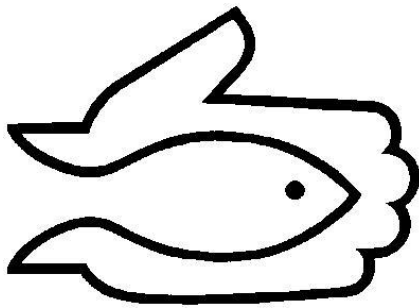




MANITOBA
**FISH AND
WILDLIFE**
ENHANCEMENT FUND

Online Angler Survey Review 2021

Author: Holly
Urban

November 2021

Swan Valley Sport
Fishing Enhancement
Inc.

Online Angler Survey Review 2021

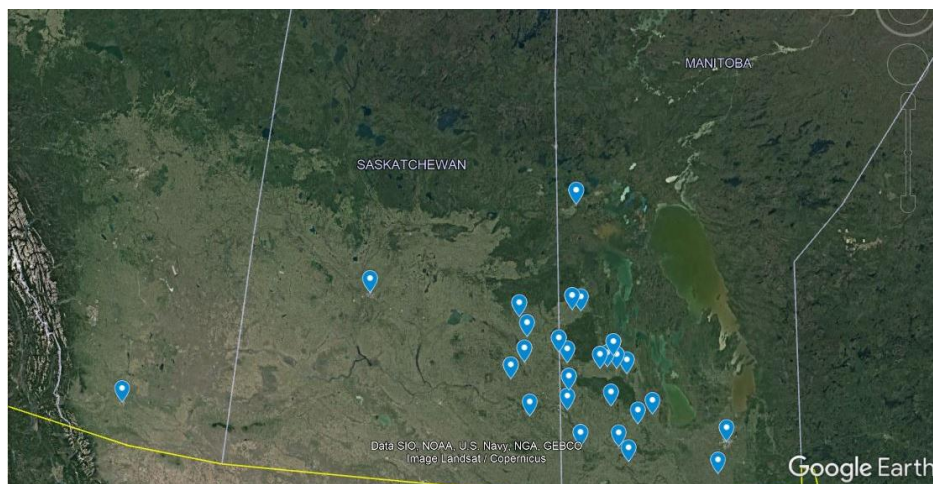
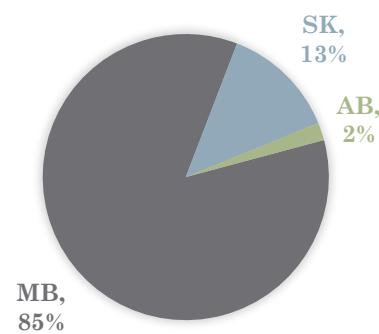
2021 Online Angler Survey Summary

SVSFE understands the importance of qualitative data and incorporating angler's insight into potential management objectives. To gather this insight, SVSFE developed the Angler Survey Questionnaire. The survey questionnaire was first initiated in 2015, conducted in-person throughout the Duck and Porcupine Mountains as well as an online (funded through Service Canada). Annual surveys from 2016-2021 were collected solely through online submissions. Online submissions were made available on the SVSFE website throughout the winter of 2020, starting November 1st and continued until the end of October 2021. Receiving entries was generally correlated with promotional boosts and shares on SVSFE's Facebook. The following is a review from the surveys received.

Angler Demographic:

Sixty-three General Surveys were completed online in 2020/2021 and of these, 87% of anglers resided in Manitoba, 13% in Saskatchewan and 2% in Alberta. Of the 53 Manitobans, listed are the communities from which they reside: Swan Valley(16), Winnipeg(9), Brandon(6), Dauphin (4), Minitonas (3), Plumas (2), Ochre River (2), Ashville (1), Gilbert Plains (1), Morris (1), Neepawa (1), Roblin (1), Russell (1), Sandy Lake (1), Sifton (1), St. Lazare (1), The Pas (1), Virden (1), Wawanesa (1). Received from Saskatchewan: Whitewood (2), Canora (1), Melville (1), Preeceville (1), Regina (1), Saskatoon (1), Togo (1) and Yorkton (1). One survey was received from Lethbridge, Alberta. Anglers visiting the Parkland area typically reside within a 410 km radius or less from Swan River with the one exception of Lethbridge (>900 km). 65% of anglers purchased Regular licenses, 29% were Conservation, 5% Seniors and 2% were classified as Youth.

