaided recognition rate of ACA continues to show a rising trend over time, up from 2% of respondents in 2008 to 5.3% in 2020. When looking at the results of Question 1, only one conservation group has an unaided recognition rate over 10% (DUC at 33%) and only four have recognition rates of 5% or higher (ACA, AFGA, WWF, and DUC). Unfortunately, 61% of Albertans (weighted responses) could not name a single active conservation group in Alberta.

When provided prompting, 56% of respondents have heard of ACA. Several ACA member groups have very good aided recognition, including AFGA with the recognition at 89% (Q. 2). DUC had the highest recognition rate from respondents out of all conservation groups, at 93%.

Catch and release fishing and catch and keep fishing both maintain a high level of support amongst Albertans (weighted responses), with catch and keep fishing seeing 87% support (Q. 3A) and catch and release fishing seeing 82% support (Q. 3B). Based on the limited difference seen between rural and urban respondents, it appears that recreational angling enjoys a high level of acceptance across Alberta.

As a comparison to an inexpensive and easily accessible outdoor activity, participants were asked about support for bird watching. There was little difference between rural and urban respondents and weighted responses indicate 95% support from Albertans overall.

Support for trapping from respondents shows an increasing trend from 41% in 2008 to 59% in 2020. There is a distinct difference in the level of support shown between urban (50%) and rural (68%) respondents (Q. 3D), with the weighted response showing 55% of Albertans supporting trapping.

For both gamebird hunting and big game hunting, the level of support indicated from respondents shows an increasing trend between 2008 and 2020, with gamebird hunting increasing from 50% to 68% and big game hunting increasing from 47% to 63% in that timeframe (Q. 3E and 3F). As may be expected, there is more support shown for hunting activities (gamebird and big game) in the rural respondents as compared to urban. Overall, the weighted responses indicate that most Albertans are supportive of hunting (67% gamebird [Q. 3E], 58% big game [Q. 3F]).

Off-highway vehicle use had a very similar trend to big game hunting, with a clear distinction between urban (42% support) and rural (65% support) and overall weighted support of 59%. It would be interesting to determine how strong a correlation exists between big game hunting and off-highway vehicle support, as many hunters do use off-highway vehicles for some of their activities.

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 licence sales. Licensed hunters make up approximately 5% of Albertans aged 18+, yet these results show a much higher participation rate in hunting: 7% for urban respondents, 20% for rural respondents and 10% participation for Albertans overall (based on weighting).

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 previous 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 licence or a gun. Although licence 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 is 23% overall for Albertans (18% for urban respondents and 36% for rural respondents) which is substantially higher than the approximate 9% of Albertans 18+ that would be expected based on fishing licence 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 licence 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 licence (34% 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 licence 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, 37% 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 six additional people in the province.

While acceptance of trapping was 55% for all Albertans (Q. 3D), only 2% indicated they had participated in trapping in the past 12 months. This participation rate is similar to previous surveys.

Bird watching is considered in this survey as a baseline to compare a relatively easy and cheap outdoor recreational activity to hunting, fishing, and trapping. While 95% of Albertans indicated support for bird watching (Q. 3C) only 44% indicated participation in the activity in the last 12 months (Q. 6C). However, the 44% participation is much higher than hunting, fishing, and trapping and appears to have a different demographic involved as this was the only activity where female participation was higher.

Despite 38% 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, as was “Reduced harvest opportunity” and “Don’t know where to go” (Q. 7B). Most respondents identified a “Loss of interest” and/or “Lack of time” (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 (82%) indicate that they have participated in fishing at some time in their life; however, 77% of respondents who 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,” “Reduced harvest opportunities” and “Regulations” were 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 many people back to fishing since these ponds create opportunities 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, even though 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 50% 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 but shows a slight bias towards 50+ age categories.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the results are positive for hunting, fishing, and trapping, with improving support trends for all three activities and more than 58% support from Albertans for hunting and 82% support for fishing. Research around participation rates, and what Albertans consider to be “participation” in hunting and fishing, would be beneficial.

In addition, it would be beneficial to hunting-related organizations to determine what role eating hunter-harvested game meat plays in developing support for hunting activities, given that one-third of Albertans have eaten hunter-harvested game meat in the last 12 months.

APPENDIX 1: 2020 ACA RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY SURVEY QUESTIONS

ACA PUBLIC SURVEY – JUNE 2020

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

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

A) 2. Alberta Conservation Association (ACA)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

DO NOT READ

Don't know

B) 3. Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

C) 4. Alberta Hunter Education Instructors Association (AHEIA)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

D) 5. Alberta Trappers Association (ATA)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

E) 6. Alberta Professional Outfitters Society (APOS)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

F) 7. Nature Alberta or Federation of Alberta Naturalists (NA or FAN)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

G) 10. Wild Sheep Foundation, Alberta (WSFA)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

H) 8. Pheasants Forever (PF)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

I) 9. Trout Unlimited Canada (TUC)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

J) 11. Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

K) 12. Hunting For Tomorrow (HFT)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

L) 13. Nature Conservancy Canada (NCC)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

M) 14. World Wildlife Fund (WWF)? [ASK IF NOT MENTIONED IN Q1]

N) 1. Alberta Bowhunters Association

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. bird watching

D. trapping

E. game bird hunting

F. big game hunting

G. 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. ___ Overfishing

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. bird watching

D. trapping

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