

Peace Fish and Wildlife Update

Northeast Roundtable May 6, 2026



Outline

- Wildlife Survey updates from 2025-2026
- Management Planning
- 2026-2027 wildlife tentative survey plans
- Fisheries update from 2025-2026



2025/2026 Wildlife Inventories

- 7-21 South Moose Stratified Random Block (SRB)
- 7-20 Moose SRB
- 7-43 Moose SRB
- 7-33 Moose Distance Survey
- South Peace Mountain Goat Surveys
- 7-42 Stone Sheep Inventory
- 7-50 Stone Sheep Inventory
- Graham-Narraway Mark- Resight
- Northern Boreal Caribou Inventory



7-20 and 7-21 South Moose Survey Results

- **MU 7-20 SRB survey**
 - Population estimate – 2464
 - 60 Bulls:100 Cows
 - 43 Calves:100 Cows
 - Population estimate of 2661 in 2016
- **MU 7-21 South SRB survey**
 - Population estimate – 768
 - 103 Bulls:100 Cows
 - 34 Calves:100 Cows
 - Population estimate of 634 in 2022
 - 7-21 North Surveyed in 2024



7-43 and 7-33 Moose Survey Results

- **MU 7-43 SRB survey**
 - Population estimate – 1067
 - 51 Bulls:100 Cows
 - 32 Calves:100 Cows
 - Population estimate of 1015 in 2020
- **MUs 7-33 and 7-47 Distance survey**
 - Currently reviewing report and quality assurance on data collected



2025-26 Collaborative Moose Surveys

- **MUs 7-48 and 7-50 (FNFN)**
 - SRB surveys
 - Currently Reviewing Report and Quality Assurance on data collected
- **MUs 7-49 and 7-54 (FNFN)**
 - Calf recruitment surveys
 - Currently Reviewing Report and Quality Assurance on data collected
- **MUs 7-47 (PRFN)**
 - Distance Survey
 - Currently Reviewing Report and Quality Assurance on data collected



South Peace Mountain Goat Inventory

Collaborative survey with McLeod Lake Indian Band

- South Peace Mountain Goat Inventories
 - Covered WMUs 7-19, 7-21, 7-22
 - Population Estimates by Herd
 - Wapiti River - 20
 - Belcourt - 349
 - Wapiti Monkman - 219
 - Sukunka - 664
 - Trapper Mountain – 97
 - Quintette – 329
 - Clearwater-Carbon to be surveyed in Summer 2026



Stone's Sheep Inventories

- **Besa-Prophet (7-42)**
 - Population estimate – 1735
 - 40 Rams:100 ewe-like sheep (ELS)
 - 21 Lambs:100 ELS
 - Population estimate of 1487 in 2012
- **Terminus/Driftpile (7-51)**
 - Combined population estimate – 399
 - 35 Rams:100 ELS
 - 33 Lambs:100 ELS
 - Population estimate of 491 in 2007



Caribou Surveys

- Later – Winter mark resight surveys
- Both populations are within the predator management work area
- Graham – Minimum count of 676 with a 79% sightability of collared caribou
 - Corrected estimate of 828 (95% confidence interval 535-1456) and 18.5% calves
 - 35 calves: 100 cows
- Narraway – Minimum count of 283 with 77% sightability of collared cows
 - Corrected estimate of 345 (95% confidence interval 216 – 629) and 18% calves
 - 37.5 calves : 100 cows



Plains Bison Survey

Collaborative survey with Prophet River First Nation

- 2026 Pink Mountain Mark-Resight
 - 12 collared individuals
 - Observed 211 bison

 - Population estimate 305
 - 48 Bulls:100 Cows
 - 26 Calves:100 Cows
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- 2025 survey observed 214 bison
 - 2024 survey observed 144 bison



2026 Tentative Wildlife Inventories

- 7-35 Moose SRB Inventory
- Mountain Goat Inventory 7-31 and 7-36
- 7-57, 7-58 and 7-43 Thinhorn Sheep Inventory
 - Delivered Collaboratively with Blueberry River First Nation
- 7-52 Horseranch Northern Mountain Caribou Survey
- 7-43, 7-57 and 7-58 Grizzly Bear DNA Hair Snag survey
 - Delivered Collaboratively with Blueberry River First Nation



