

## Recreational Fishing in the SEAWA Watershed February 2022

The South Saskatchewan River Basin (SSRB) straddles the border between AB and SK. The portion of SSRB within AB, and together with the Pakowki Lake watershed, comprise the SEAWA watershed, [Profile of the SEAWA Watershed | South East Alberta Watershed Alliance](#). In addition to the South Saskatchewan River (SSR), the SEAWA watershed is host to many types of water bodies such as several creeks that are tributaries to the SSR, lakes and reservoirs, oxbow lakes, and ponds.

People greatly rely on the SSR for drinking water, irrigation, industrial or commercial uses and recreation. Recreational fishing provides economic as well as other benefits such as relaxation, exercise, and an appreciation of nature.

Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) lists 21 natural and man-made waterbodies that host recreational fishery in the SEAWA watershed (Table, p.2). Each water body may have one or more of the 11 species found present. The map shows these fishing locations in the SEAWA watershed.

There are other ponds and fishing spots that may not be officially recognized as recreational fishery by AEP, but nevertheless, they are still excellent recreation spots. For example, Connaught pond in Medicine Hat.

Regulations that apply are for Zone PP1, and are updated annually: <https://albertaregulations.ca/fishingregs/pp1.html>

Be aware of the Fish Sustainability Index (FSI) which assesses the sustainability of an Alberta Fish Species based on seventeen metrics: <https://www.alberta.ca/fsi-metrics-and-mapping.aspx>

Some waterbodies have natural populations but some lakes are stocked: Stocking interactive map: <https://mywildalberta.ca/fishing/fish-stocking/stocking-maps.aspx>

Fishing enthusiasts can use the iFish Alberta App and blog, [www.ifishalberta.com](http://www.ifishalberta.com), as well as other blogs to find user-led information, ratings, and tips.

### Fish Species

Books that are helpful in fish species identification, their distribution, biology and sometimes angling are: "The Fishes of Alberta" by Joseph S. Nelson and Martin Joseph Paetz (1992), and "Fish of Alberta" by Amanda Joynt (1977). In addition, there are many foldable pocket guides; example, <https://www.acornnaturalists.com/alberta-fishes-pocket-naturalist-guide.html>

Sports fish found in the SEAWA watershed are listed in the Table p.2.

There are many other fish species, not typically angled but may inadvertently get captured. These fish species are important as they have a role in the overall health of a waterbody and they provide a source of food to larger fish species. It is strongly recommended that if caught, these fishes must be released back into the water rather than discarded. These fish are mainly in the Minnow, Sucker, and Sculpin families. Longnose Dace (*Rhinichthys cataractae*), Longnose Sucker (*Catostomus catostomus*), White Sucker (*Catostomus commersoni*) are very common in most water bodies. The Spoonhead Sculpin (*Cottus ricei*) and Shorthead Sculpin (*Cottus confusus*) are the most likely species to be captured in the SSR.

A study has shown that suckers are bioengineers and are important for the maintenance of a healthy water body: <https://envirobites.org/2020/05/14/a-sucker-for-ecosystem-engineers/>

### Baits

Left-over baits (examples, dead minnows and earthworms) should be discarded in the trash. Dumping them in the water or on the surrounding land may cause ecological problems such as, introduction of diseases and invasive species in the water (minnows), and destruction of the surrounding forest floor 's organic materials and vegetation (earthworms): <https://www.liveoutdoors.com/fishing/236327-dispose-live-bait-leftover/>