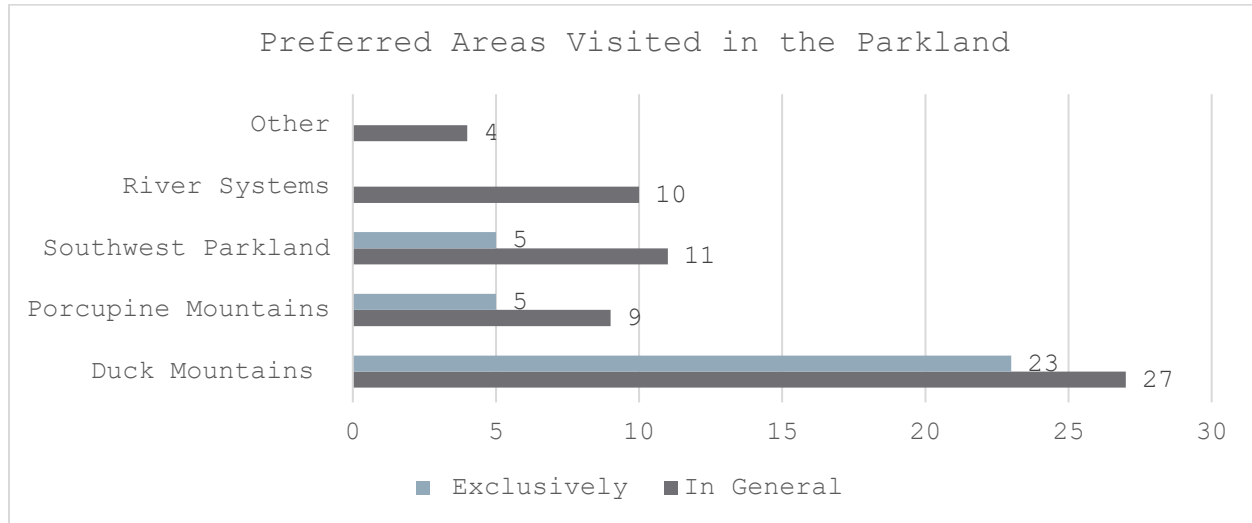
ANGLER RESIDENCE



Online Angler Survey Review 2021

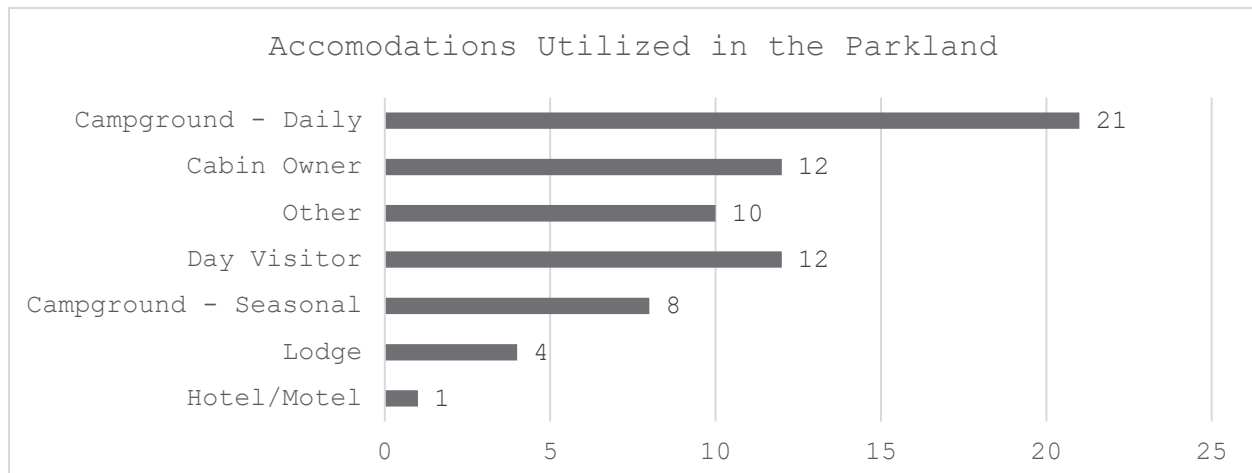
Area Use Specifics:

Within the Parkland, anglers were prompted to specify which areas they visit most frequently. Options listed were the Duck Mountains, Porcupine Mountains, Southwest Parkland, River Systems, and Other. The most frequented area was the Duck Mountains, followed by the Southwest Parkland, River Systems, Porcupine Mountains, and Other. In fact, 79% of all surveys indicated the Duck Mountains as a target destination when visiting the Parkland.



