

ERADICATION OF ILLEGALLY INTRODUCED ALIEN FISH SPECIES A DRASTIC, YET NECESSARY MEASURE

Illegally introduced alien fish species are a threat to B.C.'s native fish stocks that can negatively impact our world renowned fisheries, as well as unique ecosystems. The origin of these alien fish is often via deliberate, illegal movements of fish from water to water. The most effective way to protect B.C.'s native resources is through prevention. However, where illegal introductions have already occurred and pose serious risks, drastic eradication measures may be required to protect native species and related fisheries. While this may be expensive, the costs associated with no action may be significantly greater.

Several small lakes in the Shuswap Basin of south central B.C. have been illegally stocked with alien fish species including yellow perch, bass and pumpkinseed sunfish. This group of alien fish can severely alter small lake food webs, severely impact trout fisheries and threaten the viability of downstream fish populations including salmon. Thus, eradication of illegally introduced alien fish species in the Thompson watershed is a high priority of the Ministry of Environment's Fisheries Program.

As such, the first treatment for the eradication of yellow perch occurred in October, 2007, at one of the Skmana lakes. The lake was rehabilitated with rotenone (a rapidly biodegradable, naturally-occurring, compound which kills fish by suffocation), resulting in the removal of thousands of yellow perch. This treatment was considered a success, and additional eradication treatments are planned for the remaining lakes in the Thompson drainage where yellow perch currently exist.

Support from the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund is gratefully acknowledged, as well as a tremendous volunteer effort by local Fish and Game Clubs affiliated with the BC Wildlife Federation.

What is ours to enjoy is also ours to protect –
PLEASE DON'T MOVE LIVE FISH!



MOE staff applying rotenone to the lake

Jason Hwang

BC Outdoors

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