



DEC 2020 Lake Ontario Chinook Salmon & Lake Trout Stocking *Sport Fishery continues to produce record catch rates and thriving populations*

New York announced the state’s plans for fish stocking in Lake Ontario to ensure the lake remains one of the top fishing destinations in the country. Lake Ontario offers opportunities to catch trophy-sized fish from a wide variety of species, including Chinook and coho salmon, steelhead, brown trout, lake trout, Atlantic salmon, bass, walleye, and panfish. To ensure these species continue to thrive and to address a further projected population decline of alewife, a crucial prey fish, DEC’s 2020 stocking of Chinook salmon and lake trout into Lake Ontario will be reduced by 20 percent. More than 3.6 million salmon and trout will be stocked in 2020, and DEC remains committed to supporting Lake Ontario’s world-class sport fishery as part of its adaptive management approach to ensure its continued success.

“This past year, salmon and trout fishing in Lake Ontario was outstanding, and DEC remains committed to ensuring that the ecological, recreational, and economic benefits of this sport fishery are sustained through science-based management,” Commissioner Seggos said. “New York’s Lake Ontario fishery represents the best of the best, and we intend to maintain our world-class status. The adjustments announced today represent our commitment to an adaptive management approach for the long-term sustainability of the fishery. I am optimistic that fishing will be exceptional in 2020, and encourage anglers to take advantage of this extraordinary resource.”

Effectively managing for the long-term sustainability of the trophy Chinook salmon fishery requires balancing predator numbers with available alewife as prey.

Scientists from the U.S. Geological Survey, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry,

and DEC forecasted declines in the adult alewife population following the relatively severe winters of 2013-14 and 2014-15, that contributed to poor alewife reproductive success. Managers documented strong alewife reproduction in 2016; however, these fish now appear to be under intense predation pressure and scientists have forecasted a further decline in the adult alewife population in 2020, due to the diminishing 2016 alewife year class and relatively poor alewife production in both 2017 and 2018.

DEC reduced the number of Chinook salmon and lake trout stocked in Lake Ontario by 20 percent in 2017. Chinook salmon stocking was reduced by an additional 20 percent in 2019. Based on the newest population assessments, DEC will reduce 2020 Chinook salmon and lake trout stocking by an additional 20 percent from 2019 levels.

The stocking adjustments highlight DEC’s commitment to **Lake Ontario Stocking**

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Indiana: Lake Michigan Tributaries stocked with Steelhead Trout

DNR stocked approximately 120,000 Michigan-strain steelhead trout into three locations along Lake Michigan last month. On December 16, approximately 40,000 fish were stocked into the Little Calumet at Mineral Springs Road. On December 17, another 40,000 were stocked into Trail Creek at Meer Road and Salt Creek at West County Road 600 North. These fish measure approximately 4.25 inches and will stay in the streams until spring before

migrating to Lake Michigan. Once there, the fish will spend two to three years in Lake Michigan and return to the streams they were stocked into to spawn. Anglers should take care when fishing these areas if they catch undersized trout. These fish are under the legal size limit and are sensitive to being caught. If you are catching these fish, consider moving to a different area of the stream or try switching your method of fishing. These new fish are crucial to the continued existence of the fishery. ✧

Navy Pier Marina Launching in 2021

Will be the first and only dedicated transient Lake Michigan marina -with exclusive and direct access to Navy Pier and the City of Chicago. It will be a full-service marina offering white glove concierge service, 24-hour secure access and expert staffing just steps away from world-class dining, shopping and entertainment.

CHICAGO – Navy Pier will soon be the home to Chicago’s newest marina. Navy Pier Marina will be the first marina on Lake Michigan to exclusively offer short term, transient docking facilities with immediate access to The People’s Pier dining, shopping and entertainment, filling a need for both local and visiting boaters. The first-class marina will provide boaters with a new and unique boating experience and will serve as the premier lakeside entry to the city.

