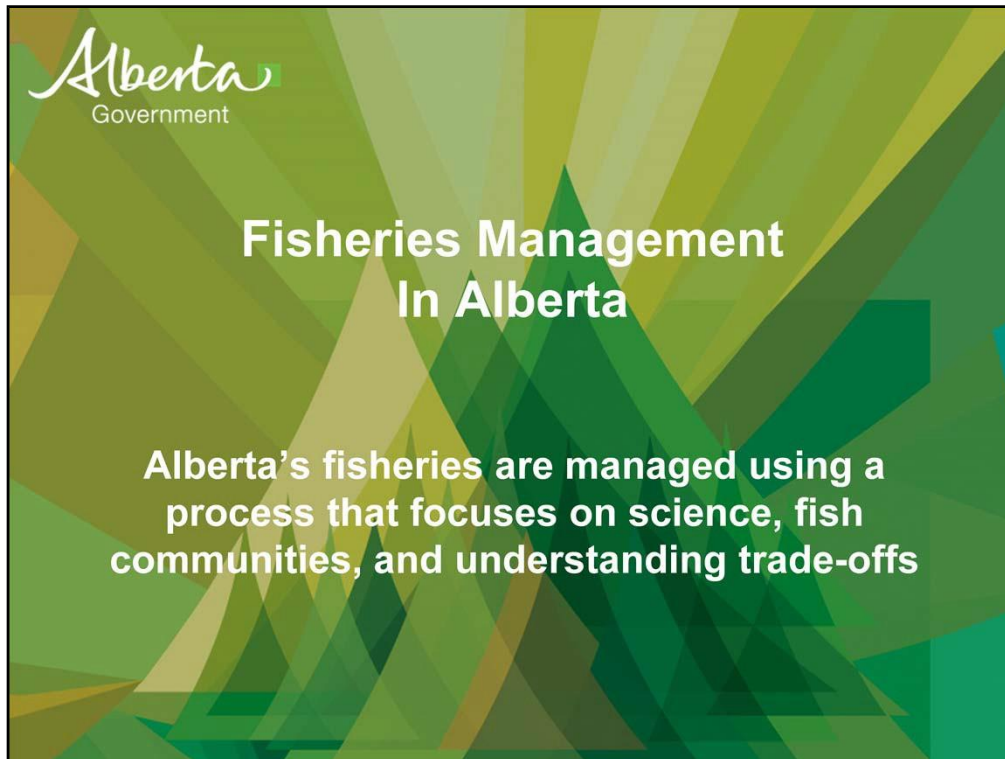


This information is based on a Power Point presentation in support of Fisheries Management in Alberta.

Fisheries in Alberta are managed using a process that focuses on:

- fish communities,
- science and
- understanding trade-offs.

The following will provide further information on the fisheries management process and objectives.



While Alberta doesn't have as much fish-bearing water as other provinces, we still have too many lakes and streams to manage each one as its own special project. To manage Alberta's fisheries effectively, we need an efficient, logical, transparent and successful process.

Our process uses scientifically-designed monitoring (how many fish?) to assess fishery status and sustainability . Some questions we ask are:

- Are the top predators, such as walleye or lake trout, abundant?
- Is the habitat okay?
- What is the pressure on the fishery?

We then ask Albertans what their priorities are - what they want from the fishery and what they will give up to reach that goal whether it is:

- Catching large, memorable fish;
- Higher catch rates; or
- Additional fish harvest opportunities. Fisheries management is a process.

Alberta's fisheries



How do we define Alberta's fisheries?

A fishery is the use of fish resources by people – it is not just fish for food.

A fishery can be for catch and release fishing or a place for watching fish run a up a creek to spawn. These are examples of fisheries; the use of fish by people.

Not all uses are equal

Alberta's priorities are set out in government policy:

- 1. Conservation First**
- 2. Indigenous Use**
- 3. Recreational Use**
- 4. Competitive Use**

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But not all uses are equal. Here in Alberta, we have prioritized how our fish resources are used by people.

First, we ensure sustainability (is the fish community healthy enough to produce fish into the future and withstand weird events like droughts, floods, forest fires and human development?). Is it resilient?

Then, we ensure that Treaty Rights are respected. Can our Indigenous communities catch enough fish to meet their needs for family and community food and for cultural traditions?

