

Fish Species Management Policy

Policy No: 10-04

Policy Title: Fish Species Management

Policy Statement: Protect and Restore Native Fish Species and their Communities

Principles Applied:

Fish communities and their habitat are a major interest of Freshwater Conservation Canada. We develop specific policy and programs using the following principles:

- Acknowledge limits to the Resource;
- Priority is native, naturally reproducing species within their natural habitats and range;
- Secondly, management of introduced species as naturalized populations where they currently exist;
- Lastly, we support the development of new fisheries using naturalized stocks, where there is evidence that no social and/or ecological conflicts exist;
- Restoring or protecting habitat so that fish can reproduce successfully on their own is the most cost effective and ecologically sound approach to fish community management; and
- Watershed connectivity is an essential element in fish species management.

Policy Rationale and Considerations:

Canada has a rich heritage of native fish species. Each region of Canada has a unique mix of species and stocks that since European settlement have been altered, lost or modified. Protecting what is remaining and restoring what has been lost is a major focus for Freshwater Conservation Canada and can be considered our contribution to Canada's native biodiversity. Part of this management should include consideration for the protection and management of all native fish species in their native ranges.

Objectives of Policy Statement:

Protection and wise management of existing native fish species is paramount, followed by restoration of native species and communities where they have been lost. Secondary focus is on non-native fish species where they have become well established and historic native fish communities have been lost or can no longer be restored due to irreversible changes in watershed conditions.

Implications to Organization:

Many of Freshwater Conservation Canada members appreciate the value of healthy native and naturalized fish population and the habitats that support them. As a conservation organization, Freshwater Conservation Canada must consider the management of naturalized species where they are well established and where they do not conflict with or threaten the physical, biological or genetic integrity of native fish species. Freshwater Conservation Canada believes that non-native fish species should not be stocked or introduced into environments on top of native populations. Where opportunities exist to restore native fish species and communities (whether by stocking or transfer) within their native range, Freshwater Conservation Canada will consider this a priority. The expansion of regionally established naturalized species (i.e. wild self-sustaining populations) should only be entertained where native populations will not be negatively impacted. Stocking of non-native species should only be considered in contained locations where there is no chance of them invading native habitats. Fish stocks should be obtained only from licensed suppliers.

Delivery:

At a National level, Freshwater Conservation Canada will pursue policy and advocacy for the protection and restoration of native species. At a Provincial level, Freshwater Conservation Canada must implement programs to protect and restore native species and their communities through constructive advocacy, encouragement of proper harvest and angling regulations, research and monitoring. Non-native, but naturalized species will also be a management focus for Freshwater Conservation Canada, as long as these species do not compromise the health and integrity of native fish species. Local Chapters may work to restore native and naturalized species through a range of activities including: exotic species management; harvest management; population assessment; restoring connectivity; native species restoration; compliance support; and enhancement.

Supporting Information:

More information on this Core Policy can be found in Policy Brief #1 of the National Conservation Agenda (2006).

Effective Date: December 13, 2010

Last Board Approval Date: August 14, 2017