The planned marina is already generating excitement from the boating community in and around Chicago as there are currently limited transient docking options. “Navy Pier Marina will provide a much-needed service to the boating community in Chicago” said Joe Caltabiano, longtime Chicago harbors boater and prominent Chicago businessman. “Short term docking and quick access to restaurants and the city are sorely lacking.”

The marina will put Navy Pier on the map as the premier boating destination for Lake Michigan boaters, “Loopers” and visiting boats from other Great Lakes, as well as those transiting from the oceans to the Great Lakes, driving incremental tourism and revenue on and off the iconic pier. “Attracting new, unique customers to Navy Pier’s broad array of restaurants, bars and entertainment options is great for Chicago and boaters from all around the city and surrounding areas, said Tito Beveridge, founder of Tito’s Handmade Vodka. “This venue will provide everything local boaters have been desiring for many years.”

Navy Pier Marina is the result of project developer Randy D. Podolsky’s long-term vision and his dedication to bring the project to life.

“A marina at Navy Pier has been talked about casually for decades,” said Podolsky. “For over 35 years I have dreamed about being able to moor at Navy Pier for lunch, dinner or an overnight stay. My vision to make the conceived marina a dedicated transient marina brings the desires of all boaters to fruition. Since the project’s approval by Chicago’s City Council in 2016, we have worked non-stop to bring the project to the people of Chicago, and all boaters who yearn for access to Navy Pier from the water. Navy Pier Marina is being privately funded and will bring the benefits of economic growth to the city, additional jobs and more exposure to Navy Pier.”

The marina will be located on the north side of Navy Pier and will offer hourly, daily or weekly mooring to vessels up to 130’. Guest amenities include concierge services, 24-hour access and staffing, advance online reservations, secured entry, a boater’s lounge, ship store, Wi-Fi, utilities, bike racks and in-slip pump-out facilities.

The project is being developed for Navy Pier by NPM Venture LLC with design and engineering by world-renowned design and engineering firm, Edgewater Resources. It will be constructed with private-funding and is scheduled to be open to boaters in 2021.

More information about the new marina will be available online at navypiermarina.com. ✧

Famous last words:

Anthony Hopkins avoids talking publicly about current events because he believes ‘Actors Are Pretty Stupid’ ✧



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Position Statement

Representing a major interest in the aquatic resources of the Great Lakes states and the province of Ontario, the Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council is a confederation of organizations and individuals with a concern for the present and future of sport fishing, our natural resources and the ecosystem in which we live. We encourage the wise use of our resources and a search for the truth about the issues confronting us.

Inland Seas Angler

GREAT LAKES BASIN REPORT

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Ludington Regional Fishery Workshop, Feb 1, 2020

Registration is now open for the 2020 Ludington Regional Fishery Workshop. The workshop will include presentations from biologists, educators, and fishery managers with Michigan DNR, NOAA/GLERL, MSU and Michigan Sea Grant. Topics will include salmon and trout diets, the impact of quagga mussels on Lake Michigan, and water level expectations for 2020 in addition to updates on stocking levels and other fishery management issues.

This year's workshop will focus on a new project that seeks to update the Predator-Prey Ratio for Lake Michigan by including the most recent data available on fish diets, lake trout population dynamics, and the influx of Chinook salmon from Lake Huron. This project will use structured decision making (SDM) to address all salmon and trout species and include a stakeholder process. The Ludington workshop will be a great opportunity to learn more about the process and how your organization can take an active role.

There will also be an opportunity to address frequently asked questions on alewife abundance, monitoring, and modelling. If you have detailed questions, please e-mail them to okeefed@msu.edu before the workshop. After the workshop, written questions and responses will be used as the basis for an FAQ document on the MSU Extension website.