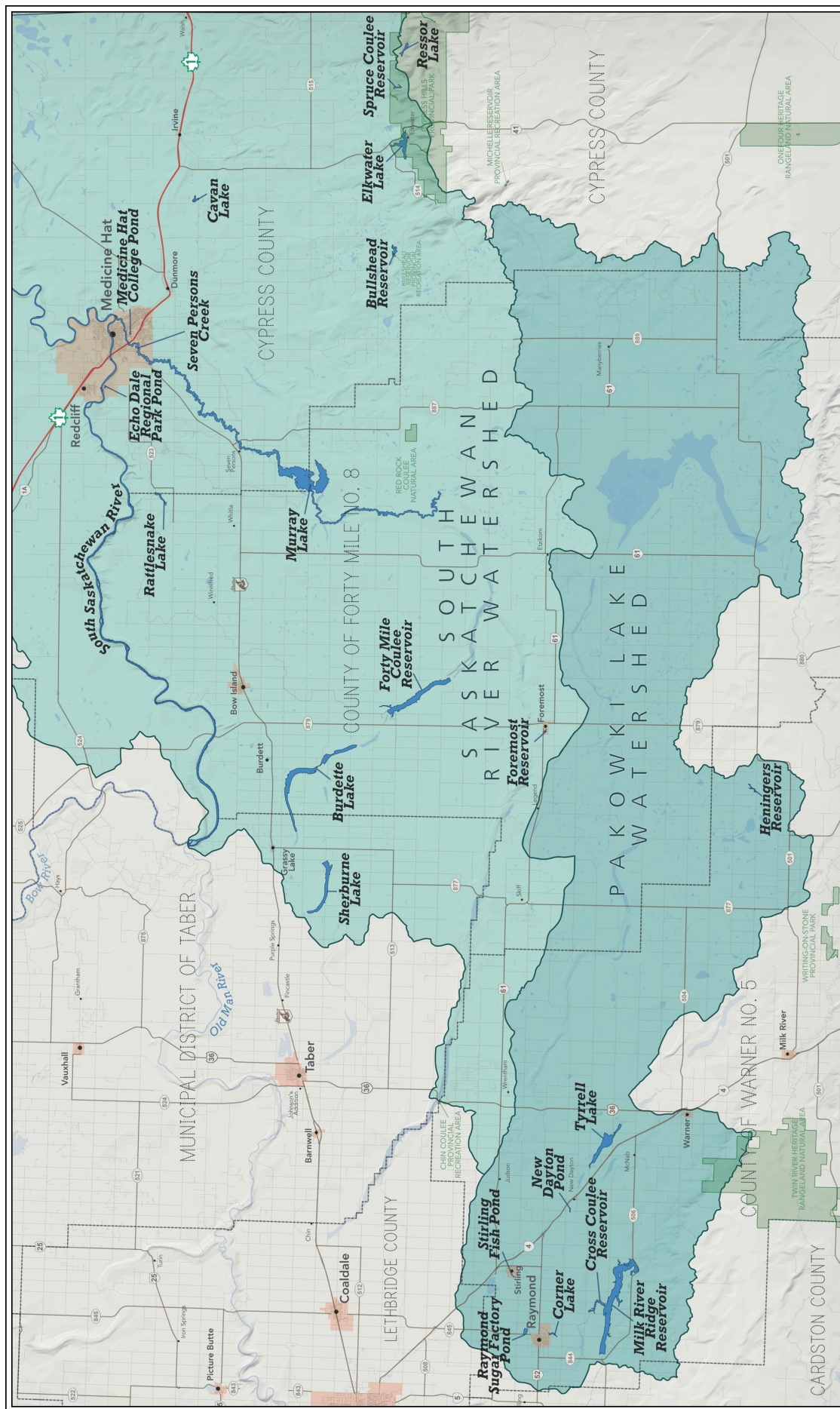


L-R: Walleye—  
Rattlesnake Res-  
ervoir, Lake Stur-  
geon - SSR, Yellow  
Perch - Seven Per-  
sons Creek, North-  
ern Pike - SSR.  
Photos provided by  
Ian Curry.

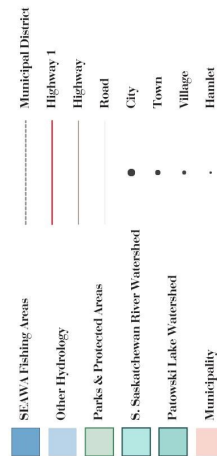
	Fish species present & FSI (Alberta Fishing Guide 2021)										
Water body	ARGR	BKTR	BURB	GOLD	LKST	LKWH	NRPK	RNTR	SAUG	WALL	YLPR
<b>SSRB</b>											
Bullshead Res- ervoir								✓			
Burdette Lake			✓			✓	✓			✓	✓
Cavan Lake								✓			
Echo Dale Regional Park pond								✓			
Elkwater Lake							✓				✓
Foremost Res- ervoir								✓			
Forty Mile Cou- lee Reservoir			✓			✓	✓			✓	✓
Medicine Hat College pond								✓			
Murray Lake			✓			✓	✓			✓	✓
Rattlesnake Reservoir			✓			✓	✓			✓	✓
Sherburne Lake			✓			✓	✓			✓	✓
South Sas- katchewan River			✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	
Spruce Coulee Reservoir	✓	✓								✓	
<b>Pakowki Lake watershed</b>											
Corner Lake							✓				
Cross Coulee Reservoir			✓			✓	✓			✓	
Heningers Reservoir								✓			
Milk River Ridge Reser- voir			✓			✓	✓			✓	
New Dayton Fish & Game pond								✓			
Raymond Sug- ar Factory pond							✓				
Stirling Chil- dren's pond								✓			
Tyrrell Lake								✓			
<b>Fish Sustainability Index</b>											
FSI			NC	Dec	Thr	Sec	Sec	MAR (stock ed)	Sen	Sec	Sec

ARGR - Arctic grayling; BKTR - Brook trout; BURB - Burbot; GOLD - Goldeye; LKST – Lake sturgeon; LKWH – Lake whitefish; NRPK – Northern pike; RNTR – Rainbow trout; SAUG - Sauger; WALL - walleye; YLPR - Yellow perch;

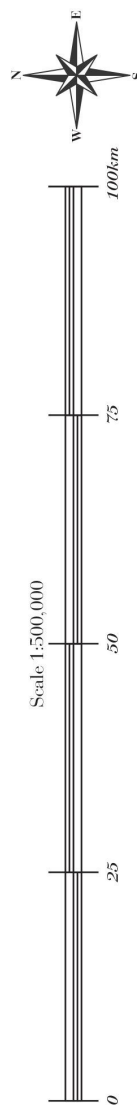
FSI: Sec—Secure; MAR—May be at risk; NC—Not completed yet; Dec—population declining; Thr—Threatened



## REFERENCE

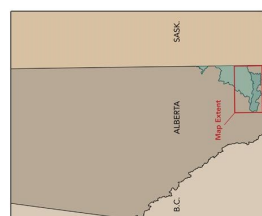


## RECREATIONAL FISHERIES IN THE SEAWA WATERSHED



Projection: NAD 83 / UTM Zone 12N  
 Date: December 2019  
 Map: Great Northern Cartography Co.

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KEY MAP



**Invasive fish species** in Alberta are goldfish, koi, Prussian carp, black bullhead, and oriental weather loach. Never release aquarium pets, water garden plants, live food (example: fish, crabs, mollusks) or live bait into rivers, streams, lakes, ponds or storm sewers. Information on the undesirable effects of invasive fish species is available here: <https://www.alberta.ca/dont-let-it-loose-campaign.aspx>



Photo credit: Sydney Taplin



Photo credit: Marilou Montemayor



Connaught Pond, Medicine Hat



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