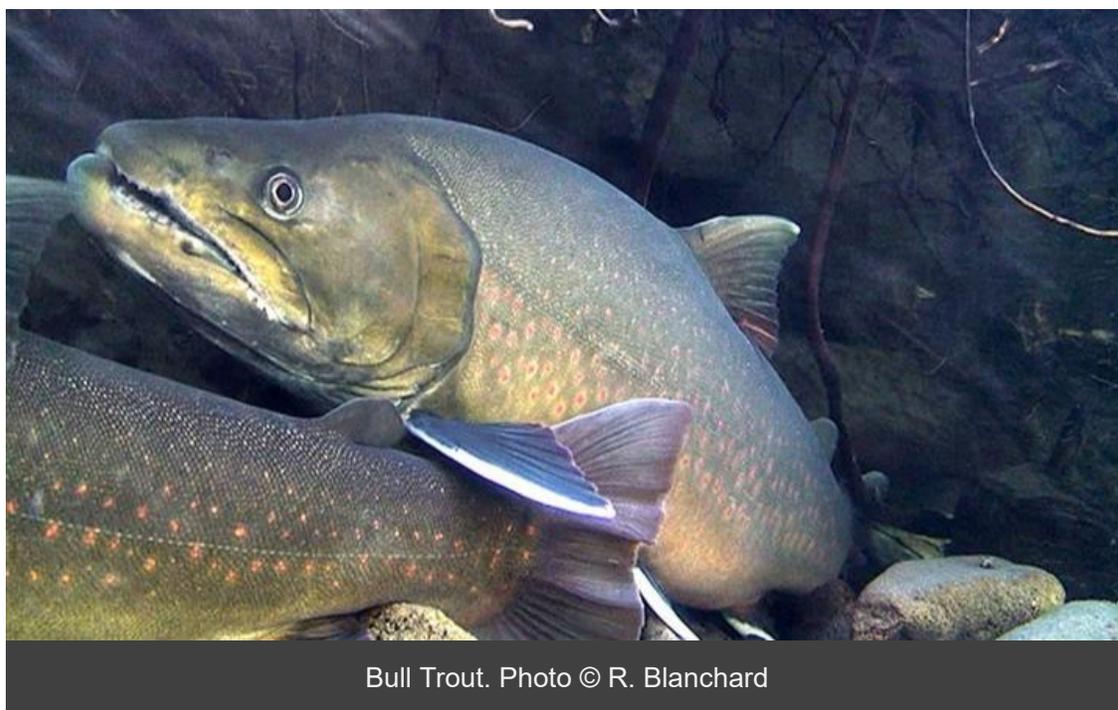


Habitat Actions Urgent for Alberta's Newly Listed Threatened and Endangered Fish

October 8, 2019



On August 21, Alberta's 'provincial fish' – the Bull Trout – plus Alberta's only native rainbow trout – the Athabasca Rainbow Trout – each received long overdue [listing](#) under Canada's Species at Risk Act (SARA): Bull Trout are now listed as Threatened with extinction, Athabasca Rainbow Trout listed as Endangered. Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) and Canadian fish expert Dr. John R. Post are calling on both the provincial and federal governments to quickly undertake recovery actions and protect the habitats of these iconic species.

“The *Species at Risk Act*, which states that species should be listed within nine months of being assessed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), has been completely compromised. Bull Trout continued to decline while they waited 7 years to be listed; likewise, Athabasca Rainbow Trout waited 5 years for an Endangered listing,” said Joanna Skrajny, AWA Conservation Specialist.

Dr. John R. Post, who chairs the COSEWIC Freshwater Fishes Committee, added: "It is our responsibility to manage Alberta wildlands to ensure the long-term persistence of native trout. Placing these fish on a species-at-risk list is not enough. The future for Athabasca Rainbow Trout and Bull Trout is uncertain unless we enact strong measures to protect the habitats on which they depend."

COSEWIC Status Assessment Documents, along with recent manuscripts submitted by Dr. John R. Post and his students at University of Calgary's Fisheries Ecology, Conservation and Management lab, have clearly outlined the key threats driving these species towards extinction, which include industrial development, roads, motorized recreation, competition with stocked non-native species, climate change, and angling.

Athabasca Rainbow Trout are found throughout the headwaters of the Athabasca River system and its major tributaries in western Alberta. These are the only native Rainbow Trout in Alberta as more southerly populations were stocked decades ago. The Saskatchewan-Nelson population of Bull Trout are found in cold, pristine waters across Alberta's Rockies and foothills.

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Dedicated to the conservation of wilderness and completion of a protected areas network, AWA inspires communities to care for Alberta's wild spaces through awareness and action.

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