

Protected A (when completed)

Research Licence Application – Pre-Approved Assessments and Salvages (RL-PAAS)

A *Research Licence (RL)*, issued under the *Alberta Fisheries Act* (Section 41 of the General Fisheries (Alberta) Regulation), must be obtained from Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) Fisheries Management prior to any fisheries research, collection, display, transport, or salvage activities that would occur within Alberta waters. This excludes Federal lands, but includes Provincial Parks and protected areas, and Indian Reserves and Métis Settlements.

For the purposes of the Licence, fish are defined by the Federal Fisheries Act as “fish, shellfish, crustaceans, marine animals and any parts of fish, shellfish, crustaceans or marine animals, and the eggs, sperm, spawn, larvae, spat and juvenile stages of fish, shellfish, crustaceans and marine animals”.

Before submitting a RL-PAAS Research Licence application, applicants should be aware of the following:

Assessments (low-risk) are defined here as: Fish and fish habitat assessments that are conducted by or under the direct supervision of a Qualified Aquatic Environmental Specialist ([QAES](#)) or in relation to a land-use activity which are anticipated to have a lower risk of disturbance to fish populations. Low-risk fish and fish habitat assessments adhere to the technical (e.g., gear type, Section 2.5), spatial and temporal bounds (April 1st to October 31st, Appendix A) of the RL-PAAS licence, unless otherwise approved in writing.

Salvage (low-risk) are defined here as: Fish are that collected with the purpose of avoiding fish mortality due to a natural event or authorized activity (i.e., dewatering activities) in locations that are anticipated to have a lower risk of disturbance to fish populations. The terms are synonymous with low-risk fish rescue. Low-risk salvages adhere to the spatial bounds of the RL- PAAS licence, unless otherwise approved in writing. NOTE: This is not to be confused with a Salvage Fishing Licence (issued under Section 24 of the General Fisheries (Alberta) Regulation of the *Alberta Fisheries Act*).

- Other permits or approvals from other agencies and organizations may be required to access or conduct research and/or engage in collection activities on other lands within the province. Such permits or approvals could include:
 - Those relating to accessing Provincial Parks lands – contact Alberta Parks.
 - Those relating to accessing Indian Reserves or Métis Settlements – contact the respective band administration office.
 - Those relating to accessing, research or collection on Federal lands – contact the appropriate Federal agency (e.g. Parks Canada, Canadian Forces).
 - Those relating to a Species at Risk under the *Species at Risk Act (SARA)* – contact the appropriate Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) office.
 - Interprovincial Carrying Permits and/or Fish Import Licences may be required for importing fish into Alberta.
 - Out-of-Country imports may also require a “Fish Import Permit”. These permits will be issued to the importer by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) under authority of the *Health of Animals Act*. Applications for the import of all Aquatic Animals into Canada must be made to the CFIA.
- The application and work conducted under the authority of this licence may be denied for reasons including, but not limited to:
 - The project **NOT** providing new information, and sufficient data exists for that site,
 - Activities do not fit in the bounds of the RL-PAAS Licence,
 - The applicant not meeting competency requirements,
 - The applicant currently being in non-compliance with an existing licence within Alberta.

Other aspects that may be considered are:

- Whether the potential risk to the public, researcher, or infrastructure and/or risk of negative public perception is determined to be too great.
- There are multiple applications for the same or similar activities at the same location(s).
- Changes to timing, location, equipment, techniques, or other aspects of the proposal may be required by ‘Approval in Writing’ before work can be undertaken.

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Section 1. Applicant Information

All sections of this form shall be completed. Type or print legibly. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

New Application

Date Submitted

Name of Applicant

Licencee / Firm

Address

City/Town

Province

Postal Code

Research on behalf of: Various, will be provided in writing (email) as part of the notification to the District Fish and Wildlife Office and Area Fisheries Contact at **4 Days** in advance of field activities.

