



WHAT IS FISH IN SCHOOLS?

Fish in Schools (FinS) is a provincial fisheries education program, delivered by Bow Habitat Station. This unique hands-on program provides Alberta schools from kindergarten to grade 12 with the opportunity to raise rainbow trout in their classrooms from egg to alevin and fry, then release the fish into a provincially-approved waterbody as a part of Alberta's fish stocking program.

FinS is an intensive, five-month commitment from January through May each year. The classroom aquarium and trout require continuous monitoring and care, regardless of school closures and holidays.

Be sure to read and fully understand the commitment and responsibilities of participation in this program prior to submitting an application.

PROGRAM GOALS

FinS aligns with learning objectives identified in Alberta Education's Program of Studies at every grade level (K-12).

FinS aims to foster an appreciation of Alberta's fish species and encourages participants to consider their role in the conservation and stewardship of Alberta's fish, water and ecosystems.

Throughout the program, students and teachers will work together to:

- Maintain a healthy aquarium environment for trout, from egg to fry;
- Release rainbow trout fry into an approved provincial waterbody;
- Study and investigate fish life cycles and stages, habitats, needs, and adaptations;
- Learn about Alberta's fish and threats to their survival;
- Understand the importance of water quality; and,
- Develop an awareness of human impacts and actions on aquatic ecosystems.

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RAINBOW TROUT EGGS

Bow Habitat Station provides 65 triploid rainbow trout eggs (infertile) to projects via provincial fish hatcheries.

Rainbow trout are selected for their higher survival rates, and for their many options for release locations in the province due to their established role in the provincial recreation stocking program.



PROGRAM COSTS

Schools are responsible for the initial cost and ongoing maintenance of the aquarium equipment required for the program. Specifications of equipment items are provided. Returning schools may be required to upgrade their aquarium system as needed to maintain established program standards.

- Start-up Costs: approx. \$1,500-\$1,700
 - See *FinS Technical Manual* for specifications.
- Annual Supplies: approx. \$100/year
 - Includes consumable products critical for successful care of trout: filter media, water conditioners, and water quality tests.
 - See *FinS Technical Manual* for specifications.
- Returning Egg Delivery Equipment:
 - Shipping cost to return egg delivery equipment to Bow Habitat Station.
- Release Event:
 - Includes any and all costs associated with the event (i.e. transportation to and from the provincially-approved waterbody).
- General Maintenance:
 - Cost to power tank.
 - Disinfectant / cleaning supplies.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The FinS program accepts a limited number of projects each year. An annual application process allows new participants into the program and for schools in good standing to reapply, repeatedly, in the program.

New and returning program participants must fill out an application form on an annual basis.

Schools applying to the program must reside in Alberta and make financial and resource commitments to be eligible:

- Identify two responsible School Coordinators (applicants); at least one of whom is in a permanent role with the school (a teacher, librarian, or administration);
- Have the required School Authorization from the school principal for the costs associated with the program, licencing requirements, and time commitments required of School Coordinators;
- Commit to program guidelines; and
- Be in good standing with the FinS program.

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FISH RESEARCH LICENCE

Anyone (person, agency or institution) whose work involves collecting, holding or sampling fish for inventory, research, educational or promotional purposes in Alberta must obtain a Fish Research Licence (FRL).

Bow Habitat Station is responsible for obtaining FRL's from an Alberta Fisheries Biologist.

Schools are responsible for adhering to the requirements of the FRL.



GOOD STANDING

For schools to be in good standing they must complete the following on an annual basis:

1. Adhere to the requirements of the Fish Research Licence;
2. Return egg delivery supplies to Bow Habitat Station;
3. Complete the online release training and quiz; and
4. Submit final report by June 30.

YOUR SCHOOL'S ROLE AND STRUCTURE

Schools must designate two School Coordinators (applicants). Both School Coordinators are responsible for meeting the terms of the Fish Research Licence and the program requirements, including:

- Completing the annual application form;
- Purchasing initial set-up and replacement equipment;
- Setting up and maintaining the aquarium and its equipment;
- Supporting coordination of egg pick-up/delivery;
- Coordinating return of egg delivery supplies to Bow Habitat Station;
- Monitoring and maintaining a healthy aquarium environment;
- Monitoring and documenting fish development and health;
- Participating in the virtual training for release events in April;
- Coordinating the class/school's participation and transportation for the release of their fish into a provincially-approved water body;
- Maintaining and submitting required program documents; and,
- Disinfecting aquarium equipment at the end of the year.

If a project has an extensive mortality rate (>50%) for two consecutive years, a review will be conducted to determine possible solutions. This review may require documented information that School Coordinators must maintain throughout the project.

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TEACHER RESOURCES

[FinS Resource Portal](#)

School Coordinators will have access to an online FinS Resource Portal, where they can access training resources, as well as connect with the FinS Team to assist with troubleshooting issues beyond what is listed in the FinS Technical Manual.



