



## ACT Fish Stocking Plan

The ACT Fish Stocking Plan (plan) provides policy and guidance on the introduction of fish into public waters in the ACT. The plan divides stocking into different categories, providing or supplementing recreational fisheries, for conservation such as re-establishing threatened species, cultural practices and scientific research. The plan manages the risks of stocking on the natural populations of fish and aquatic ecosystems of the ACT. A history of stocking and proposal for recreation stocking locations and species under the ACT government funded program for the next five years are provided in the plan.

### THE CONVERSATION

The proposed plan was released for public consultation on the Your Say website from 8 October to 18 November 2022. Several social media posts were released through the Parks and Conservation Service and Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate pages and shared to local recreational fishing sites.

The plan is based on previous versions and draws on consultation with fishing clubs, land managers, Ngunnawal people, researchers and anglers. A radio interview about fish stocking was held on ABC radio involving officials from the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate and the Canberra Fishermans Club during the consultation period.

### WHO WE ENGAGED

The social media campaign received responses from recreational fishers and fishing groups, additional contact was made with both fishing clubs and land and utility managers including the National Capital Authority and Icon Water.

From the responses to the Your Say website, the majority of respondents were male recreational fishers under the age of 55 who fish at least monthly. This corresponds well with the results of previous social research on recreational fishing in the ACT region. While most of the responses were from this group a small number of responses were from female recreational fishers and several respondents identified as Aboriginal. Written responses were also received from the ACT Conservation Council and Icon Water.



## Key insights from the community

### Increase Stocking

1. There is strong support for more stocking, increasing both the number of ponds stocked and the number of fish stocked per year to provide more equitable access and broader spatial biodiversity benefits of the stocking program.
2. Support also exists for increasing the range of species stocked including suggestions for trout, catfish, silver perch and small native fish.

### Habitat and water quality

3. The limited sufficient habitat in the lakes, including lake design not providing structural habitat for small and large fish, was a high concern for a number of respondents.
4. Non-native species, particularly carp, were identified as a problem for our waterways.
5. Additionally, water quality in the urban lakes was raised as a problem for the environment.

Some of these concerns while they can impact of success of stocking, have a broader application to fisheries and land management and planning. They will be considered in consultation with other relevant directorates.

### Enforcement feedback and education

6. There is also strong commentary on the lack of enforcement of fishing regulations and the impact that has on the stocked resources, wild fishery sustainability and threatened species.
7. Education and communication or feedback on the results of monitoring programs was raised by several respondents.

### How people fish

8. Of the respondents more than 75% preferred to fish for Murray Cod and Golden Perch with about 50% preferring to fish for Trout and Redfin.
9. Almost all respondents (90%) release some or all the fish they catch and 10% report taking fish for food.
10. The most popular waterways for fishing were stocked lakes with the unstocked wild fisheries of the Murrumbidgee River and the Cotter River also very popular.



## WHAT'S NEXT?

The ACT Fish Stocking Plan will now be finalised as a statutory plan under the Fisheries Act. Issues raised such as water quality, access and land management will be considered in consultation with relevant departments.

Following the request for more species and stocking, a working group will be formed to investigate whether any additional species are suitable for stocking into the ACT Lakes. Additionally, pathways will be explored to obtain additional funding to enable an increase in the number of fish stocked and potentially stock additional ponds in the newer areas of Canberra.

### Key Timings

**December 2022 Analysis of YourSay responses to the Plan**

**January 2023 Release of Listening Report**

**February 2023 Incorporation of issues raised into the Stocking Plan**

**Autumn 2023 Plan presentation to Ngunnawal community, fishing clubs and Conservation Council**

**Approval of the plan and publishing as a statutory plan under the ACT Fisheries Act**

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

**325**

We reached 325 people via  
YourSay

**9**

We sent emails to 9  
organisations and individuals

**12,000**

We reached a social media  
audience of 12,000

**76**

We received 76 items of  
written feedback