



Adjustments to the Catchable Rainbow Trout Stocking Program

Catchable Rainbow Trout Program

- Division hatcheries produce approximately 100,000 Catchable (10-12") Rainbow Trout (CRT) each year.
- Most of these fish are stocked in more than 70 lakes and ponds during late-March through early-May.
- These stockings are intended to provide very high angler success by creating "Fish in a Barrel" opportunities and harvest of all stocked fish.
- CRT not caught by anglers represent a lost opportunity because these fish are sensitive to warm water temperatures and typically do not survive through late spring.



Angler Use of Catchable Rainbow Trout

Surveys conducted following CRT stocking during 2018 and 2019 provided the following information:

- ✓ Most anglers fish for CRT from shore and larger waters generally provided less shoreline access.
- ✓ Angler effort is highest the day fish are stocked and declines sharply to 0 within about 10 days after stocking.
- ✓ Catches are much greater in small lakes and ponds as compared to larger ones
- ✓ This type of fishing is a "close to home" activity, with anglers typically fishing in the county where they live or an adjacent county.

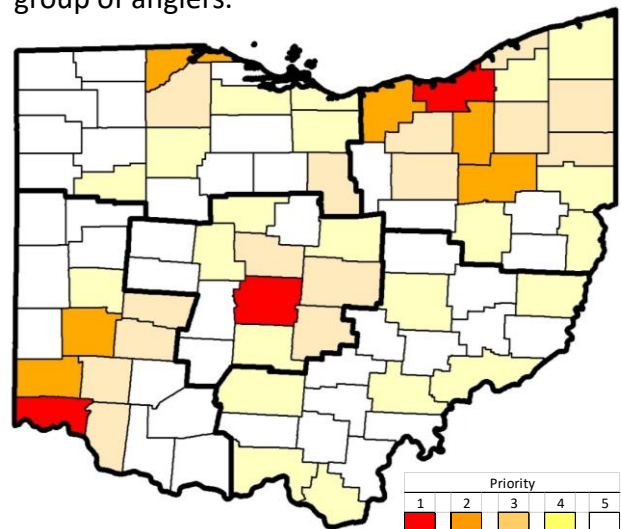
Observations for Program Improvement

- CRT stocked in larger lakes are benefiting anglers less than those stocked in smaller lakes and ponds as indicated by catches.
- Fishery participation would likely increase if CRT were stocked closer to population centers.
- CRT are the Division's most expensive stocking program, with fish costing \$5 each to produce and extensive fish transportation for stocking.
- **Program adjustments during the next few years can maximize benefits of CRT stocking in lakes and ponds.**



Proposed Adjustments

- Primarily limit stocking to lakes <25 acres with >75% shoreline accessibility.
- Redistribute stockings among counties in proportion to the number of people that reside in them to better serve more people (see map below).
- Adjusting opportunities to focus on more populous counties to reach a more diverse group of anglers.



CRT stocking priorities among Ohio's 88 counties and five DOW districts (bold lines).