

## Summary Information

<b>Version Date:</b> September 2018	<b>Prepared by:</b> Myles Brown	<b>Reviewed by:</b> Kristy Wakeling	<b>Approved by:</b> Norbert Raffael
<b>Waterbody ID:</b> 5743	<b>Surface Area:</b> 2793 ha	<b>Hydrologic Unit Code Name (HUC_8):</b>	<b>Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC_8):</b> 18050102
<b>Sport Fish Species: Walleye, Northern Pike, Lake Whitefish, Yellow Perch, Burbot</b>			
<b>Indigenous Fishery: Yes, NLT 140 mm, Seasonal Conservation Closures for areas in lake</b>			
<b>Environment and Parks Region:</b> Lower Peace Region (LPR)		<b>Fisheries Management Zone: Northern Boreal 3 (NB3)</b>	<b>Fisheries Management Office:</b> Slave Lake

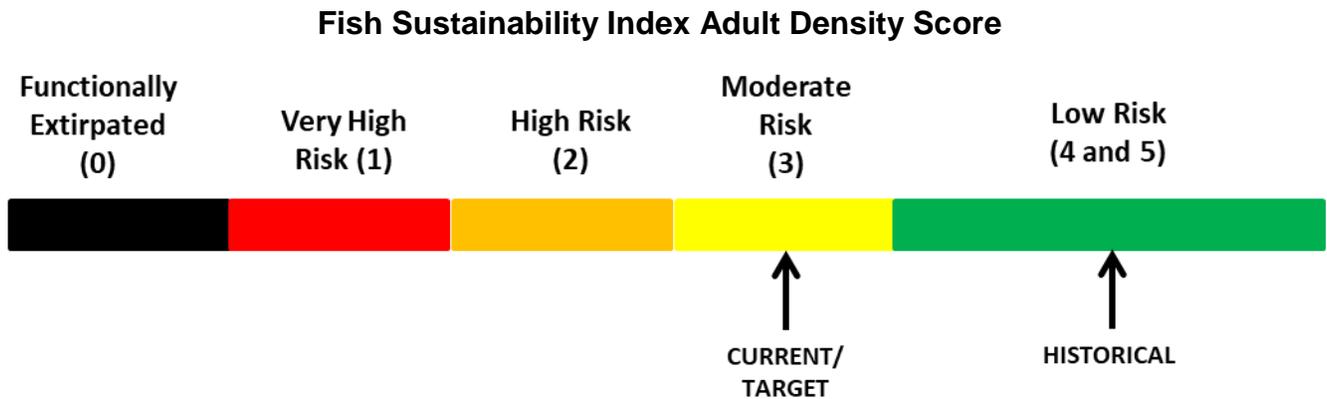
## Background

Sandy Lake is an actively managed lake located approximately 44 km southeast of Wabasca-Desmarais and 134 km north of Athabasca, Alberta. Sandy Lake is bordered on the south west corner of the lake by the community of Sandy Lake. The lake is accessible by pavement road. There are several residences bordering the lake with low grad private boat launches and docks present at some residences and one public boat launch suitable for launching large size boats. The lake is comprised of a single, shallow basin with a surface area of 2793 ha, an average depth of 2.8 m and a maximum depth of 7 m.

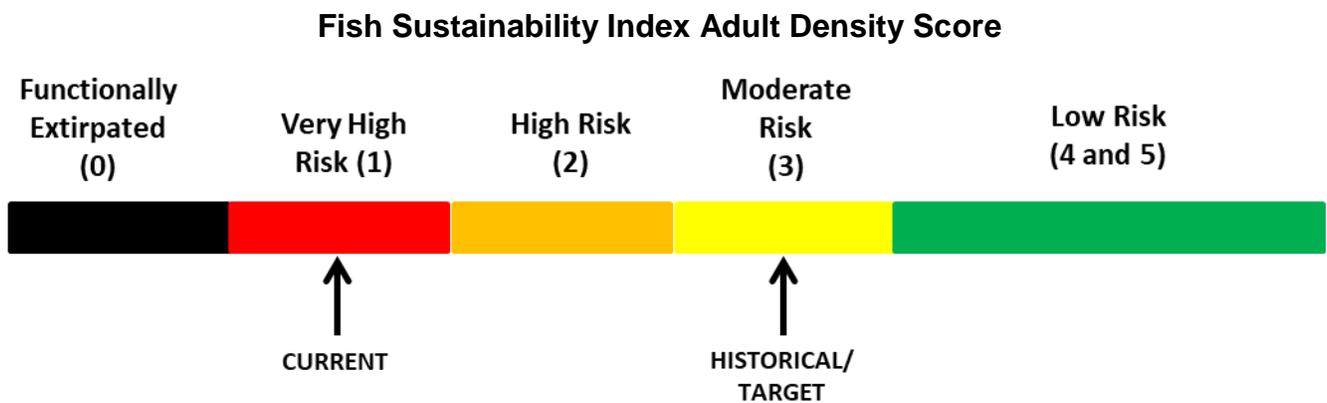
Sandy Lake supports Indigenous and recreational fisheries targeting walleye, northern pike, and yellow perch. Historically, the sport fish populations (walleye, northern pike) in Sandy Lake were assessed as being low risk to sustainability but experienced declines and collapses followed by periods of recovery. The open water fishery is estimated to be low effort for recreational and moderate effort for indigenous use. In the winter months, there is an Indigenous netting presence, a low amount of recreational fishing effort and one tournament focused on northern pike. Previously the lake supported commercial fisheries. The commercial fishery was closed to promote lake whitefish and walleye recovery following a trend of population decline and growing bycatch of non-target species. Survey data in 2013 showed the walleye were at very low abundances with an adult catch rate of 0.15 walleye /net-night corresponding to a very high risk to sustainability (FSI 1). The management action for walleye has been recovery since 1998 when the sportfishing regulation was changed to catch and release. In continued support of this objective, strong management actions were taken to promote walleye recovery including the implementation of conservation closures in 2015 in the North and South portions of the lake to protect vulnerable spawning Walleye. The northern pike population in 2013 were moderate risk to sustainability with a moderate abundance and broad size structure. Since the survey in 2013, the walleye are beginning to show signs of recovery however they remain a high risk to sustainability. Sandy Lake was last surveyed in 2017.