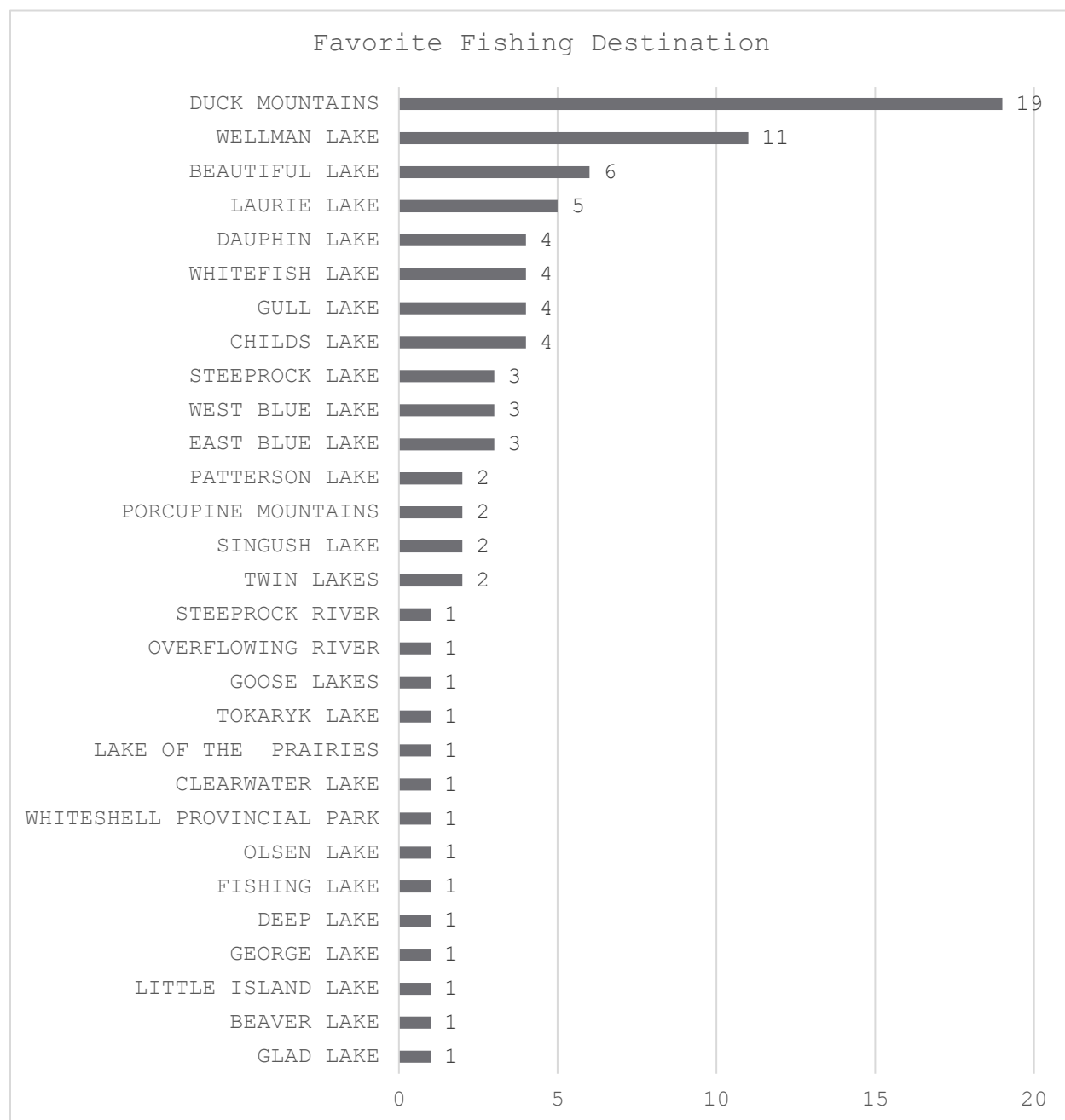
Angling was identified as the primary reason for visiting the Parkland by 87% of surveys, while the remaining 13% visited for camping, hiking, visiting family, visiting the cabin or work-related reasons.

In general, anglers who visit the Parkland to fish, do so an average of 30 times/year (range 1 - 300). When it comes to accommodations, 31% of anglers noted staying at campgrounds and reserving daily campsites. In order of most to least frequented others noted utilizing personal cabins, other means, day visits, seasonal campsites, or booked their stay at local lodges/hotels.



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Anglers declared the Duck Mountains as the favourite fishing destination for 2021. The Duck Mountains has been in the top 3 favourite fishery category since 2016. Other top destinations included Wellman Lake, Beautiful Lake, Laurie Lake, Dauphin Lake, Whitefish Lake, Gull Lake and Childs Lake.



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General Angling Inquiries:

To better understand current contributions to the economy, along with angling ethics of the recreational angling community, anglers are asked some general questions on their angling approach and expectations.

Anglers stated they are fishing on an average of 46 times/year (range 4-200) and spending \$255 per fishing trip and \$2,845 annually on fishing. Angler demographics can influence how much money and time is spent per fishing trip and annually therefore has been broken down in the table below.

	Anglers living in or close to the area (Locals or Non-residents <200km from Swan River)	Anglers living a distance from the area (>200km from the Swan River)
\$ Spent Per Trip on Angling	\$20 - \$750 Average \$154	\$30 - \$3,000 Average \$389
\$ Spent Per Year on Angling	\$30 - \$15,000 Average \$2,172	\$500 - \$16,000 Average \$3,668
Times Anglers Fish/ Year	4 - 200 Average 44	10 - 150 Average 52