Registration costs \$30 and includes lunch. To register by phone, contact Cara at (231) 843-5825. Payment can be made the day of the event, reservations are required. **Deadline to register is January 27. Date:** Saturday, **Feb. 1, 2020**, **Time:** 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., doors open at 8, **Location:** West Shore Community College, Administration and Conference Building, 3000 North Stiles Road, Scottville, MI 49454. **Contact:** Cara at (231) 843-5825 or via email at cemitchell@westshore.edu. ✧

Pure Fishing strengthens salt portfolio with two acquisitions

Pure Fishing, the world's largest supplier of fishing tackle, has strengthened its presence in the saltwater market with the acquisition of Fin-Nor and Van Staal from Zebco Holdings. Pure Fishing says that the move will accelerate the group's ongoing focus on driving growth in the fishing industry. Pure Fishing says that the move will accelerate the group's ongoing focus on driving growth in the fishing industry. Captain Craig Cantelmo, who headed up the Van Staal business for Zebco, will join Pure Fishing as part of the acquisition. Cantelmo will report to Dave Bulthuis, Pure Fishing's newly appointed President of North America, who was the Director of Sales for Fin-Nor earlier in his career. "The Fin-Nor and Van Staal brands are some of the most storied brands in the fishing industry," said Harlan M. Kent, CEO of Pure Fishing. "We are excited to add them to our portfolio and are committed to maintaining their focus on the independent retail channel. ✧

Pure Fishing pioneer Berkley Bedell dies at 98

Berkley Bedell, one of the most famous figures in the history of the American sportfishing industry, died last week after suffering a stroke. He was 98. Bedell was born in Spirit Lake, Iowa, where he founded Berkley & Co., which later became part of the Pure Fishing group, the world's biggest supplier of fishing tackle. He was inducted into the Bass Fishing Hall of Fame in 2018.

He was named Small Businessman of the Year in 1964 and received his award from President Lyndon B. Johnson in Washington.

After attending Iowa State University and serving in the US Army from 1942 to 1945, Bedell went on to make his mark in politics. ✧

Spiny water fleas in the shallow waters

Spiny water fleas flourish in the shallow southern waters of Lake Michigan's Green Bay, despite warm summer temperatures and no deep-water refuge.

The spiny [water flea](#) (*Bythotrephes longimanus*) is a predatory cladoceran that invaded Green Bay, Lake Michigan by 1988 and has been shown to negatively affect [zooplankton](#) prey. *Bythotrephes* is thought to occur where a deep-water [daytime](#) refuge from fish [predation](#) is available. Information from shallow, [nearshore environments](#) is relatively sparse, yet risk of secondary [dispersal](#) from these areas to [inland waters](#) is high. The production of desiccation-tolerant resting eggs, coupled with recreational boating activities, can facilitate spread inland. We determined *Bythotrephes* population demographics and dynamics at two sites in southern Green Bay during 2015 and 2016 to examine interactions with zooplankton and timing of resting egg production. Estimates of prey consumption rates by *Bythotrephes* were compared to those for a native predatory zooplankton, *Leptodora kindtii*, and against productivity estimates for potential [crustacean](#) prey. *Bythotrephes* population dynamics were similar at both sites in each year, with [biomass](#) peaks in September 2015 and July 2016. Earliest resting egg production occurred by 8 July 2015 and 17 June 2016; resting eggs occurred until at least October each year, when sampling ceased. Consumption by *Bythotrephes* generally exceeded that by *Leptodora*. Zooplankton productivity rates were lower than consumption rates on all dates in 2015 but approximated or exceeded consumption rates in 2016. *Bythotrephes* has become a major predator in the Green Bay lower food web, changing energy transfer through this major Great Lakes ecosystem. Its success has increased potential dispersal to inland lakes, especially from shallow, nearshore habitats such as occur in southern Green Bay. ✧

New stocking plan aims at enhancing Lake Michigan Fishing

MADISON, Wis. – To enhance fishing success and opportunities for all Lake Michigan anglers, while sustaining a balanced and vibrant fisheries community, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has released a new Lake Michigan fish stocking plan.