Staff Involved in Collections:

Primary Contact Person:

Phone Number

Fax

Email

Section 2. Sampling Program

2.1 Proposed Sampling Period:

Note: Fish salvages and fish and fish habitat assessments works are prohibited after October 31st (see Appendix A)

Start Date (DD/MM/YYYY): 01/04/2024 End Date (DD/MM/YYYY): 31/03/2024

2.2 Permitted Sampling Locations

Note: Locations within a National Park are not valid for this application. Locations within an Alberta Provincial Park or Protected Area require an additional permit from Alberta Parks. These agencies have their own research permit processes.

Sampling locations within the Province of Alberta, excluding National Parks:

- (a) Fish and fish habitat assessments in Class C and D waterbodies (see below for exceptions)
- (b) Fish and fish habitat assessments in Class B waterbodies **outside of the Restricted Activity Period** (see below for exceptions)
- (c) Fish rescues and salvages in Class B, C and D waterbodies (see below for exceptions)
- (d) All mapped and unmapped waterbodies, water courses, lakes, and wetlands (see below for exceptions)

The sampling/handling/collection of fish under the authority of this licence **is not permitted** at the following locations within the Province of Alberta, excluding National Parks, unless approved in writing by an Area Fisheries Contact:

- (a) Class A waterbodies
- (b) Fish and fish habitat assessments in Class B waterbodies within the Restricted Activity Period
- (c) Fish and fish habitat assessments in Special Waters, as defined in the RL-PAAS Special Waters Geospatial Layers that can be accessed using the Fish and Wildlife Internet Mapping Tool (FWIMT)
- (d) Fish rescues/salvages from stormwater management facilities

Specific sampling locations (Waterbody Name, FWMIS Waterbody ID, legal land location, and UTM coordinates (NAD 83); maps/digital shape file will be provided in writing (email) as part of the notification to the District Fish and Wildlife Office and Area Fisheries Contact at least **4 days** in advance of field activities.

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2.3 Project Description

Research Licence Pre-Approved Assessments and Salvages (RL-PAAS) permits fish and fish habitat assessments and fish salvages within the Province of Alberta, excluding National Parks as per the conditions of the RL-PAAS Licence. Proponent name (i.e., who the work is being conducted on behalf of) and project type (i.e., assessments or salvages) will be provided in writing (email) as part of the notification to the District Fish and Wildlife Office and Area Fisheries Contact(s) at least **4 days** in advance of field activities, or by providing in writing (email) a request for approval in writing to the Area Fisheries Contact. For further description of specific works permitted under this licence please refer to the RL-PAAS Fact Sheet and other supporting documents.

2.4 Sampling Techniques (check those that apply)

Minnow Trapping (indicate number used if traps are baited, type of bait, and length of sets): Minnow traps will be baited and affixed with a tag and RL information. Minnow traps will be checked at least once every 24 hour period.

Seining

Dip Netting

Electrofishing (state equipment type-make and model): Boat, Float, and Backpack Electrofishing

Note: Fisheries Management Branch reserves the right to deny any sampling technique that is considered to have potential to cause undue harm (example: electrofishing over an active spawning run).

2.5 Anticipated Activities

YES a. Will fish be held live for an extended period of time (considered to be greater than the time required to identify, enumerate, and measure captured specimens)?

NO If 'YES', indicate the conditions under which the fish will be held and handled in the project description.

YES b. Will non-lethal ageing samples be taken?

NO If 'YES', please note the species for which non-lethal aging structures will be taken. Note lethal sampling of sportfish species is not permitted under the RL-PAAS.

YES c. Will sites be visited multiple times through the duration of the Licence?

NO If 'YES', indicate the frequency and timing of sampling (note that each sampling event will require separate District Office notification, and that long-term monitoring programs are not permitted under the RL-PAAS).

YES d. Will it be necessary to transport and hold fish at another location?

NO If 'YES', include an explanation of this in the above project description.

NOTE: In Special Waters Approval in Writing may be required to hold and transport fish (i.e. identifying where fish are to be released) on salvages upstream or downstream of barrier.

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Section 3. Acknowledgement

I ensure that all staff engaged in collection activities under this permit are conducted by or under direct supervision of a Qualified Aquatic Environmental Specialist (QAES). I acknowledge that I may be asked to provide proof of these qualifications.