Bison Management Plans

- Developing Regional Bison Management Plans for both Plains and Wood Bison
- Currently reaching out to First Nations to complete interviews within the month of May on the Plains Bison Management Plan
- Followed by stakeholder groups local, governments and local residents with historic knowledge of the herd



Hunting Regulations 2026-2028

- Currently awaiting Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship decision
- Peace Region proposed 9 changes to the hunting and trapping regional regulations



Fisheries Update

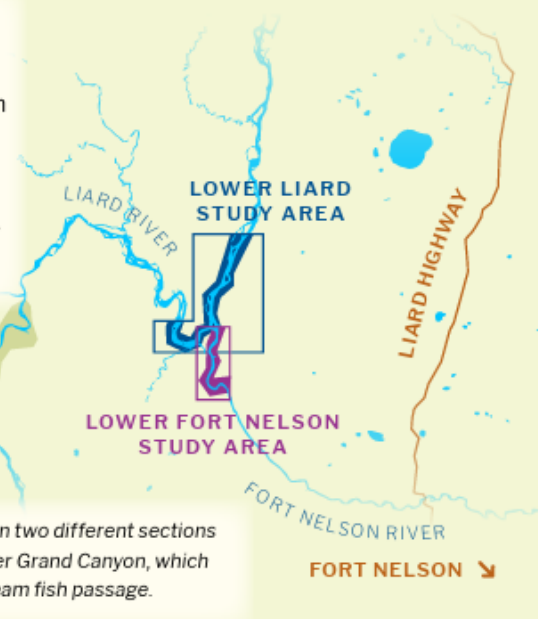
- Collaborative Inventories with Fort Nelson First Nation and Halfway River First Nation
- Stocked Lakes assessments through Freshwater Fisheries Society of British Columbia
- Tentative 2026-2027 fish inventories



2025 FISH ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

LIARD & FORT NELSON RIVERS | FORT NELSON FIRST NATION

In fall 2025, a scientific assessment of fish populations was conducted in Fort Nelson First Nation territory, in collaboration with the British Columbia Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) and guided by community priorities. Historically, the Fort Nelson and Liard rivers were a hub of cultural activity and continue to be used for hunting and harvesting today. Fish were captured via electrofishing, identified, assessed for size and condition, then released. The purpose was to assess fish community structure, including species composition, abundance and habitat use. Collected data can inform decisions on how to manage and strengthen fish populations.



The Liard River was sampled in two different sections on either side of the Liard River Grand Canyon, which acts as a soft barrier to upstream fish passage.

- Collaboratively assessed with Fort Nelson First Nation on both the Liard and Fort Nelson Rivers for species presence, abundance and updating ageing baseline data
- Utilized a Jet boat and electrofisher to temporarily stun fish to collect length, weight and opportunistic ageing structures
- Provided evidence of a clear difference between species assemblage between the upper and lower Liard sections.

UPPER LIARD STUDY AREA

Distance sampled: 18.74km

Key findings:

- Coldwater fish* were the dominant species found (86%), including Arctic Grayling and Mountain Whitefish.
- Suckers were common, minnows and sculpins were rare.
- Tributaries and side channels supported the highest catch rates.

Top three species detected:



LOWER LIARD STUDY AREA

Distance sampled: 30.90 km

Key findings:

- A mix of coldwater and coolwater fish species.*
- A high number of small fish species, such as Trout-Perch and chubs, along with the first recorded sighting of Emerald Shiner in the BC section of the Liard River.

Top three species detected:



- Tentatively planning to use a modified survey method to assess the Muskwa River in 2026-2027.
- Continue to work collaboratively with Fort Nelson First Nation on assessing waterbodies in the North
- Final technical Report available in the Summer of 2026

LOWER FORT NELSON STUDY AREA

Distance sampled: 14.29 km

Key findings:

- Dominated by minnows (Flathead Chub).
- Coolwater predators (Walleye and Pike) were present.
- Captured coldwater species were limited to Mountain Whitefish and Lake Whitefish.
- First documented occurrence of Spottail Shiner outside of Maxhamish Lake in British Columbia. It was captured in the Fort Nelson River near the Liard River confluence, with only a single individual observed.