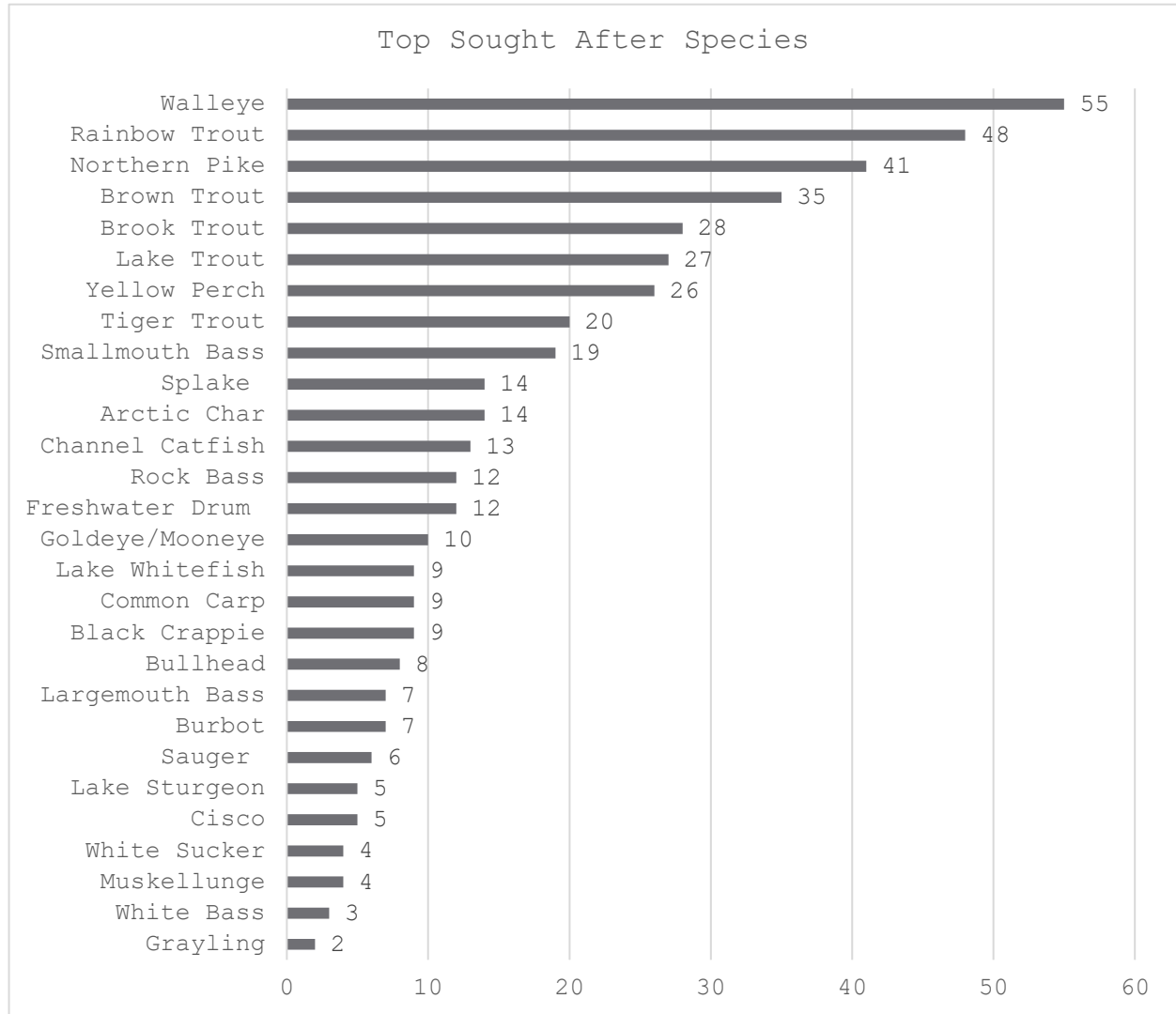
When reviewing catch and release ratios, it was found that anglers release 84% of their catches on average. These ratios differed depending on where anglers were travelling from. Typically, locals or non-resident anglers living close to the area had a higher retain/release ratio (1:4) compared to anglers who travel 200+ kms to the area (1:10). Of the lakes fished, anglers preferred angling stocked trout waterbodies (50) and natural lakes (47), as opposed to river/streams (25).

Anglers utilize different fishing tactics besides regular rod/reel fishing when in the Parkland. 75% of anglers interviewed noted ice fishing as an additional practice, along with 19% of anglers who indicated fly fishing as a method. A low percent of anglers noted dip netting and spear fishing as methods to catch fish.

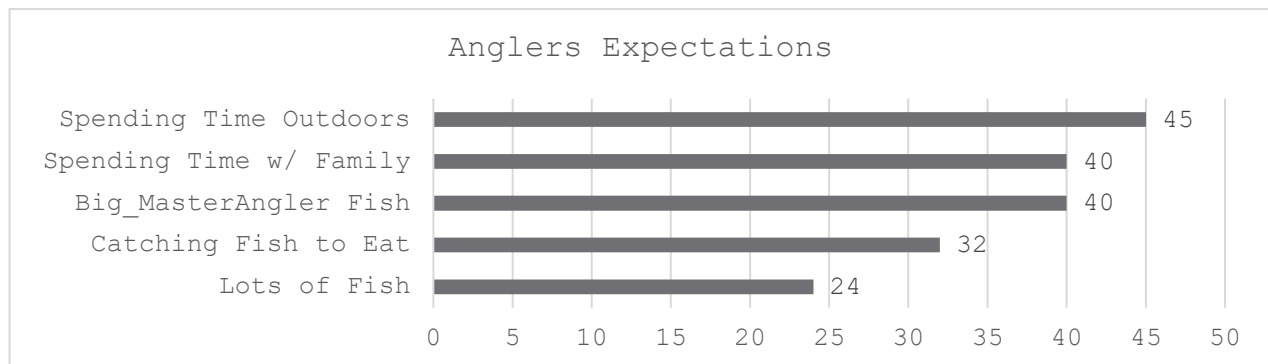
The top sought after fish species targeted by anglers was the walleye, closely followed by rainbow trout. Rainbow trout were the target species from 2016 to 2019, while walleye has been the popular choice the past two years.