I ensure that all equipment decontamination shall adhere to most current version of the '[DECONTAMINATION PROTOCOL FOR WATERCRAFT AND EQUIPMENT](#)' and risk zone maps.

I am aware and fully understand and accept the data submission requirements expected of myself / my organization. I understand the RL-PAAS licence requires the submission of separate Loadforms for each individual sampling notification/project 90 days after project completion.

I have consulted the [Fish and Wildlife Information Management Tool \(FWIMT\)](#) to ensure that the proposed project does not duplicate existing information and that this project(s) will provide new information.

I ensure that I and all individuals conducting the above work have read and will follow all conditions as outlined in Appendix A, including any documents referenced in these conditions such as, but not limited to, '[THE ALBERTA FISHERIES MANAGEMENT DIVISION ELECTROFISHING POLICY RESPECTING INJURIES TO FISH](#)' and will strive to adhere to the Best Practices in Appendix B, and ensuring notification(s) and request(s) for 'Approval in Writing' align with Special Water in Appendix C.

I acknowledge that this application and any proposed work to be undertaken under the authority of the issued licence may be denied for reasons including, but not limited to, the project NOT providing new information, the project not adhering to the spatial, technical or temporal bounds of the RL-PAAS licence, the applicant not meeting competency requirements, or the applicant currently being in non-compliance with an existing licence within Alberta.

The RL-PAAS application period is February 1 to March 25 annually to ensure licence issuance by Apr 1. Any RL-PAAS applications received after this period are subject to delay. Timely submission of a completed application form is the way to reduce the review and processing time.

Note that District Fish and Wildlife Office(s) and Area Fisheries Contact notification must take place at least 4 days prior to commencement of the project (and every sampling event).

By signing below, I acknowledge that the information I have provided is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

I confirm that the information included in this application is correct and complete.

Signature

Date of Application (YYYY-MM-DD)

Fish and Wildlife Notification

1. The licensee shall advise the appropriate District Fisheries Contact(s) and District Fish and Wildlife Office(s) of the intended times and places of collection at least 4 days in advance of the commencement of field activities (unless advanced approval by a District Fisheries Contact). Email notifications shall be sent to RLPAAS@gov.ab.ca identifying the correct Fisheries office(s) in the subject line.

Approved Sampling Locations and Timings

2. The sampling/handling/collection of fish under the authority of this licence is permitted at the following locations within the Province of Alberta, excluding National Parks:
 - a. Fish and fish habitat assessments in Class C and D waterbodies (see Section 3c and 4 for exceptions).
 - b. Fish and fish habitat assessments in Class B waterbodies outside of the Restricted Activity Period (see Section 3c and 4 for exceptions)
 - c. Fish rescues and salvages in Class B, C and D waterbodies (see Section 3a for exceptions)
 - d. All mapped and unmapped waterbodies, water courses, and wetlands (see Section 3c and 4 for exceptions)

Activities, Sampling, and Timings not covered by this Licence

3. The sampling/handling/collection of fish under the authority of this licence is not permitted at the following locations within the Province of Alberta, unless approved in writing by an Area Fisheries Contact:
 - a. Class A waterbodies
 - b. Fish and fish habitat assessments in Class B waterbodies within the Restricted Activity Period
 - c. Fish and fish habitat assessments in Special Waters, as defined in the RL-PAAS Special Waters Geospatial Layers that can be accessed using the Fish and Wildlife Internet Mapping Tool (FWIMT)
 - d. Fish rescues/salvages from stormwater management facilities
4. Fish and fish habitat assessments are permitted from April 1st to October 31st; fish salvages are permitted from April 1st to March 31st.

