

Improving Alberta's Fisheries

Fact Sheet

Fishing for trouble in Richardson backcountry area

The perils of ignoring Alberta's sportfishing regulations can be costly. Just ask the five anglers who each received a one-year fishing prohibition and were fined a total of \$7580 after pleading guilty earlier this year to violating provisions of the *Fisheries (Alberta) Act*.

The violations arose in August 2004, when Fish and Wildlife officers visited remote Blueberry Lake in the Richardson backcountry area, about 200 kilometres northeast of Fort McMurray and accessible only by off-highway vehicle or floatplane. There they found a Styrofoam cooler containing an indeterminate number and species of fish that had been skinned, cut into pieces and frozen.

What was wrong with this picture

The five anglers in joint possession of the cooler were charged with violating regulations that make it unlawful to possess game fish that is skinned, cut or packed so the species and length cannot be identified.

Within days, the five men were also charged with unlawfully exceeding the possession limit for fish, after forensic analysis conducted at the Alberta Fish and Wildlife Lab in Edmonton determined that the cooler contained the remains of at least 42 walleye and 10 northern pike. The catch limit at Blueberry Lake is one walleye over 50 cm and three northern pike over 63 cm.

It is clearly stated in the *Alberta Guide to Sportfishing Regulations* that "the number of fish of each species you may possess at the end of a fishing trip, regardless of the number of days fished, is equal to a 1-day limit at the water body fished and includes fish stored at home."

The result

After pleading guilty to the charges in Provincial Court in April 2005, each of the five fishermen was fined \$1516 and given a one-year suspension from sportfishing in Alberta.



How to enjoy your fishing adventure

Fish and Wildlife officers in Fort McMurray and throughout Alberta are grateful for the public's continuing support in helping conserve Alberta's natural resources—attention to sportfishing regulations is a key part of that support. Harvest and size limits are necessary to ensure sustainable fish stocks for the future. It is especially important for anglers to follow requirements to properly store harvested fish, which allows enforcement staff to verify all possession limits for species and size of fish.

Anyone with information about a fish or wildlife crime is asked to call:

Report A Poacher line, 1-800-642-3800 toll-free.

Callers may remain anonymous, and rewards may be available for information that leads to a charge being laid.

Details that help in an investigation include a person's name, vehicle licence plate number and physical descriptions, as well as the date, time and location of the alleged offence.

Visit our web site for more information: <http://www3.gov.ab.ca/srd/fw/>