

Summary Information

Version Date: October 2018	Prepared by: Chris Briggs	Reviewed by: Adrian Meinke	Approved by: KayeDon Wilcox
Waterbody ID: 4886	Surface Area: 610 ha	Hydrologic Unit Code Name (HUC_8): Meander River	Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC_8): 19010303
Sport Fish Species: Walleye, Northern Pike and Yellow Perch			
Indigenous Fishery: Not on the Domestic Harvest List			
Environment and Parks Region: Peace Region		Fisheries Management Zone: Northern Boreal 3 (NB3)	Fisheries Management Office: Peace River

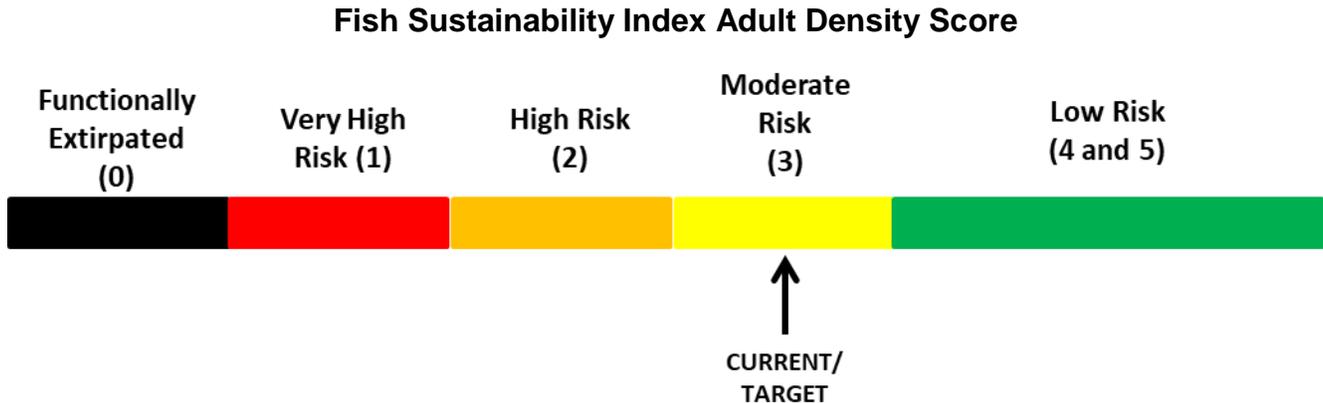
Background

Hutch Lake is a reservoir in the upper reach of the Meander River located approximately 25 km northwest of the Town of High Level. Hutch Lake is approximately 11.5 km long but only 0.5 km wide, with a surface area of 610 ha and a maximum depth of 8.0 m. There are several intermittent inlet streams and a large wetland complex at the southeast end of the lake. The reservoir outlet is the source of the Meander River, which flows approximately 37.5 km (straight line distance) northwest to the Hay River confluence. The reservoir was created in 1989 and attempts have been made to establish populations of walleye and yellow perch through various stocking programs. Northern pike and white sucker were present as native species to the Meander River and are also found in the lake. Hutch Lake has been sampled twice using the Fall Index Netting (FIN) protocol. In 2011, low numbers of both northern pike and walleye which warranted a management action of catch and release. However, the results of the 2018 FIN survey found northern pike to be at a Moderate Risk and walleye to be at Low Risk to sustainability and harvest options are available.