Gear Restrictions

5. Minnow traps set under the authority of this licence shall be affixed with a weatherproof tag, of minimum size 5 x 10 cm bearing the Research Licence number and the name of the licensee, in letters not less than 20 mm high.
6. Minnow traps shall be checked at least once within a 24-hour period.
7. Minnow trapping, seine netting, and/or other stated methods shall follow, as a minimum, the protocol outlined in “Standards for Sampling Small Bodied Fish in Alberta” located on the AEP website under Research Licences.
8. Fish assessments and sampling in small streams (defined as ‘easily wadeable’) in Alberta under the authority of this licence shall meet the ‘minimum’ standard for collecting and reporting data as per the “[Standard Protocol for Sampling of Small Streams in Alberta](#)”. For electrofishing this shall require sampling a distance of 300 meters or 40 times the wetted width, whichever is greater.
9. The licensee shall operate in accordance with the “[Alberta Fisheries Management Division Electrofishing Policy](#)”. Respecting Injuries to Fish. **If spawning fish or eggs are encountered cease electrofishing immediately and contact the Area Fisheries Contact.**
10. In an effort to prevent the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) and fish disease in Alberta, all licence holders shall adhere to the Government of Alberta Decontamination Protocol when conducting work in water. The most current version of the [Alberta Decontamination Protocol for Watercraft and Equipment](#) shall be followed in direct association with the most current [Whirling Disease decontamination risk zone map](#).
 - Upon notification, the Area Fisheries Contact or Provincial Fish Disease Specialist may recommend and impose additional decontamination protocols and conditions depending on the risk posed by the proposed work (Example, Quaternary Ammonium Compound (QAC) solutions may be ineffective for some AIS and fish diseases, or based on any new Whirling Disease testing data or a delay in updating online decontamination risk zone maps).
11. The use of felt-soled wading boots is prohibited unless the felt can be removed and properly decontaminated.

Fish Handling

12. No lethal sampling of fish and no collection of fish tissues.

Exceptions:

- a. **Carp and Carassius species (i.e., Prussian, Common, Asian), and other non-naturalized Aquatic Invasive species are to be retained, euthanized, and disposed of according to Condition 13(g). If not previously documented in the Fisheries and Wildlife Management Information Mapping Tool (FWIMT), the Area Fisheries Contact is to be notified immediately if any Aquatic Invasive Fish Species are observed or captured.**
 - b. **Fish for identification purposes according to Condition 14.**
13. All captured fish shall be handled and disposed of as follows:
- a. **Specific to fish assessment works**, all live fish (not approved for retention under this licence) shall be handled in such a manner as to ensure maximum survival and be released to the waters from which they were collected (refer to Best Practices).
 - b. **Specific to fish salvages**, all live fish (not approved for retention under this licence) shall be handled in such a manner as to ensure maximum survival and be released to sites determined prior to capture in the waters from which they were collected (refer to Best Practices).
 - c. Any species captured that is not named on the Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) List of Native and Naturalized Fish Species in Alberta shall be reported immediately to the Area Fisheries Contact. Voucher specimens and digital photos of the specimens shall be submitted to the Area Fisheries Contact immediately for confirmation purposes, unless otherwise agreed to, and shall be reported as per the data return requirements.
 - d. **All species must be identified and tallied.**
 - e. **Fork lengths (mm) must be measured for sport fish species and including Pygmy Whitefish, Stonecat, Brassy Minnow, and Western Silvery Minnow, with the exception of Burbot and all Sculpin species, which require total length (mm).**
 - f. All fish mortalities shall have at a minimum, count of species collected.
 - i. All sport fish mortalities must length (mm), weight (g), and an ageing structure, sex, and maturity collected.
 - g. All fish mortalities shall be disposed of:
 - i. By incineration or disposal at an approved sanitary landfill; or

- ii. In a manner approved by the Area Fisheries Contact where the collection occurred if disposal under sub-clause (i) is not practical.

