Utah Blue Ribbon Waters Rating System (Hepworth-Walker Scale)

Adopted, 2015 • Revised, 2020

The Hepworth-Walker scale was developed by Blue Ribbon Fishery Advisory Council to help quantify the knowledge, experience and opinions of the Council membership when determining the suitability of Utah waters for Blue Ribbon status.

- Please read carefully. Point scales are not all the same for all the criteria, even though some may appear to be.
- There are 87 points possible for flat waters and 83 points possible for flowing waters.
- Blue Ribbon threshold levels for the different classes of waters can be found in the table on Page 4.

A. FISHERY STATUS (46 pts. possible)

1. Size Caught *(10 pts. possible)*

Anglers have an opportunity to catch large fish at this water.

Choose one

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Pts.	10	7	4	1	0

2. Number Caught *(10 pts. possible)*

Anglers have an opportunity to catch a lot of fish at this water.

Choose one

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Pts.	10	7	4	1	0

3. Fish Population Characteristics *(8 pts. possible)*

Note all that apply:

- Unique species
- Trophy fish
- Native sportfish
- Naturally reproducing
- Diverse species assemblage

How many of the above characteristics apply to this fishery?

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Pts.	0	2	4	6	8

4. Harvest Potential *(6 pts. possible)*

An angler's opportunities to harvest fish at this water can be described as:

Choose one	**Pts**.
Anglers have the opportunity to harvest fish in excess of statewide creel limits; it is **highly likely** that they will achieve desired harvest. Water is not catch and kill.	6
Anglers have the opportunity to harvest fish in excess of statewide creel limits; it is **likely** they will achieve desired harvest. Water is not catch and kill.	5
Anglers have the opportunity to harvest fish at statewide creel limits; it is **highly likely** that they will achieve desired harvest.	4
Anglers have the opportunity to harvest fish at statewide creel limits; it is **likely** that they will achieve desired harvest.	3
Anglers have the opportunity to harvest fish at statewide creel limits, however, it is **unlikely** that they will achieve desired harvest.	1
Anglers **do not** have the opportunity to harvest fish at the statewide creel limit.	0

5. Habitat *(8 pts. possible)*

To what extent is physical habitat improvement needed, such as stream bank stabilization, vegetation, fencing, in lake fish structure etc.?

Choose one	**Pts**.
No improvements are needed.	8
Improvements have begun as outlined in an existing written management plan and these improvements will likely be completed.	6
Improvements are needed but have not been specified in a written management plan.	2
Improvements are needed and, whether specified in a management plan or not, they are unlikely to be completed.	0

6. Management Initiatives *(4 pts. possible)*

Major management action, such as change in stocking, fishing regulations, completion of rotenone treatments, introduction of biological controls:

Choose one	**Pts**.
Have been undertaken successfully or are not required.	4
Are necessary and needed and are part of a written management plan.	3
Are necessary and planned for inclusion in a pending written management plan.	2
Are necessary, but are not included in an existing or pending written management plan.	1

B. ACCESS (13 points possible)

7. Shore Access *(4 pts. possible)*

What percentage of the shore at the proposed water is accessible to the public?

Choose one

	81% to 100%	51% to 80%	26% to 50%	Less than 25%
Pts.	4	3	2	1

8. Boat Access *(4 pts. possible. Score for flat waters only.)*

If boating (motorized or non motorized) is allowed at this water, is improved boater access provided and is it sufficient to meet demands.

Choose one

	Yes, and sufficient	Yes, but insufficient	No access provided
Pts.	4	2	0

9. Accessibility *(5 pts. possible)*

The ease with which anglers and other recreationalists are able to get to the water can have a positive or negative impact, depending on the desired experience. Identify which of the following best characterizes the accessibility at this water:

Choose one	Pts.
Access is easy, maximizing the quality of the desired angling experience, **OR** access is difficult, maximizing the quality of the desired angling experience.	5
Access is easy, limiting the quality of the desired angling experience, **OR** access is difficult, limiting the quality of the desired angling experience.	0

C. ENVIRONMENT (28 points possible)

10. Setting *(8 pts. possible)*

A desirable setting for anglers can be characterized as having the following *(Note all that apply)*:

- Desirable to anglers who are seeking a specific social experience (e.g. family oriented anglers group oriented anglers or solitary anglers)
- Aesthetically pleasing
- Providing user amenities (e.g. restrooms, fish cleaning stations, parking)
- Providing universal (handicapped) accessible amenities.
- Desirable for multiple social groups

How many of the above characteristics apply to this fishery?

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Pts.	0	2	4	6	8

11. Water Quantity *(10 pts. possible)*

Water quantities are at sufficient levels or protections currently in place at this water (such as conservation pools, in-stream flow rights, UDWR ownership, etc.) are adequate to maintain water volumes or flows needed for a healthy, productive and accessible fishery.

Choose one

	Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
Pts.	10	8	6	4	2

12. Water Quality *(10 pts. possible)*

Beneficial uses for this water as defined by DEQ can be categorized as follows:

Choose one	**Pts**.
Beneficial uses for cold and/or warm water game fish are not impaired, and water quality improvements are not needed to improve fish population health.	10
Beneficial uses for cold and/or warm water game fish are impaired at this water, but water quality improvements are not needed to improve fish population health.	8
Cold water and/or warm water game fish are impaired at this water and water quality improvements are being pursued to improve fish population health.	6
Beneficial use for cold and/or warm water game fish are impaired at this water and, although water quality improvements are needed to improve fish population health, they are not being pursued.	4
Beneficial uses for cold and/or warm water game fish are not designated for this water.	2

Table 1: Blue Ribbon Fishery Categories and Thresholds

Flat Waters (Reservoirs & Lakes)		
Category/Type of Fishery	***Size***	***Minimum points for BRF***
Large/Cold	1,000+ acres	65 points
Large/Warm	1,000+ acres	65 points
Moderate/Cold	200-999 acres	60 points
Moderate/Warm	200-999 acres	60 points
Small/Cold	Less than 200 acres	60 points
Small/Warm	Less than 200 acres	60 points
Flowing Waters (Rivers & Streams)		
Large	More than 30 feet average width	65 points
Moderate	15-30 feet average width	55 points
Small	Less than 15 feet average width	55 points

Blue Ribbon

Water Rating Worksheet

1. Size Caught																		
2. Number Caught																		
3. Fish Pop. Characteristics																		
4. Harvest Potential																		
5. Habitat																		
6. Management Initiatives																		
7. Shore Access																		
8. Boat Access (Flat Waters)																		
9. Accessibility																		
10. Setting																		
11. Water Quantity																		
12. Water Quality																		
Total																		