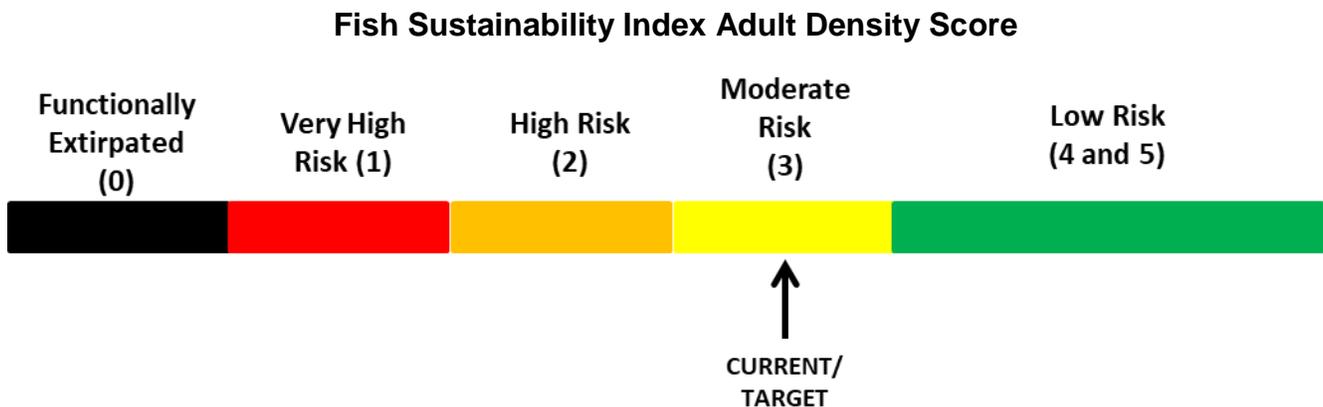
The lake shoreline is largely undeveloped, consisting of a recreation area near the dam that includes a campground and boat launch; and a few small rural acreages to the north of the lake. Hutch Lake is eutrophic and experiences algal blooms as well as periodic winterkill events including partial winterkills in 2001/02 and 2002/03 which reduced fish densities. A major winterkill in 2004/05 depleted fish stocks and transplants of both walleye and northern pike were made from Rainbow Lake. The last major walleye stocking was made in 2007 with approximately 250,000 fry stocked. There is no Domestic or commercial fishery on Hutch Lake.

Fish Population Status

Walleye – Adult Abundance



Northern Pike – Adult Abundance



Yellow Perch- Adult Abundance – No Yellow Perch have been captured in the two most recent FIN surveys

Recreational Fishery Management Objectives

The **focal species** for recreational management is walleye. The secondary species managed for recreational objectives are northern pike and yellow perch. The **Overharvest Protection Need** is assessed as **Moderate**.

Walleye: The recreational management objective for walleye is a **Sustainable Harvest** fishery. The corresponding Fish Sustainability Index (FSI) score for the current adult density of walleye was assessed at **Low Risk** to sustainability. The walleye population is currently meeting the status and criteria for the objective of sustainable harvest fishery and there are options. The recommended management action is 1 walleye over 50 cm. This regulation provides harvest opportunities at a low risk to the sustainability of the population as a whole. There is also an option to allow 2 fish over 50 cm. This allows for greater harvest opportunities, but at an increased risk to the sustainability of the population.

Northern Pike: The recreational management objective for northern pike is a **Sustainable Harvest** fishery. The corresponding FSI score for the current adult density of northern pike was assessed at the low end of **Moderate Risk** to sustainability. The northern pike population is currently meeting the status and criteria for the objective of a Sustainable Harvest fishery. The recommended management action is a harvest regulation of 1 fish over 63 cm. This allows for harvest opportunities at a lower risk to the population as a whole. Other options available are 2 fish

over 63 cm, but this comes at an increased risk to the sustainability of the population which could cause it to become catch and release in the future.

Yellow Perch - The yellow perch population was assessed in 2011 and although there is no FSI completed for yellow perch, the current adult density was estimated to be at **Very High Risk**. The current management action is **to promote recovery through the use of catch and release** until such time the population increases into the moderate risk (yellow) category where alternative options can be explored (open harvest).

Management Summary

Management Priority	Species	Overharvest Protection Need	Management Action	Sport Fishing Harvest Regulation
1	Walleye	Moderate	Maintenance – Multiple Options available	1 fish over 50 cm (recommended) Or 2 fish over 50 cm
2	Northern Pike	Moderate	Maintenance – Sustainable Harvest	1 fish over 63 cm
3	Yellow Perch*	Moderate	Recovery – Sustainable Harvest	Catch and Release

**Recreational management objectives for yellow perch have not been fully developed into management frameworks, and will be subject to change pending on-going work and development. However, general action statements have been listed for this species within the context of relative abundance, catch rates and trends associated with index netting assessments, in relation to the management of this species at a provincial level.*