Top three species detected:



10 species detected, from highest to lowest catch rate:



SPECIES HIGHLIGHTS



Arctic Grayling

- Most commonly caught species
- Largest specimen caught was 14", 1.2lbs



Northern Pike / ɹudáa / iyinito-kinosêw
SLAVEY CREE

- Encountered in all study locations
- Largest specimen caught was 32.5", 15.75lbs (caught in Lower Liard)



Walleye / ɹehch 'uq / okâw
SLAVEY CREE

- Total of 28 Walleye caught across Lower Liard and Lower Fort Nelson
- Largest specimen caught was 17", 1.9lbs (caught in Lower Fort Nelson)



Burbot

- Only two were caught, likely because of the sampling method (electrofishing), not because the population is declining.
- Both were in the Upper Liard



Whitefish / luh / atihkamek
SLAVEY CREE

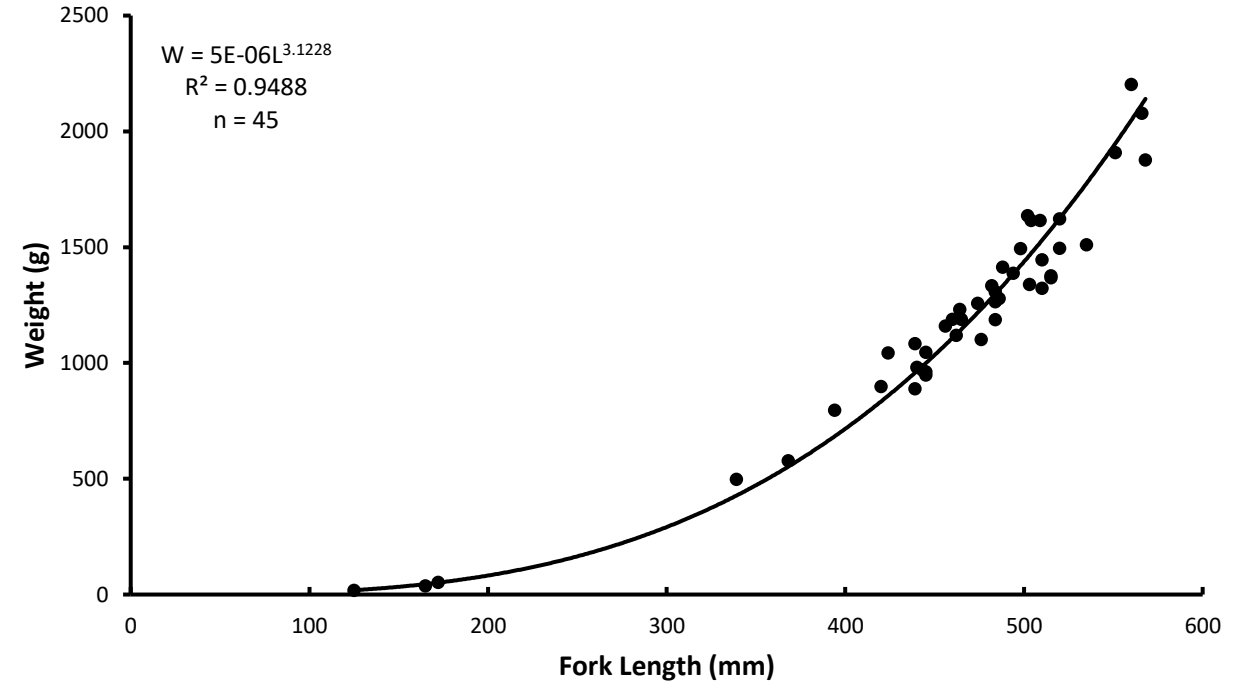
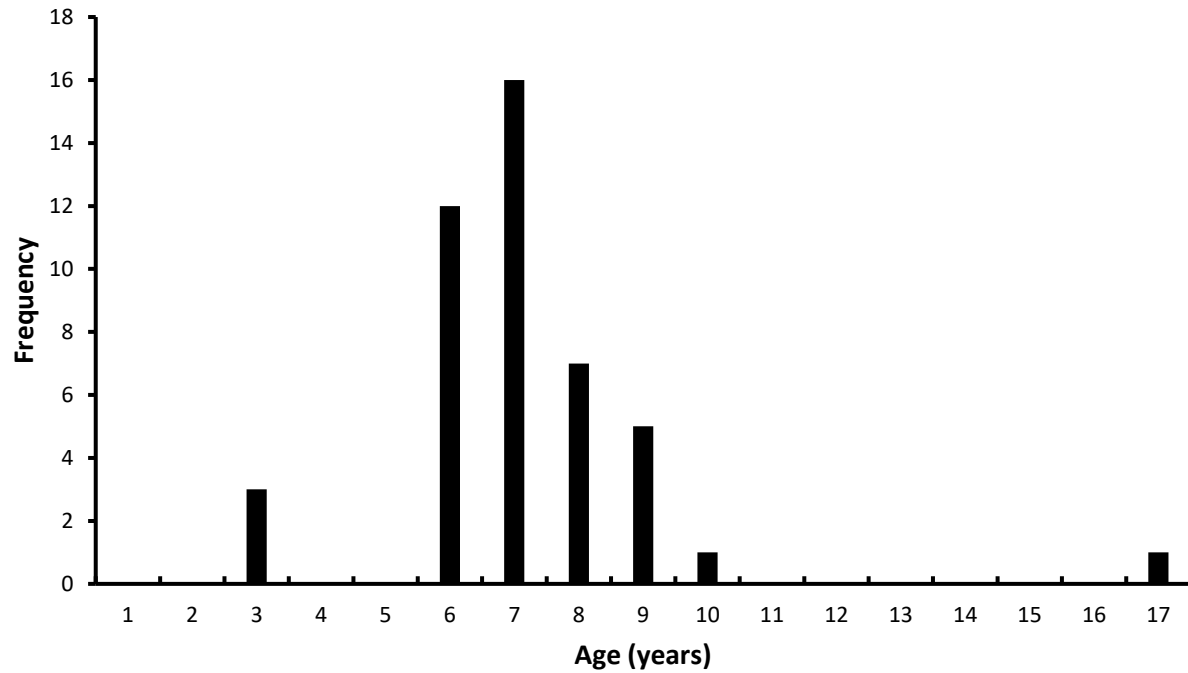
- Were consistent in size and had good body condition
- Higher capture of mature Lake Whitefish in the Lower Liard
- Round whitefish only captured in the Upper Liard