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When out on the water, the most common reason anglers fish was to simply spend time outdoors. Other high expectations were spending time with family & friends and targeting big/master angler fish. These expectations have remained consistent over the years of Voluntary Angler Surveys.



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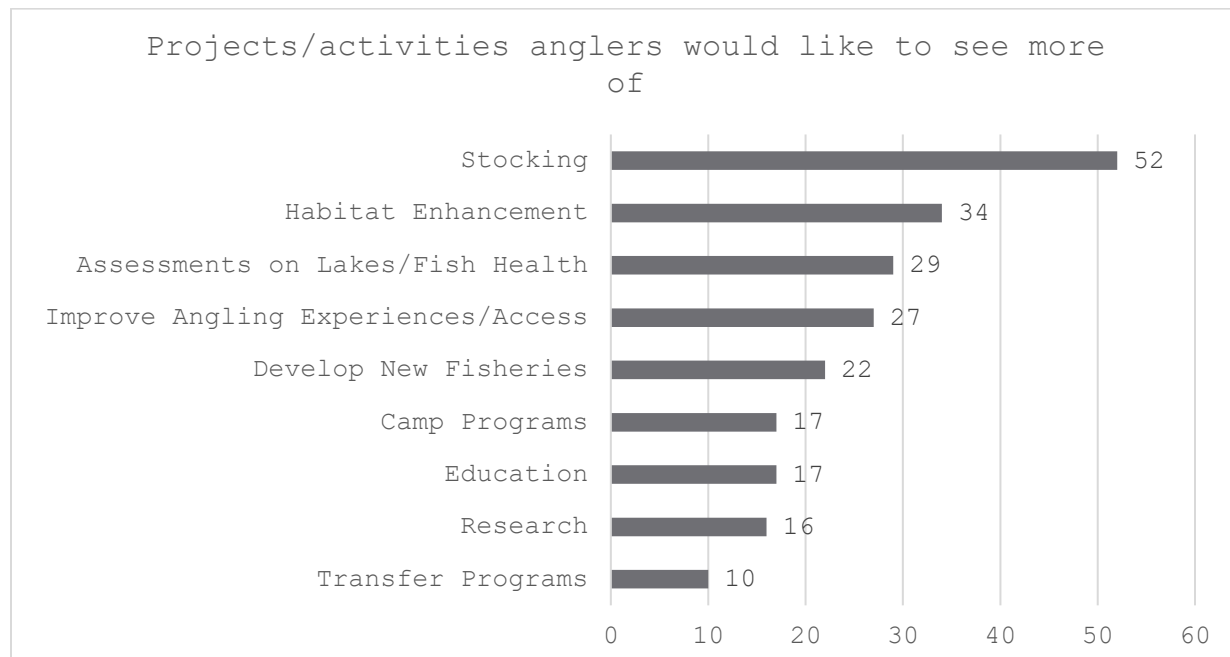
Supported Initiatives:

Receiving support for enhancement initiatives in Manitoba from the angling community is vital to managing local fisheries. Approximately 95% of individuals were previously aware of the Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Fund (FWEF) and 97% supported those initiatives. 92% of individuals were previously aware of SVSFE and 94% supported our initiatives.

In some provinces, anglers are required to purchase a stamp to support enhancement programs even though they are exempt from license fees. Individuals were asked if they would consider contributing to the FWEF stamp even if they were exempt from purchasing an angling license (ie. Senior, etc). 92% were in support of the idea.

Enforcement is an important role in not only protecting fisheries but also educating anglers. Regarding enforcement presence, 70% of anglers stated they have been checked by an officer while angling. Of those anglers, checks per year ranged from once to 25 but were most common at once (39%) and twice (25%) per year.

When requesting feedback for what type of fisheries projects or activities anglers prefer the government or sport fish groups focus on, stocking was the top priority. This has always been the most supported type of project since this survey was initiated in 2015. It shows a strong awareness of the significant role our hatcheries play into recreational fishing. Besides stocking, anglers are also very supportive of habitat enhancement and assessments on lakes/fish health, improving angling experiences/access and developing new fisheries.



