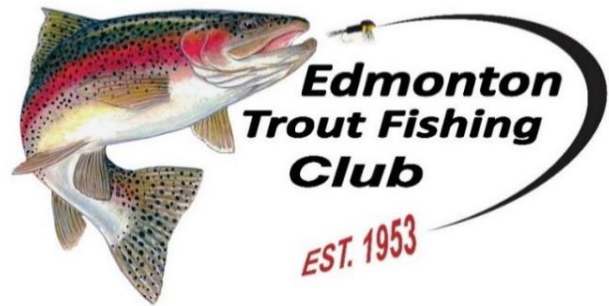


FLYCASTER

September 2024



ETFC NEWS:

- **Re: Fall meetings**

Guest speakers, topics, and dates are currently being planned and will be emailed to all members as soon as possible

- **Re: Spring Lake Environmental Committee**

As suggested by our members we offered the services of a representative from the club to serve on the committee voluntarily. Our membership (which includes former fisheries biologists, those with knowledge and experience in riparian protection, aquatic entomology, fisheries management and more), has over 70 years of experience with the lake, its wildlife and surrounding environment. We offered to share that with our Village neighbours and decision makers. However, we were told in April that although we pay property taxes (and have done so for over 70 years) we are not considered village 'residents' so cannot have a seat on the committee. That, to put it mildly, is unfortunate and disappointing. However, we just learned that the Environment Committee may be reviewing that decision. Anyone interested in representing the club on the committee if the Village changes its rule?



- **Re: Continued aeration of Spring Lake**

Winter aeration of Spring Lake has been vital for fish survival and the health of the waterbody for many years. Without it, the likelihood of fish survival decreases significantly. In 2023 Alberta Conservation Association made a principled decision to stop using licence fee revenues from Alberta anglers to fund the cost of aerating the lake which 99.9% of those anglers, even local ones, were unable to access with a boat. Council

was unable to find a way to improve angler access, so

ETFC tried to find at least a partial solution. The club negotiated an arrangement with ACA to borrow 5 aeration pumps (one as a spare), underwater cables, exclusion fencing, and signage (total value about \$27,000), We trained members on installation and use of the equipment, and volunteered time and labour for installation, monitoring, upkeep and take-down for the 2023-24 winter, Operating an aeration system also requires provincial authorization and insurance coverage, both of which we obtained. Then there was the cost of electricity to run the system (about \$4,500 for the winter at

the old rates). We approached Council for help, but it was only willing to commit \$3,000 for the 2024-25 winter aeration.

We can volunteer the time and labour, we can borrow the equipment again and get the insurance, but finding the additional money for electrical power will not be easy.

Certainly we don't want to risk losing the fishery, decreasing the health of the lake and losing some of its extensive and varied bird and invertebrate populations, but hopefully Council and residents don't want that either and will take on more of the aeration cost responsibility. We'll keep you updated!



FISH and FISHING:

- **Fishing the Swimmer** – backswimmers will soon be seen coming to the surface and taking short flights at Spring Lake and elsewhere. Here are a few fly-fishing tips [from Phil Rowley](#) for imitating them:

‘Using a series of short, 2 to 4” strips and prolonged pauses, foam-based patterns dart through the water column bobbing upward during the pauses. A series of long pulls and pauses also works well. No matter the presentation choice, be prepared during the pause phase for trout to pound the pattern. Where multiple fly rigs are permitted place a buoyant pattern on the point and traditional weighted patterns on the droppers. This washing line approach, as it was named by its English creators, works wonders in the fall when weed growth is at its peak. The buoyant pattern skims the other patterns just above the weeds reducing the risk of fouling.

Backswimmer and water boatman activity often overlaps, and it is prudent to offer fish a choice between these two morsels. In the later summer and fall I often have a backswimmer on the point and a smaller boatman on the dropper. It is common to have trout favour the backswimmer for a period then switching to the smaller boatman pattern. Trout seesaw back and forth between the two choices all day long. It is a great approach, throwing the odds in the fly fisher’s favour.’

Check out Phil’s website: <https://philrowleyflyfishing.com/> for more.