Robb Lake

- Collaborative Project with Halfway River First Nation
- Previous baseline data on Robb Lake was quite old, and it had not been determined if Bull Trout were the only species found in the lake.
- Potential spawning habitat exists for Bull Trout in the Halfway River inlet and outlet
- 45 Bull trout were captured in Robb Lake
- 1 juvenile Bull trout was captured in the outlet to the Halfway River



Robb Lake



Small Lakes Assessments – FFSBC – Boot Lake

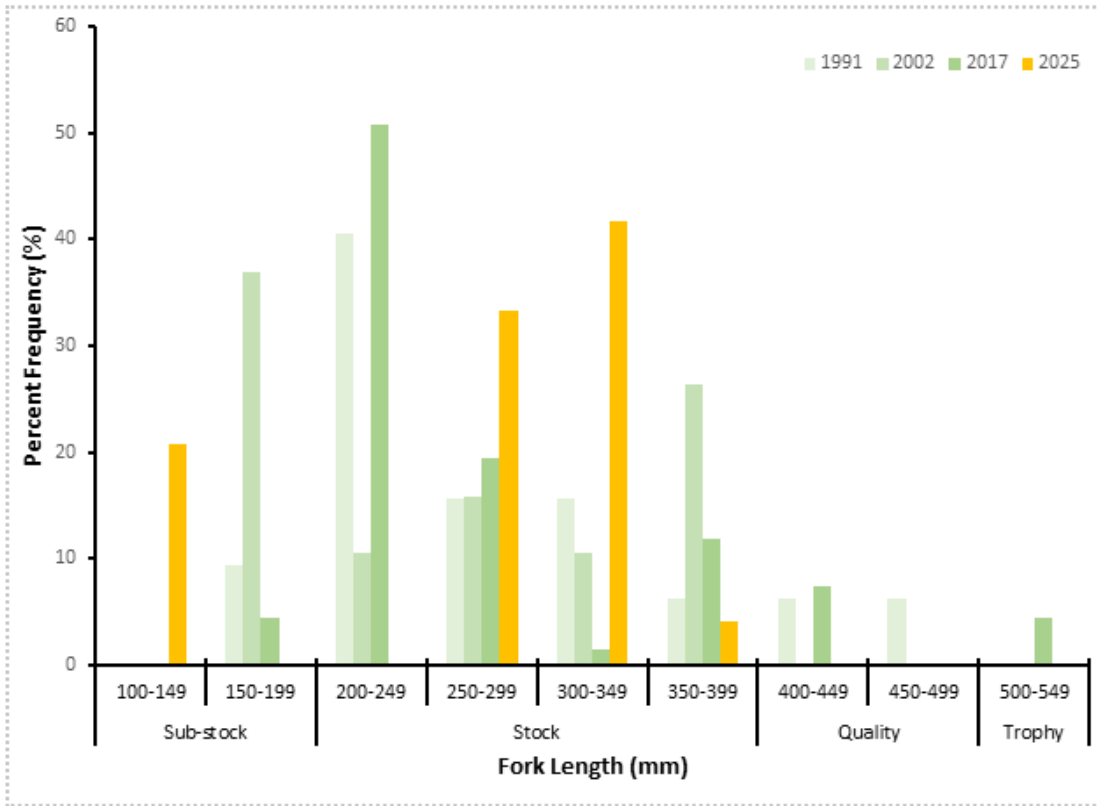


Figure 4. Rainbow Trout captured during previous stock assessments in 1991, 2002, 2017, and 2025 categorized by size classification. Sub-stock < 200 mm, Stock between 200 and 399 mm, Quality between 400 and 499 mm, and Trophy > 500mm.