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Anglers were given the opportunity to specify activities they would like to see done or any issues they face. A full list of suggestions may be viewed in the appendix, but some examples include:

- ✓ Increase stocking
- ✓ Develop more arctic char fisheries
- ✓ Lake trout stocking more often
- ✓ More largemouth and smallmouth bass lakes
- ✓ Create some small camping area at the trout triangle
- ✓ Would like to see the kids fishing pond in the Swan Valley area
- ✓ More Ais check stations in Parkland Area, keep live bait to be allowed like leeches live minnows, go to a credit card style license instead of 8½" x 11
- ✓ Having more no kill lakes...ie. West Blue as a trophy brook trout lake.
- ✓ Encourage NRO'S to be more evident in Duck Mountain area.
- ✓ One day mini fishing tournaments
- ✓ Weekly online updates on what's biting and lures/bait could help attract additional anglers or improve the experience for those who are unfamiliar with the areas. The updated contour signage at the lakes have been a nice improvement.
- ✓ T dock at Perch Lake

With anglers having the opportunity to share specific ideas or comments, local sport fish groups and fisheries managers can focus on programs and projects that are beneficial to both the anglers and the fisheries themselves.

Comparison of Past & Present Feedback:

When comparing the survey feedback from 2016 to present, there are similarities indicating criteria that is important to anglers. Typically, a large portion of anglers surveyed are Manitoba residents, with a smaller percent made up of Saskatchewan, Alberta, US and on one occasion Ontario. The pandemic was likely the influencing factor to the lack of US participants in recent years. Of these license holders, more than half of anglers purchase a regular license opposed to a conservation licence.

Over six years the Duck Mountains has been chosen annually as one of the top three angling destinations. In addition, many lakes within the Ducks fall in the top three and further rankings each year. When anglers visit the area, the park appears to be the preferred place to stay. Participants noted campgrounds as the ideal location to be while visiting the area. This signifies the importance of high-quality management and promotion of our lakes and parks within with in the Parkland.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
# of Surveys Received	26	43	40	78	68	63
Residence of Anglers participating in survey	MB 69%, AB 12%, SK 11%, ON 4%, US 4%	MB 81%, SK 12%, AB 5%, US 2%	MB 71%, SK 16%, US 8%, AB 5%	MB 82%, SK 13%, US 4%, AB 1%	MB 85%, SK 13%, AB 2%	MB 85%, SK 13%, AB 2%
Type of License	Regular 50%, Conservation 42%	Regular 58% Conservation 37%	Regular 61% Conservation 34%	Regular 60% Conservation 32%	Regular 75% Conservation 18%	Regular 65% Conservation 29%
Top Three Fishing Destinations	1. Patterson Lake 2. Twin Lakes 3. Duck Mountains	1. Duck Mountains 2. East Blue Lake 3. Wellman Lake	1. Twin Lakes 2. Duck Mountains 3. West Goose Lake	1. Duck Mountains 2. Twin Lakes 3. East Blue Lake	1. Duck Mountains 2. East Blue Lake 3. Wellman Lake	1. Duck Mountains 2. Wellman Lake 3. Beautiful Lake

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Preferred Accommodation	Campground - Daily	Day Visits	Campground - Daily	Campground - Daily	Day Visits	Campground - Daily
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Days Fish/Year	60.5 (Range 1-200)	75 (Range 1-224)	59 (Range 10-200)	64 (Range 5-300)	60 (Range 5-200)	47 (Range 4 - 200)
Average \$ Spent/Fishing Trip	\$378.00	\$287.00	\$573.00	\$303.00	\$165.00	\$255.00
Angling Practices Release/Retain Ratio	3:1	4.5 :1	7:1	5:1	4:1	5:1
Target Species	1. Rainbow trout 2. Walleye 3. Brown Trout	1. Rainbow trout 2. Walleye 3. Northern Pike	1. Rainbow trout 2. Brook Trout 3. Walleye	1. Rainbow trout 2. Walleye 3. Tiger, Brook, Brown Trout	1. Walleye 2. Rainbow Trout 3. Smallmouth Bass, Brook Trout	1. Walleye 2. Rainbow trout 3. Northern Pike
Most Valued Fishing Expectation	Spending Time Outdoors	Catching Big/Master Angler Fish	Spending Time Outdoors	Tie: Spending Time Outdoors & Catching Big/Master Angler Fish	Spending Time Outdoors	Spending Time Outdoors
Percent of Anglers Being Checked by Enforcement	52%	42%	53%	71%	75%	70%

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Most Supported Projects for Fisheries Initiatives	1. Stocking 2. Assessments on Lakes and Fish Health 3. Develop New Fisheries	1. Stocking 2. Habitat Enhancement 3. Develop New Fisheries	1. Stocking 2. Assessments on Lakes and Fish Health 3. Develop New Fisheries	1. Stocking 2. Assessment on Lakes and Fish Health 3. Improving Angler Experience/Access	1. Stocking 2. Habitat Enhancement 3. Assessments on Lakes and Fish Health	1. Stocking 2. Habitat Enhancement 3. Assessments on Lakes and Fish Health
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When considering the value our fisheries provide to the area, anglers surveyed from 2016 - 2021 are spending on average \$325 per trip and fishing on average 60 times per year. That is a significant contribution towards Manitoba's economy considering approximately 190,000 angling licenses are sold annually, with 150,000 of those being Manitoban anglers.