Once these uses are met, then the lake or river can provide for recreational opportunities (sportfishing) and sustainable harvests (family meals, shore lunches).

We could also permit organized fishing events like derbies and tournaments under certain cautious rules.

Objectives



Before we set objectives, we have to be able to answer some important questions.

These questions address the process of 'what do we have today?', and 'what we want for tomorrow?'

Objectives

We need to be able to answer some important questions:

- **What fish species are we focusing on?**
- **How is fish community being managed?**
- **How are these fish being used?**
- **What type of fishery do we want?**
- **What are the limitations, both natural and induced?**

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Early in the management process, we have to be able to answer questions like:

- Are we focusing on one species or focusing on the whole fish community?
- How are the fish going to be used; is it a catch and release fishery like the Bow River or a food fishery like some lakes in northern Alberta?
- What type of fishery do the users/stakeholders want; for example, a trophy fishery or a harvest fishery?
- What is the reality? Are there limitations getting in the way of the objective?
- What are the natural limitations, for example, what have we changed about the habitat that will allow us to meet those objectives?

It all has to start with really good data collection.

It starts with good data collection.



We used standardized techniques that build an accurate assessment of what the population of fish looks like – the number and age of the fish, for example.

It starts with good data collection.

Populations are measured using standard methods:

- **Electrofishing in flowing waters**
- **Index-Netting in lakes**
- **Angler surveys**
- **Trapping and counting**
- **Mark-recapture population estimates**

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Generally, that means catching fish; by netting in lakes and by mild electric shocks (electro-fishing) in streams and rivers.

We use other techniques like angler surveys, trapping and tag-recapture population estimates to check on those two primary techniques and gather other important data.

Basically, we gillnet lakes and electro-fish streams and rivers.

Fish Sustainability Index.



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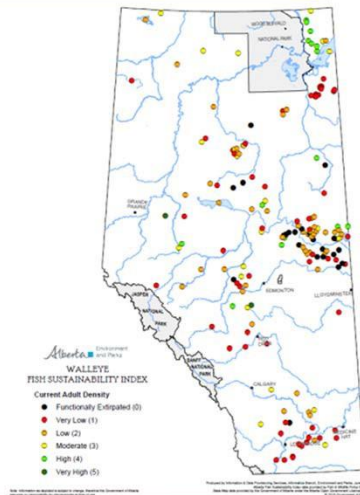
When we get that data, we rate the fish species and waterbodies for their status. Are they in great shape, good shape or poor shape?

This rating system is called the Fish Sustainability Index (FSI).

Fish Sustainability Index.

This is like a report card for our fisheries.

- Science-based
- Ecosystem focused
- Consistent and peer-reviewed
- Supports comparisons over time
- More than just population data



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The index is just like a report card for our fisheries. It is based on good science; it is focused on more than one species; it is ecosystem focused. We have a species of priority but we also look at how the fish community as a whole is doing.

This is a consistent process across Alberta; colleagues in Grande Prairie and Lethbridge, for example, use the same technique. It is also peer reviewed; this means other scientists look at our data to see if we are interpreting it correctly.

The FSI allows us to compare how our fish communities are doing over time (in the next few years) and over space (are the fish communities in the south, the mountains, the north doing the same).

It is far more than just population data.

A management process that works

It's a simple process

- It assesses 'what we have' and 'what do we want?'
- It then asks 'what do we do to get there?'
- Stakeholders help set objectives for fisheries
- Focuses on science, fish communities, and understanding trade-offs

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This process works! It is a simple process of understanding:

- 'what we have';
- 'what do we want?'; and asking
- 'what do we do to get there?'

Our consultation process, where users are setting objectives based on good science, is getting us there!

Fishing in many lakes in Alberta is better now than it has been in decades.

This process works and we hope it continues to work, so our fisheries remain viable for future generations.

Conclusion

Fisheries managers and anglers need to work together

- **Determining our objectives for fisheries and ecosystems**
- **Understanding the tradeoffs**
- **Sharing information openly**
- **Guiding habitat protection, and conservation efforts**

Alberta's fisheries are managed using a process that focuses on science, fish communities, and understanding trade-offs

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We are continuing to build scientific and innovative ways to determine these objectives and to share them with Albertans.

Thank you



Alberta

Together, we will ensure that Alberta's fish communities and fisheries remain healthy and provide Albertans with benefits for decades to come!