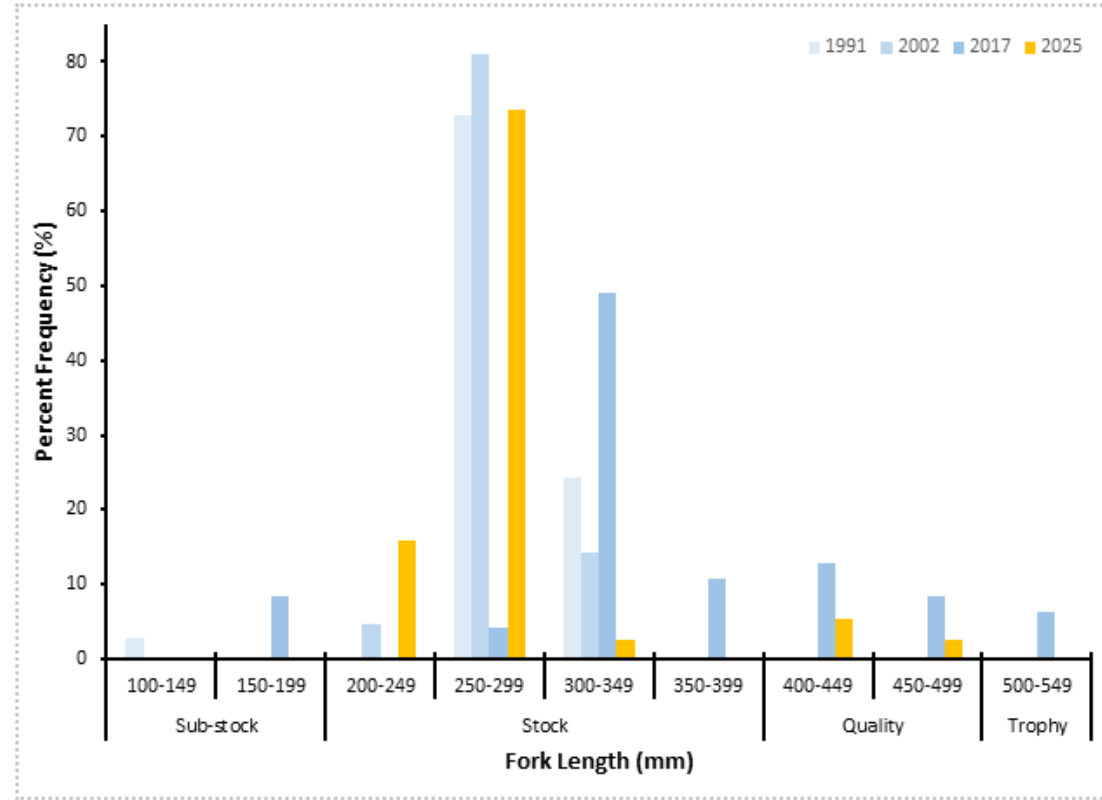


Figure 5. Brook Trout captured during previous stock assessments in 1991, 2002, 2017, and 2025 categorized by size classification. Sub-stock < 200 mm, Stock between 200 and 399 mm, Quality between 400 and 499 mm, and Trophy > 500mm.

Pete Lake

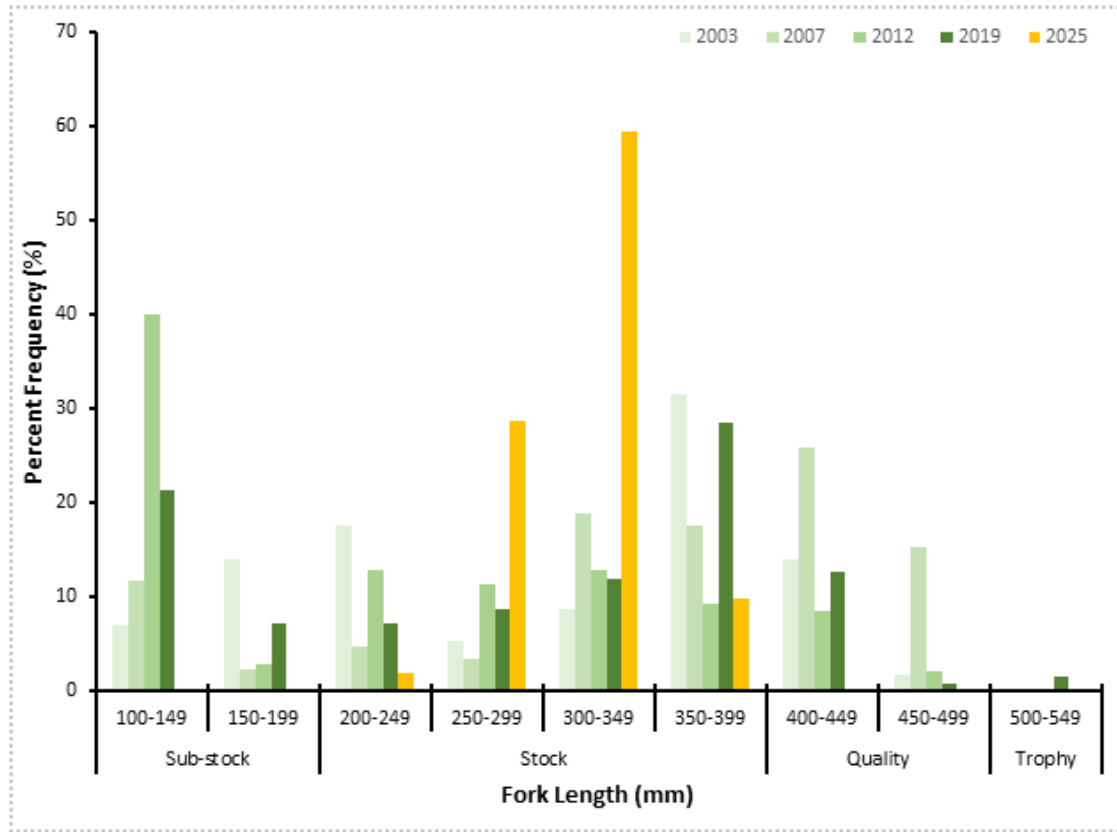


Figure 4. Rainbow Trout captured during previous stock assessments in 2003, 2007, 2012, 2019, and 2025 categorized by size classification. Sub-stock < 200 mm, Stock between 200 and 399 mm, Quality between 400 and 499 mm, and Trophy > 500mm.