When it comes to the current angling ethics, there is a consistent practice/expectation over the years. Anglers in Manitoba have a high release/retain ratio. On average 80% of fish caught are released. When asked what the objective is while fishing, angler's main intention is merely to spend time outdoors. Again, another reason why the Duck Mountains is such an attraction. Another top valued experience is catching big or master angler fish. Master angler enthusiasts will travel and invest a great deal of time and money when chasing that fish of a lifetime. Many of the lakes in the Duck Mountains, and the Parkland as a whole, offer those diverse opportunities.

Proactive initiatives are key to understanding specific fisheries and providing effective management. Incorporating angler feedback plays an important role in management and enhancement efforts. Anglers do identify the importance of provincial hatcheries as stocking has been a top priority for recommended projects/activities over the last 6 years. They also consistently identified assessments on fish and lake health, habitat enhancement projects and development of new fisheries as vital initiatives that management should focus on.

Summary of the 2021 Survey:

In summary, out of 63 surveys received in 2021, anglers declared the Duck Mountains as the preferred destination and 87% of anglers stated the primary reason they visit the area is to fish. Among all the surveys, on average anglers state they are visiting the Parkland 30 times/year. Anglers are most commonly staying at local campground when visiting the area and spending time outdoors was considered the most valued expectation while fishing. Walleye were voted the targeted species for 2021 for the second year in a row. When asked, in general, how often anglers go out fishing the response equated to an average of 46 times/year. When relating the average cost per fishing trip, (\$255) with the average times fished per year (46), this equates to an estimated investment of \$11,730 angler/year into Manitoba's recreational angling and local communities.

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Acknowledgements:

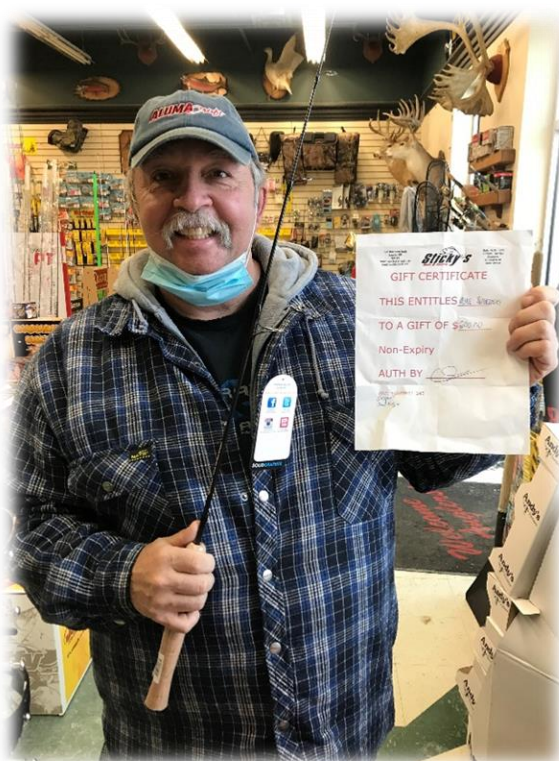
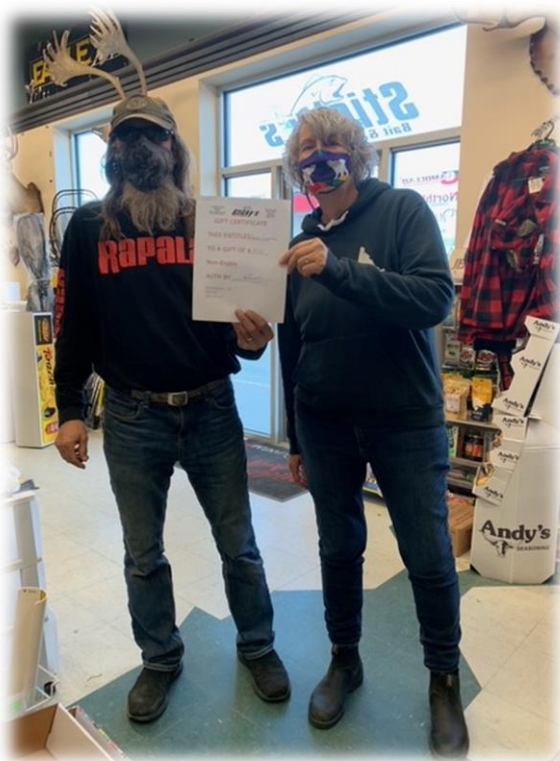
Increasing survey participants year to year is always the intent for SVSFE as angler input is extremely beneficial to the fishing world. These are the eyes, the ears and the hands on the water. SVSFE would like to express gratitude to those anglers who took the time to fill out angler surveys and tagged fish returns over the years. This signifies a true investment into Parkland fisheries, and we ask you to continue sharing and spreading the word! We need more anglers informed on how important it is to have managers aware of what fishers are experiencing. Quality data aids in providing quality management. Quality management ensures sustainable and high-quality fisheries for current and future Parkland users.