14. For the purpose of this licence, the following species, or group of species, and numbers of fish shall be retained for identification purposes:
 - a. If captured, voucher specimens (up to 5 per species) of any species named on the AEP List of Native and Naturalized Fish Species in Alberta, and which shall be surrendered to the Area Fisheries Contact immediately unless otherwise agreed to.
 - b. **NO SPORT FISH SHALL BE RETAINED UNLESS APPROVED IN WRITING BY AN AREA FISHERIES CONTACT.**
15. Where an authorized number of individuals have been permitted to be culled in one of the preceding conditions, if the combined total mortality of those species identified in this Licence is exceeded, the Area Fisheries Contact shall be notified immediately before continued sampling takes place.
16. This licence **does not** permit tagging or marking of fish.
17. The licensee is permitted to transport and temporarily hold live fish within the immediate study area, however, they shall be returned into the same waterbody from which they were captured,

Exception:

- a. For sampling approval in Special Waters as defined in the Special Waters (RL-PAAS) geospatial layers that can be accessed using the Fish and Wildlife Internet Mapping Tool (FWIMT) specific fish release locations may be requested by the Area Fisheries Contact prior to fish collection activities.
18. Any proposed release of collected fish outside the immediate sampling area (waterbody) where fish are collected shall be submitted to, and approved by the Head of Fisheries Allocation and Use of the Fisheries Management Branch (or designated representative) and may additionally require a review by the Alberta Introductions and Transfers Committee.

Reporting

19. Locations where sampling occurred and no fish were captured shall be recorded in the data return, including reason (e.g., frozen conditions). The number of passes/attempts shall be recorded.
20. Data return requirements shall be satisfied by providing a digital copy of all fisheries data in the appropriate FWMIS loadform format **within 90 days following the end date provided in the email notification for all works**, as per the FWMIS data submission requirements.

For the RL-PAAS licence, please note that every separate notification or sampling event requires an individual loadform submission. If a report was produced, a copy of the final report of the work (or the portions of the final report that includes all aspects pertaining to the assessment), as well as any ageing structures if collected, and/or genetic samples (if approved/collected) shall be provided within 180 days of the expiry of the licence.

21. All data returns shall be sent to RLPAAS@gov.ab.ca.

Other

22. The use of explosives or piscicide chemicals is not permitted.
23. Any of the proposed activities shall adhere to as a minimum the “[Standards for the Ethical Use of Fishes in Alberta](#)”.
24. This licence and any additional approval in writing from an Area Fisheries Contact shall be in possession and

available upon the request of staff from the Fish and Wildlife Division or Area Fisheries Contact.

25. This licence is subject to cancellation at any time and shall be surrendered to the issuer upon written notice of its cancellation.
26. **This licence is non-transferable. This licence is only valid for the company and/or individuals listed on the licence; transfer or delegation of the licence from the Licencee to another private or public body, including sub-contractors is not permitted. The responsibility and authority of the issued licence is given solely to that of the Licencee, and the individuals listed on the licence.**
27. Please note a RL-PAAS licence does not supersede a SARA permit or other licences/permits that may be required by other regulatory agencies as an authorization of the proposed work.

Appendix B: Best Practices

1. Where fish population data is collected, the corresponding fish habitat information that complies with the Fisheries Management Information System (FWMIS) protocol shall be reported.
2. Where the **following** fish species are captured, photographic evidence (preferably through the use of a water filled photographic chamber) shall be provided in the Licence return for Fisheries Management Branch verification purposes: Brassy Minnow, Deepwater Sculpin, Emerald Shiner, Finescale Dace, Goldeye, Largescale Sucker, Logperch, Mooneye, Mountain Sucker, Northern Pikeminnow, Northern Redbelly Dace, Pearl Dace, Pygmy Whitefish, Redside Shiner, River Shiner, Round Whitefish, Rocky Mountain Sculpin, Shortjaw Cisco, Silver Redhorse, Slimy Sculpin, Spoonhead Sculpin, and Western Silvery Minnow. Photographs should focus on characteristic features of that species. The return shall also identify in the species comments section, the meristic features used to identify the above species, particularly in the case where photographic evidence may be by itself inconclusive AND should identify whether the species was captured outside of its expected range according to “Fishes of Alberta” (Nelson and Paetz 1992).
3. Special care and planning shall occur when engaged in cold weather non-lethal sampling to avoid frost damage to fish. Certain parts of fish, such as eyes, gill tissue, and thin fins may freeze in a few seconds if proper care is not taken at low temperatures. Heated tents or shelters over sampling areas shall be used and insulated coolers containing water taken from the sampled waterbody shall be used to hold fish for short periods (water must be changed regularly to ensure water temperatures are consistent between waterbody and the cooler). Care must be used to prevent fish from freezing to measuring boards, weigh scales, and sampling tools. When signs of undue stress and/or mortality of individuals is observed during cold weather, fish collection operations shall be postponed until warmer conditions prevail.
4. Locations where sampling did not occur during a site visit shall be recorded in the data return spreadsheet and the reason for not sampling provided (e.g. low or no water flow).
5. When electrofishing, and where not already considered mandatory under a referenced standard, temperature and conductivity shall be measured, recorded, and included in the FWMIS loadform return.
6. Any deformities or irregularities for measured fish shall be noted in the FWMIS data return, and photographic documentation provided.

