

## Our Club helps stem White Lake's Goldfish Plague

At long last, our Club can report good news about White Lake, a trout-stocked lake just off the Trans-Canada Highway west of Salmon Arm.

40 plus years ago, the Salmon Arm Fish and Game Club (SAFGC) began investing in White Lake with time and money to develop the lake's potential as one of BC's fishing hotspots. Club members worked with provincial fish biologists and mainly the Fresh Water Fisheries Society of BC to stock the lake with rainbow trout. Club volunteers spent countless hours improving dock facilities, the White Lake campground and building trout spawning beds. After all, B.C.'s stocked lakes lure anglers from around the world, and while they're here, they boost the provincial economy by spending about \$500 million a year. For local anglers, there's nothing better than having a stocked lake right in the neighbourhood.

Meanwhile, White Lake residents were aware their lake was infested with goldfish. This invasive species probably escaped from a poorly-situated pond during spring flooding. Once in the lake, the nuisance fish thrived, breeding up to three times a year, each female producing up to 30,000 eggs at a time. Worst of all, goldfish are voracious and eat everything, including young trout.

We're pleased to report that a lifelong Club member and avid angler, Julian Kuna, was willing and able to take on the work involved in finding a solution to the goldfish plague. Research, consultation with experts and working with White Lake residents followed. Everyone wanted an environmentally friendly, chemical free strategy to selectively get rid of the goldfish without killing the trout. Six years ago, they found one: electroshocking.

When an electric current is passed through a school of goldfish, it stuns fish for 15-20 seconds. They are easily netted and any bycatch of trout are separated, revived and returned to the lake unharmed.

Like many environmentally friendly solutions, electroshock treatments are expensive and need to be repeated every year. Over \$31,200 of SAFGC funding two treatments a year, and Julian Kuna's leadership, made it happen. White Lake became one of the first places in BC to field-test electroshocking invasive goldfish.

White Lake residents began recording spots where and when big schools of goldfish gathered. They called Julian Kuna, who organized Tisdale Environmental Consulting Inc. from Kamloops, for a day of electroshocking where the highest concentrations of goldfish were. Volunteers put in 10 hour days for every shock treatment, in addition to netting goldfish and returning trout to the lake unharmed; the goldfish were sorted by sex, then euthanized, counted, cut up and returned to the lake, females in one area and males in another ensured not a single goldfish egg gets fertilized.

What White Lake needed next was a predatory trout that would eat goldfish, dead or alive. Blackwater rainbow trout, native to B.C., evolved to eat the young of other fish. In 2023, Blackwater rainbows, bred by the Fresh Water Fisheries Society of BC, were released to restock White Lake; the hope was to reverse the tide of competition between goldfish and trout. It worked; White Lake anglers report that Blackwater rainbow trout have stomachs full of goldfish juveniles.



White Lake residents Gary Winram, Rick Patrick and Terry Winram (not pictured) were responsible for reporting the goldfish spawning frenzy at White Lake. Julian Kuna, on the right, lead the electroshocking program for the past six years. Steve Leadbeater and Gene Tisdale from Environmental Consulting Inc., the electroshocking contractor, are not pictured. 10,000 goldfish, 1,000 kilograms<sup>1</sup> or 2,200 lbs, were harvested December 2025.

The photo shows the latest episode in our fish story, with White Lake residents becoming experts at goldfish monitoring. Observing whole swarms of goldfish in mating frenzies clearly is the right time to organize effective electroshock treatments. So when residents noticed a major goldfish frenzy in progress, Julian Kuna launched one of the province's largest goldfish harvests ever. By the end of a hard day of work, the goldfish mating frenzy was reduced to 2,200 pounds of food for trout juveniles and other aquatic life.

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<sup>1</sup> 10 goldfish average 1 kilogram – Six years of White Lake data verify this average weight ratio

White Lake finally has a strategy to selectively manage goldfish and maximize its potential as a world class trout fishing lake. In the absence of BC government participation, the Salmon Arm Fish & Game Club is proud to have sponsored this White Lake project and we plan to continue doing so. This strategy may work for other goldfish-infested lakes, but we recognize that other areas may lack the key to success that we have in our Club. We recognize that Julian Kuna, his commitment and enthusiastic leadership, made all the difference. We're grateful and we know we couldn't have done this project without him.

For more detailed information please refer to the following link: [make link to White Lake Gold Fish Report](#)