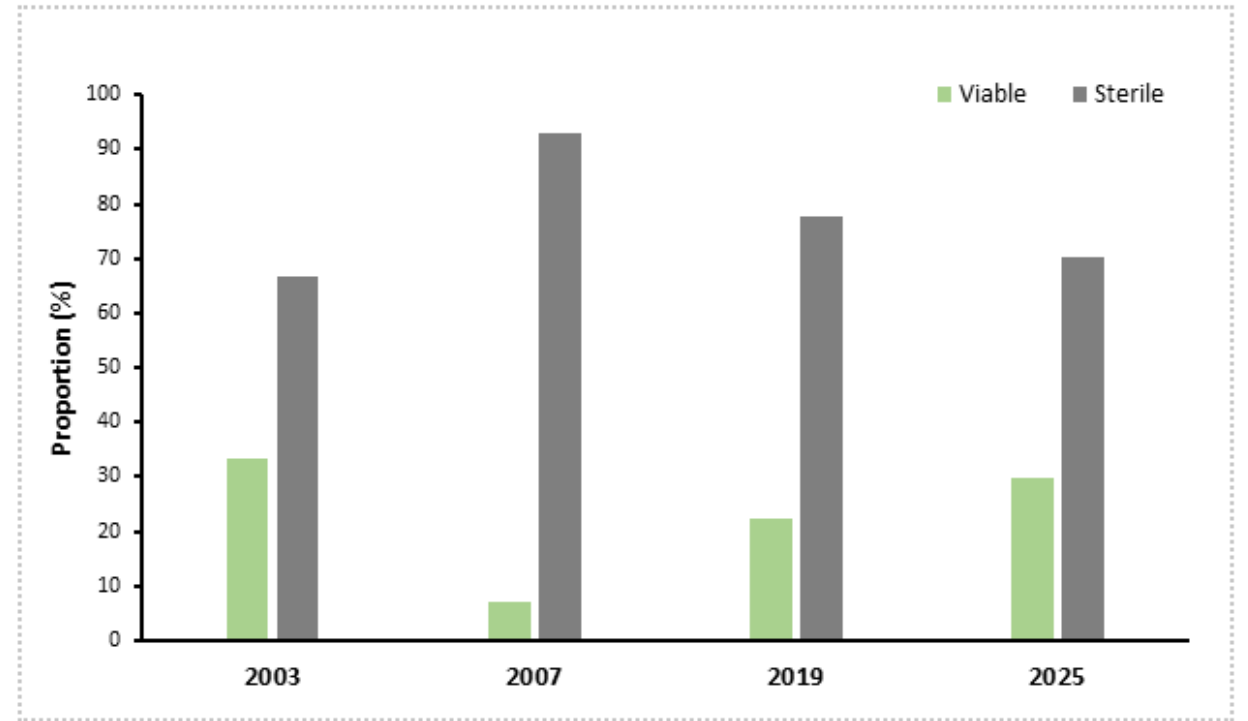


Figure 5. The proportion of fish that were recorded as viable (mature, maturing, or spent) compared to those that were recorded sterile (immature, or unknown).

Quality Lake

- Winterkill event in the Winter of 2025
 - Not uncommon for Quality Lake due to its shallow average depth and large littoral area.
- Illegal introduction of Yellow Perch confirmed in 2025 survey.
 - Potentially introduced from nearby Bearhole Lake
- Regulation change proposed for 2027-2029 to disincentivize angling by closing fish on quality lake



Tentative Fisheries Projects for 2026-2027

- Moberly Lake Spawner Mark-recapture
- Small Lakes Assessments
- Fall Walleye Index Netting Surveys
- South Peace Bull Trout Redd Surveys

Questions?



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