THE FOLLOWING BEST PRACTICES FOR FISH RESCUES ONLY.

7. Measures shall be taken to minimize the number of fish requiring salvage prior to works being conducted (passive fish removal). This can include but is not limited to herding fish and/or providing an escape route out of the area of operation, prior to and during the dewatering process or other salvaging techniques.
8. Relocation sites shall be determined prior to fish being salvaged. The site shall mimic the habitat the fish were salvaged from. During ice cover this shall necessitate drilling multiple holes in the ice, when it is safe to do so, and testing habitat to ensure enough water and oxygen is available to sustain fish for the duration of the winter.
9. Fish handling times shall be kept to a minimum and soft wet gloves used to reduce exposure to air, stress and prevent removal of the protective mucous barrier.
10. Large bodied fish shall be supported at the tail and head to reduce internal injury. Where possible, all fish should be kept in their natural horizontal position.
11. If using holding tanks, they shall contain a minimum of 15 L per 1 kg of fish and be monitored regularly for oxygen and stress related issues, to ensure maximum fish survival.
12. Fish salvage shall occur between -20°C to 20°C, taking wind and extreme weather conditions into consideration. If it is required to salvage beyond this temperature range and in inclement weather extra precautions shall be taken

when holding/handling fish to reduce stress (i.e. increased frequency of monitoring fish in holding tanks to detect stress induced issues, holding tanks be kept out of the elements; in summer—fewer fish/holding tank, employ aerators; keep in shaded area; in winter – limited/no air exposure (i.e. transfer of fish from collection pails and capture gear to holding tanks occur in water or in shelter from the elements), use of insulated holding tanks and heated or insulated sampling tents and wind breaks).

13. In situations where extreme temperatures may injure fish before completion of sampling, it is acceptable to only record numbers and species of fish handled, and not collect length and weight data.
14. All nets (including entanglement gear and dip nets) shall be knotless and made of non-abrasive materials to reduce injury to fish.
15. A minimum of 2 consecutive passes of each active gear type (i.e. electrofishing, seining etc.) that produces a zero catch shall be completed to ensure all/the majority of fish have been removed from the salvage area.
16. Each pass of a single gear type and its associated catch shall be recorded in the data return spreadsheet. If fish are released immediately due to extreme conditions, it should be iterated in the survey comments.

cc.

Bill Patterson for the Executive Director of Resource Stewardship's Fish and Wildlife Stewardship Branch
District Fish & Wildlife Officers
Area Fisheries Contacts

Appendix C: Special Waters Geospatial Layers & Fish and Wildlife Internet Mapping Tool (FWIMT) *subject to change

1. Special Waters in the Provincial of Alberta have been created as geospatial layers for 'Research License - Pre-Approved Assessments and Salvages (RL-PAAS) Special Waters – Streams and Lakes in Alberta.
 - a. Map Name/Title: Special Waters (RL-PAAS)
 - b. Spatial files can be downloaded here: https://geospatial.alberta.ca/titan/rest/services/environment/fw_special_waters_streams_and_lakes_10tm_nad83_aep/MapServer
2. Special Waters for the Province of Alberta can also be accessed using the internet mapping Tool Fish and Wildlife Internet Mapping Tool https://geospatial.alberta.ca/FWIMT_Pub/?TermsOfUseRequired=true&Viewer=FWIMT_Pub