

Blood Indian Reservoir: Fisheries Management

Fish Stocking in Alberta

Since the early 1900's, fish have been stocked into Alberta's waters to maintain native populations, re-establish collapsed populations, provide sport fishing opportunities and diversify angling experiences. Stocked trout fisheries provide some of the most popular, productive and important fish harvest opportunities across the province. Angling has always been a popular sport, with Alberta now seeing nearly 300,000 angling licenses sold every year.

Alberta has two brood stations and two fish hatcheries. Brood fish provide Alberta's hatcheries with fertilized eggs and are generally over 55 cm in length when released. The fish hatcheries stock over two million fish annually into over 200 waterbodies.

Blood Indian Reservoir, located south east of Hanna in southeast Alberta, is a popular sport fishing location, where approximately 150,000 rainbow trout have been stocked annually. In 2015, Fisheries Management and Special Areas conducted a survey and asked more than 200 anglers what type of trout fishery they would prefer, if they would support a diversified stocked fishery (as opposed to the single species currently stocked), and what type of overall quality in terms of trout size and catch rates they would prefer. There was overwhelming support (84%) to stock brook

and brown trout along with rainbow trout, as long as harvest opportunities were still available. In addition, just over half showed a desire to improve the overall quality of the fishery.

Due to the results of this survey, brook, brown and rainbow trout will now be stocked in Blood Indian Reservoir. Beginning in spring 2016, 7,500 brook and 7,500 brown trout will be stocked along with 135,000 rainbow trout. In the fall another 15,000 rainbow trout will be added along with 300 large brood fish.

Fisheries Regulation Change

As Blood Indian Reservoir is now a diversified fishery with multiple species stocked, the regulations will be updated to reflect the new fisheries management objective.

The trout limit has been decreased from five (5) fish to three (3), along with a minimum size limit for the new trout species to maintain and enhance the size and number of fish in the reservoir.

Regulations from April 1, 2016 through March 31, 2017 are:

- **Fishing season: Open all year; and**
- **Trout limit 3, of which only 1 may be a Brown trout or Brook trout over 35 cm**

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Fisheries Management Objective

A fisheries management objective is an objective that is set for a defined waterbody that considers public consultation and habitat features to support a fishery.

The new fisheries management objectives will be to:

- Maintain an enhanced a put-and-take stocked fishery that allows moderate harvest opportunities and provides improved size range of trout with moderate-to-high catch rates; and
- Diversify the fishery with three species of trout, where at least 10 per cent of the overall trout population is made up of brook and brown trout.

There are many factors that will ultimately affect whether or not these objectives are successful. Noticeable changes in the trout fishery at Blood Indian Reservoir will take time, and could take up to two years to start seeing increased size range of trout and higher catch rates.

The fisheries management team will continue to monitor progress and commit the necessary resources to pursue these fisheries management objectives.

If the objectives cannot be reached in the next 5 to 7 years, a review will be conducted and adjustments will be made as necessary.

For any questions, please call the Red Deer Fish and Wildlife office at 403-340-5142.

Prussian Carp

Another factor that could affect the success of this new diversified fishery is Prussian carp; an invasive species that was illegally introduced into various waterbodies across Alberta. This species is an extremely hardy and rapidly reproducing fish; which is known to live in aquatic environments with very low oxygen and high pollution rates.

If you have questions about aquatic invasive species or watercraft inspections, please call

1-855-336-BOAT (2628)

The effect of Prussian carp on Blood Indian Reservoir is currently unknown; however they have been known to devastate other aquatic ecosystems and pose a severe threat to native fish species. This fish outcompetes other native fish for food and habitat, and is a high risk to introduce and spread new diseases and pathogens to the ecosystem.



If you catch a Prussian carp, kill it immediately. Take it home to eat it, or dispose of the carcass in the nearest waste container. Do not release it back into the water or leave it near the water's edge, as they have been known to survive out of the water for relatively long periods of time.