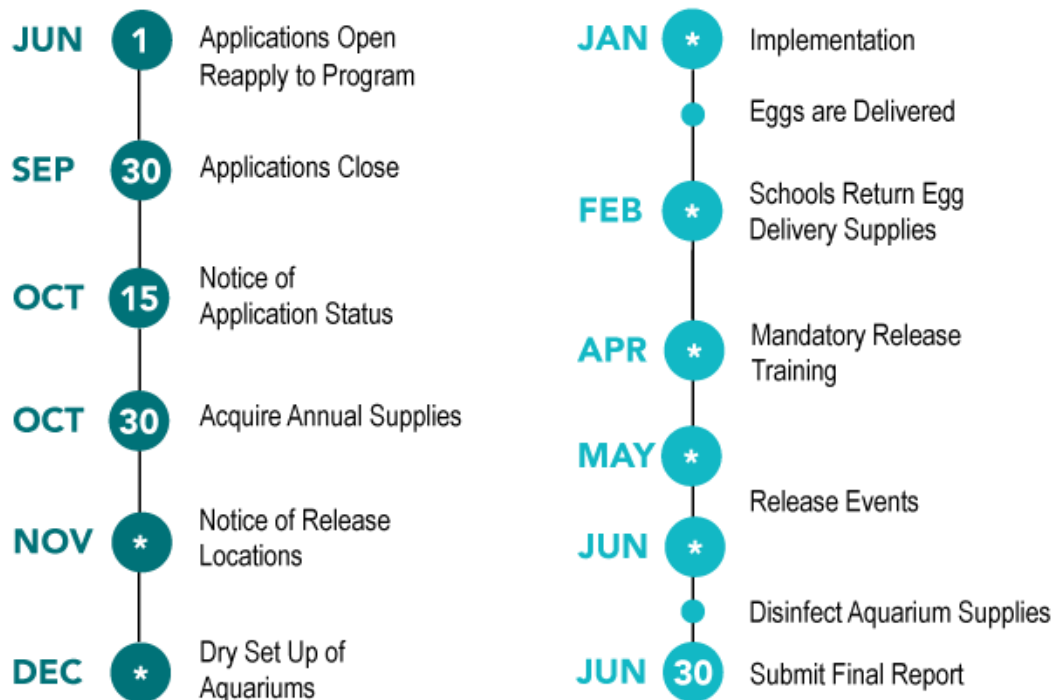
BOW HABITAT STATION'S COMMITMENT

Bow Habitat Station manages the delivery of the FinS program and is responsible for the delivery of healthy rainbow trout eggs, training and resources to schools participating in the program.

The FinS Coordinator will assist the schools in coordination and troubleshooting including:

- Coordinating egg pick-up and delivery to participating projects; and
- Providing training and support to School Coordinators, including:
 - Maintaining the FinS Resource Portal with educational and training resources and trouble-shooting support;
 - Program coordination, including fish biologist approval to raise and release fish; and
 - Release event virtual training.

KEY PROGRAM DATES



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CONTACT INFORMATION

[Bow Habitat Station Website](#)

FinS Email
Fins.program@gov.ab.ca

Bow Habitat Station Mainline
403-297-6561

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Fish in Schools (FinS) is a provincial fisheries education program established by the Government of Alberta in 1998 and coordinated by Bow Habitat Station.

WHAT IS THE FISH IN SCHOOLS (FINS) PROGRAM?

FinS is a provincial fisheries education program coordinated by Bow Habitat Station. This unique program provides schools across Alberta with hands-on learning opportunities to raise rainbow trout in a classroom aquarium.

From January through May, students and teachers gain first-hand knowledge as they monitor and maintain the care of 65 rainbow trout from eggs to alevin and fry, then release them into a provincially-approved waterbody as a part of Alberta's fish stocking program.

HOW DO I JOIN THE FINS PROGRAM?

Applications are open to schools across Alberta from June 1 – September 30 each year. Applications can be found on Bow Habitat Station's website www.bowhabitat.alberta.ca

IS THERE A COST?

Schools are responsible for the initial cost of the aquarium equipment (~\$1,500-\$1,700), annual supplies (~\$100/year), returning delivery supplies to Bow Habitat Station, maintenance fees, and all costs associated with a fish release event (i.e. bussing).

The FinS program provides participants with the required training and licencing for the program, access to learning materials and student webinars.

WHAT IS A FISH RESEARCH LICENCE?

A Fish Research Licence (FRL) allows you to legally raise rainbow trout in your classroom and release them into an approved waterbody. Bow Habitat Station coordinates the delivery of FRLs for participating schools.

Anyone (person, agency or institution) whose work involves collecting, holding or sampling fish for inventory, research, educational or promotional purposes in Alberta must obtain a FRL.

WHERE CAN I RELEASE MY FINS FISH?

Fish release locations are selected and approved by provincial regional biologists and are consistent with established recreational stocking sites. This ensures the fish are released into a healthy habitat and fit in with the local ecosystem where recreational fish stocking has already been approved as a management tool for the waterbody.

WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THE FINS PROGRAM?

FinS aims to foster an appreciation of trout and encourages participants to consider their role in the conservation and stewardship of Alberta's fish, water and ecosystems.

WOULD MY CLASSROOM / SCHOOL BE A GOOD FIT?

Success in the FinS program requires an ongoing commitment from the School Coordinators and students to care for the fish and aquariums systems. This includes care in the form of equipment set-up and maintenance, water changes, feeding of fish, and water quality testing.

It is important for School Coordinators to secure support from other staff and their principal to support with the care and maintenance required in the FinS program.

WHAT ENVIRONMENTAL TOPICS ARE COVERED?

FinS directly engages students and teachers in classroom-based learning opportunities that support the delivery of environmental education topics, including: native trout and species at risk, fisheries management, water quality, ecosystem health, and aquatic invasive species.

Through this work, students and teachers uncover the pressure facing Alberta's water, aquatic habitats and fisheries, and consider their role in maintaining these precious natural resources for future generations.

WILL OUR SCHOOL BE ACCEPTED INTO FINS EVERY YEAR?

Schools must remain in good standing with the FinS program to be accepted in future years. School Coordinators must complete the following to be considered in good standing:

1. Adhere to the requirements of the Fish Research Licence;
2. Return their egg delivery supplies to Bow Habitat Station;
3. Complete the online release training and quiz; and
4. Submit their final report by June 30.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

Visit Bow Habitat Station's website at bowhabitat.alberta.ca or reach out directly to fins.program@gov.ab.ca.