



Summary of Activities

Date: August 13th, 2015

To: Ian Kitch
Conservation & Water Stewardship

From: Holly Urban & Brock Koutecky
Swan Valley Sport Fishing Enhancement
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Subject: Nick Lake

Location: Nick Lake, Porcupine Provincial Forest, 14U 335038 58319680

Summary of Activities: Nick Lake is a very small (3ha) waterbody in the Porcupine Provincial Forest which has been a popular trout fishery since stocking was initialized in the early 1970's. At current, Nick Lake is managed as a rainbow trout fishery, with stocking occurring once every few years. The most recent stocking occurred in September, 2015 (2000-2500). In the spring of 2015, Regional Biologist Ian Kitch informed SVSFE of an opportunity to receive a disease free strain of triploid albino rainbow trout (aka golden trout). The idea was well received and to date the Whiteshell Hatchery is on a waiting list for albino trout eyed eggs destined for the Parkland Region. This initiative partnered with Fisheries Branch, the Whiteshell Hatchery and SVSFE instantly created a need to find homes for this unique strain of fish. Trout anglers are constantly seeking new/unique angling opportunities, so finding suitable waterbodies for these unique fish quickly became one of SVSFE's priorities. Nick Lake was one of these potential candidates.

On July 22, and 23 2015 SVSFE technicians assessed Nick Lake to gather forage information and assess stocked rainbow trout survival and growth. One small mesh trap net was set on the east shore for a duration of 21.25 hours. Catchment included a 102 white sucker (mean weight - 69 grams), and 15.2 kg of forage. Species included fathead minnows, longnose dace, brook stickleback, and blacknose shiners. Unfortunately, no rainbow trout were captured.

It is apparent the Nick Lake inherits a very high abundance of forage, and it is not conclusive that the current survival of rainbow trout is poor. Trap netting methods are not ideal for catchment of rainbow trout, especially mid-summer. Technicians observed a very high abundance of large arches on the sonar believed to be thermocline seeking suspended rainbow trout. As per SVSFE protocol, gill netting for trout is not recommended during the months of July and August due to high mortality rates, especially from the depths.

Nick Lake appears to be very productive, and for this reason it is highly recommended that the lake be used as one of the candidate lakes for albino trout. As stated earlier, the lake was recently re-stocked with rainbows, suggesting that stocking albinos on top of rainbows may be an issue. At current, it is recommended that albino trout stocking be further discussed as the stocking dates approach. Also, if angling quality ever decreases in Nick Lake that presence of white suckers be further investigated. Also, stocking rates could be re-considered as current rates appear to be quite high especially for a lake of only 3 hectares.