2021 Online Angler Survey Winners:

1st Place: Bill Pollock, Roblin MB - \$500 towards a GPS/Sonar Unit from Sticky's Bait & Tackle in Dauphin, MB

2nd Place: Mike TWARDOSKI, Russell MB - \$200 Gift Card to Sticky's Bait & Tackle in Dauphin, MB

3rd Place: Brenda CRUICKSHANKS, Ochre River MB - \$100 Gift Card to Sticky's Bait & Tackle in Dauphin, MB



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Appendix: Angler Suggestions, Comments, Concerns (uncensored, unedited)

- ✓ Doing great work in all departments
- ✓ I would like to see stocking and improvements to walleye habitats. I think this organization is doing a wonderful job. I am truly fortunate to have this great resource and organization in my backyard.
- ✓ I spend a lot of time fishing the eastern side of the province but I'm looking forward to going west this winter - maybe snail lake for example!
- ✓ Stocks the lakes. Not in summer, when all kind of predators are around (birds). Increase fish stocks by ,75 percent. Increase fish limits to 6 fish. More \$\$ for enforcement, management and stocking fish species that inhabit our lakes. Having fish 🐟 hatcheries in area. Better management of fish stocks in lakes that are heavily fished. Example Two Mile Lake. Set a minimum size on walleye. Ex. 16in min, 22in max.
- ✓ Beaver lake stocking trout
- ✓ Weird to put the aerators at patterson right off the launch. Ice was 3-4" at the shore and like 10" elsewhere. Probably should have put them much farther away from the access point that everyone has to walk past in the winter.
- ✓ Stock large mouth, musky , splake, Kokanee, white fish
- ✓ Keep up the great work!!!
- ✓ Backcountry access to Lakes such as East Fish, George and Little Island can become nearly impassible from quad use and fallen trees. Marge/Cache lake have poor access and can be dangerous with limited vision given the curve in the road.
- ✓ Increase stocking in laurie and child's
- ✓ boat launch/winter access
- ✓ More smallmouth bass and crappie stocking
- ✓ Child's and Laurie lake fishing isn't near as good as it used to be. Lake trout stocks are way down in Child's lake, has been neglected by the province for years, boat traffic is higher than before, do the math.
- ✓ The trout triangle or anywhere we have gone seems very good! Maybe a better spot to tent or camp by the trout triangle in duck mountain!
- ✓ I think the Swan Valley sports fishing enhancement group does a good job in the valley, maybe put a column in the paper about what species and what lake are hot , let people know the bite is on, what lake and what species. Maybe more people would get out to these lakes , if they new the fishing are biting . Would help tourism out !!!

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- ✓ Many parkland stocked trout lakes are on the decline. We need to find a way to restore lakes like Patterson Lake to its former world-class glory.
- ✓ On the right track with Char, Arctic Grayling would be attractive if stocked further south, larger quantities of trout stocking. Why did the biggest brown in Mb end up put into Reynolds of all places?... that was a massive slap in the face to all of us who spend huge amounts to go to remote places chasing the record fish. Very pissed off about that as were most of the trout guys I fish with
- ✓ To convert bird sanctuary in neewapa to be a trout fishing lake. Put up a trout fishing lake down here or near to neepawa area..
- ✓ Would like the removal of suckers to continue at Eastblue and also like to see suckers removed from West blue.
- ✓ West blue is producing 35 plus inch lake trout, I have caught 3 now and all different fish not the same but pressure will end that unless we can stock bi yearly, laurie doesnt have the potential without a solid Cisco population but east blue laurie and childs can all help take the pressure off with splitting the splake up between those 3 and gull whenever they are available and we need to close the SNAGGING seasons on west blue by the dock and laurie at the 2nd island. Would also be nice to see if we could get more crappie for jackfish and transfer some pike outta there, lake produces monster crappie and quality perch fishing as well.
- ✓ I support whatever you guys doing!!! Fish on!!
- ✓ I wish they would allow enough water through the dams to keep the lake winnipegosis and over flow river at better levels
- ✓ New splAke stocking
- ✓ control algae on East Goose and control Cattails on West Goose so there are spots to shore fish. I noticed a lot of garbage at East Goose this past weekend on shore which i was able to gather up but also in the water and floating on the algae which I couldn't get from shore. Maybe East Goose needs more garbage receptacles or cleanup initiatives?
- ✓ It appears as though you are doing a good job, some lakes might be suffering, I don't know as I'm not local, I've heard Patterson isn't doing well. Some launches need improving but thanks for everything you do! Thanks for the diversity of angling opportunities! I really appreciate the multi species opportunity in several of the waterbodies. Keep up the great work and it is much appreciated. Happy to see splake are being stocked a little again, I've never fished for or caught one. Have you assessed the status of your stocking efforts of Arctic Char in Glad lake? Any tips on when or how to angle for them?
- ✓ New aeration lakes. Camps and master angler submissions