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## Review of *The Fishes of Alberta (2nd edition)* by Joseph S. Nelson and Martin J. Paetz

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**The Fishes of Alberta (2nd edition).** Joseph S. Nelson and Martin J. Paetz. Edmonton and Calgary, AB: The University of Alberta Press and The University of Calgary Press, 1992. xxvi+427 pp. Maps, photos, drawings, and references. \$C34.95 cloth, (ISBN 0-88864-235-0). \$C24.95 paper, (ISBN 0-88864-236-9).

This useful and attractive book is a much needed second edition of *The Fishes of Alberta*, first published in 1970. It is expanded and improved from the first edition and will be an essential reference for biologists working with the fishes of Alberta and surrounding areas, for those interested in the distribution of freshwater fishes in North America, and for anglers and the interested public as well.

*The Fishes of Alberta* is organized into two main sections. An introductory section has chapters on various types of fish habitat in the different river basins and regions of Alberta, fish management and culture practices in Alberta, a brief outline of limnology and fish biology, the post-glacial dispersal of fishes into Alberta, the species concept and a checklist of Alberta fishes, evolution and fossils, and the use of keys and definitions. Much of this material, although expanded from the first edition, is relatively brief and will be of interest mainly to anglers and interested non-professionals. It is clearly written and well illustrated, although some of the pictures, such as those of hatchery operations and numerous river channels, seem unnecessary.

The main body of the book contains a key to families, keys to species, and species accounts. Keys are clear and should be easy to follow. A particularly nice feature of the keys are comparison outline drawings of fish, showing their main characteristics.

Species accounts have the usual sections on description, distribution, and biology, as well as notes on nomenclature, taxonomy, and introductory

history, if appropriate. Also, some species include 'sections on angling characteristics. Most accounts are accompanied by full page distribution maps, which are clearly presented. Line drawings, black and white photographs, or color photographs illustrate each species. Color pictures are a good idea to give those unfamiliar with the species a better idea of body shape and color; however, not all of the pictures show important characteristics clearly (e.g., presence of adipose fin, mouth size and shape) and the colors of some specimens are not typical of the species. The species accounts might be enhanced by short descriptions of post-glacial and recent dispersal. Overall, the species descriptions are clearly written, although brief, compilations of current information. The increased number of species recorded in Alberta from the first to the second edition of this book (45 native and 4 introduced species recorded in 1970 versus 51 native and 8 introduced species in 1992) illustrates both our incomplete knowledge of even relatively well-studied fish faunas, and the continued spread of many species due to human interference.

Appendices include river discharges, physical features of some Alberta lakes, a glossary, and a particularly useful listing of fishes in areas adjacent to Alberta, and species present but apparently not reproducing in Alberta.

*The Fishes of Alberta* is well-written and logically-organized. It is intended for a diverse audience, and although it cannot hope to be perfect for everyone, its authors have struck a good balance between technical and popular content. It is reasonably priced and is recommended for everyone interested in the fish of Alberta, including those who already have the first edition. **R. A. Bodaly**, *Canada Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Freshwater Institute, Winnipeg, Alberta.*