## Fish Population Status

### Northern Pike – Adult Abundance



### Walleye Pike – Adult Abundance



Yellow Perch- FSI Adult Abundance - Undetermined

Lake Whitefish - FSI Adult Abundance - Undetermined

## Recreational Fishery Management Objectives

The **focal species** for recreational management is **Northern Pike**. The secondary species managed for recreational objectives are walleye, yellow perch and lake whitefish. These sport-fisheries are directly assessed at intervals, and therefore are actively managed. The **Overharvest Protection Need** is assessed as **Moderate**.

**Northern Pike** - The current recreational fishery management objective for northern pike is **Sustainable Harvest**. The corresponding FSI score for the current mature density of northern pike was assessed as **Moderate Risk** to sustainability. The northern pike population is currently **meeting** the status and criteria for the objective of a sustainable harvest fishery. The current regulation is 3 fish over 63 cm. The recommended RFMO is sustainable harvest. To align with the Northern Pike Recreational Management framework, the proposed management action is a maintenance regulation of **2 fish > 63cm**. Sandy Lake is also capable of producing a **Quality Fishery**. If supported through consultation, the management action to meet the criteria of a quality objective would be a maintenance regulation of **1 or 2 fish over 75 cm total length**.

**Walleye** - The current recreational fishery management objective for walleye is **Sustainable Harvest**. The corresponding FSI score for the current mature density of walleye was assessed at **very high risk (1)** to sustainability. The walleye population is currently **not meeting** the status and criteria for the objective of a sustainable harvest fishery. The current regulation is catch and release. The recommended RFMO is **Sustainable Harvest**. The management action is **recovery** to achieve the desired RFMO using catch and release. To align with the Walleye Recreational Management Framework, the proposed management action is a maintenance regulation of **catch and release**.

**Yellow Perch** – The recreational fishery management objective being applied is the provincial default (**Sustainable Harvest**). The status of the yellow perch population has not been assessed using FSI. The current management action is a maintenance regulation of **15 perch, any size**.

**Lake Whitefish/Cisco** – The current recreational fishery management objective for lake whitefish/ cisco is **Sustainable Harvest**. Cisco in Sandy Lake can grow relatively large in size, and may be easily confused for lake whitefish. The corresponding FSI score for the current mature density of lake whitefish has not been formally assessed but would be equivalent to a **very high risk** to sustainability. The current regulation is 10 fish, no size. 2017 survey data indicates the lake whitefish/cisco population is likely **not meeting** the status for the objective of a sustainable harvest fishery. The required management action is a recovery regulation of **Catch and Release** to support recovery of the population; to be implemented in 2019-2020.

## Management Summary

Management Priority	Species	Overharvest Protection Need	Management Action	Sport Fishing Harvest Regulation
1	Walleye	Moderate	Recovery – Sustainable Harvest	Catch and Release
2	Northern Pike	Moderate	Options: Maintenance – Sustainable Harvest  Maintenance – Quality Harvest	Options: 1 > 63 cm or 2 > 63 cm (Sustainable Harvest options) 1 > 75 cm or 2 > 75 cm (Quality Harvest options)
3	Yellow Perch*	Moderate	Maintenance – Sustainable Harvest	15 any size
4	Lake Whitefish/Cisco*	Moderate	Recovery – Sustainable Harvest	Catch and Release

\*Recreational management objectives for lake whitefish/cisco and 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 these species within the context of relative abundance, catch rates and trends associated with index netting assessments, in relation to the management of these species at a provincial level.