- **Big Fish** – as an indication of what’s lurking in Alberta waters here’s the size of trout species caught by AWF members and recognized in the 2024 AWF Awards (in cms and also in inches for those of us brought up in a pre-metric age):

Brook	44.45 cm	17.50 ins	Butcher Lake
Brown	70.49 cm	27.75 ins	Waterton River
Cutthroat	50.80 cm	20.00 ins	North Ram River
Lake	68.00 cm	26.77 ins	Cold Lake
Rainbow	68.58 cm	27.00 ins	Reesor Lake (there’s at least one bigger in Spring Lake, or there was a month ago!)
Tiger	64.77 cm	25.50 ins	Peerless Lake

EFFC currently sponsors the award for “Largest Trout taken with a fly” (this year’s winner was Brendan Oskam) for the bull trout listed above. However, the ETFC executive is currently reviewing our sponsorship of this award. Is funding this award in line with our objectives or would the money be better spent promoting youth or first-time anglers for example? Interestingly, despite winning 5 awards himself this year, Brendan thought a shift toward promoting youth and angling in general would be a good idea! Any thoughts on this? Please let us know at etfcnews@gmail.com

- **Member Reports** - the objective of the club is ‘to provide for a community in which members may develop their angling knowledge and skills’ so please share your fishing experiences - what worked, what didn’t etc.- throughout the summer – good and not so good. We won’t use your name without your permission. Email us at etfcnews@gmail.com
- **Cormorants:** As of June 20th ‘24, Alberta expanded the use of damage control licences for double-crested cormorants. Too late for Beaumont’s Don Sparrow Lake where, by that time, it seems cormorants (with a little help from some pelicans) had pretty much cleaned out the 2,500 trout that ACA stocked there in May.

If you’d like to do a little cormorant controlling, the application process is available at <https://www.alberta.ca/damage-control-licences-and-permits>



- **Fish and Water Temperature** – [a new study](#) just reported by *KeepFishWet*:

Quote - "The results of my literature review suggest the angling threshold of 68°F/20°C is too high for all the species I researched.

I encourage anglers to be more conservative and start being aware of the impacts of temperature on fish much earlier, specifically at 61°F /16°C for rainbow, steelhead, cutthroat, and brook trout, 66°F/ 19°C for brown trout, and 54°F/12°C for bull trout."

Some interesting considerations for catch and release angling and the fish stocking program! Fortunately, Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) is already working on that, as follows:

The End of the Rainbow? Warming waters and the research noted above suggest there’s a growing need to stock alternative species that can tolerate higher temperatures. Rainbow trout are not doing well in many ponds and lakes. So with some encouragement from provincial officials our partner in conservation, the Alberta Conservation Association, has evaluated alternatives for Put-and-Take Fisheries on 5 characteristics:

Species	Habitat Requirements	Fishery Characteristics	Ease of Culture	Affordability	Ecological Impact
Channel Catfish	Neutral	Pass	Pass	Pass	Neutral

Walleye	Neutral	Pass	Neutral	Fail	Neutral
Yellow Perch	Pass	Fail	Neutral	Neutral	Pass
Pike	Neutral	Neutral	Fail	Fail	Neutral
Black Crappie	Pass	Fail	Fail	Neutral	Neutral
Largemouth Bass	Neutral	Pass	Neutral	Neutral	Fail
Smallmouth Bass	Neutral	Pass	Fail	Fail	Fail

Mike Rodtka, the ACA bio conducting the research, writes “Although no candidate species is without shortcomings, only Channel Catfish passes or is neutrally scored on all criteria. Based on the evaluation, **Channel Catfish has the greatest potential to succeed as an alternative to Rainbow Trout in Alberta.**



Although the five criteria have been given equal consideration, affordable acquisition of fish is likely to be of overriding importance if ecological impacts can be mitigated . . . For much of North America, Channel Catfish have proven to be one of the most affordable

options, but this remains an open question for Alberta.

A factor not considered in this evaluation is novelty. Species unfamiliar to Alberta anglers are likely to generate interest independent of their other qualities, native species will not . . . While it is impossible to know for certain, the novelty of Channel Catfish to most Alberta anglers may be one of its strongest selling points. Demand for recreational angling opportunity in Alberta is high, fish stocking is necessary to help meet this demand. An overreliance on coldwater species, a limited number of waterbodies, and a warming climate place the future of Alberta’s stocking program in jeopardy . . . an alternative to trout for recreational enhancement stocking is required.”

Ed Note: the province would require any catfish stocked to be sterile

Next Newsletter – will be appearing on your screen on Oct 1, 2024.

Email us at etfcnews@gmail.com with comments, suggestions, questions! No names will be used without your permission.

Meanwhile Jacqueline Harriman, our membership director, is planning a year-end review in pictures. Please send her – at communications@edmontontrout.ca - any photos you may have of club activities, you or others fishing, of fish and favourite flies, and anything else that illustrates ETFC member activities.

PSL/

Thinking of fishing Spring Lake. Here’s the [14Day Weather Forecast](#)