"Because of work with key partners in the Lake Michigan fisheries community, Wisconsin will grow as the preeminent destination for world-class fishing. This collaborative approach and innovative management strategies will expand our diverse and exciting fishery," said DNR Fisheries, Wildlife, and Parks Director Scott Loomans. "I'm looking forward to big things."

Lake Michigan is home to a world-class fishery, and there are anglers, businesses, stakeholder groups and communities that have a deep commitment to developing management strategies that will benefit this fishery for current and future generations, according to Todd Kalish, Deputy Director of DNR Fisheries Management. Throughout 2019, DNR fisheries staff conducted an open and inclusive process to gather input on management options for the Lake Michigan fishery.

"Stakeholder input has historically and continues to be a driving force in the development of Lake Michigan management strategies," Kalish said. "A common theme of stakeholder input was a strong interest in developing innovative management strategies and collaboration that acknowledge economic, social and biological factors."

For 2020, 2021 and 2022, Chinook salmon stocking numbers will increase to 1,200,000 fish annually, coho stocking will increase to 500,000 annually, steelhead stocking will increase to 460,000 fish annually and brown trout, a popular fish, caught off piers and in harbors, will increase to 450,000 fish annually. "In meetings and in comments we

received about this plan, there was strong interest in increases in stocking not just for Chinook salmon but for coho salmon, steelhead and brown trout," said Brad Eggold, Great Lakes District Fisheries Supervisor. "This plan accomplished that goal and contained increases for every type of fisherman."

Fisheries managers will assess potential changes to stocking numbers for 2023 and beyond based on traditional and new data and metrics collected and evaluated in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

The DNR will also begin the development of a Lake Michigan brook trout stocking initiative in 2020. Brook trout are a revered native species that could produce critical near-shore angling opportunities. "We are excited to work with stakeholders to pursue reestablishing this native species to enhance angler opportunities and experiences," Kalish said.

"Lake Michigan is a tremendous economic asset, and the fish stocking plan released today by Secretary-designee Preston Cole shows his vision of enhancing our world-class fishery in this great lake, making Milwaukee and the rest of our shoreline a fantastic tourist destination," said Steve Baas Sr., Vice President of Government Affairs and Public Policy for Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce.

In addition to the 2020-2022 stocking plan, department staff, in collaboration with charter, commercial and sport fishers, plan to:

- expand salmon and trout net pen projects to maximize the survivability of stocked fish;
- develop and implement innovative public/private data collection initiatives to better inform future management strategies;
- enhance outreach and communication by more actively engaging stakeholders in communication initiatives;

- increase and enhance diverse marketing and outreach strategies; and
- pursue salmon and trout habitat enhancement projects.

"I commend Secretary-designee Cole for his leadership and standing up for Wisconsin sportsmen and our impact on the Wisconsin economy," said Tom Kleiman, President of the Wisconsin Lakeshore Business Association. "Our priority throughout this process is to promote the entire Lake Michigan fishery, including the tributaries, near-shore and open water fishing. This plan addresses short-term needs with a comprehensive plan for future growth to enhance fishing opportunities in this great resource."

To learn more about [Lake Michigan fisheries](#), visit the [DNR website](#). ✧

Lake Ontario Stocking

Continued from page 1

science-based management to maintain a high-quality Lake Ontario sport fishery. With these stocking reductions, 2020 lake-wide salmon and trout stocking in Lake Ontario will exceed 3.6 million fish, including approximately 1.1 million Chinook salmon, 755,000 rainbow trout/steelhead, 556,000 brown trout, 601,000 lake trout, 325,000 coho salmon, and 200,000 yearling Atlantic salmon. Additionally, many Lake Ontario tributaries also produce "wild" Chinook salmon each year. These wild salmon make a significant contribution to the fishery, comprising on average 50 percent of the adult salmon population. DEC is optimistic that these management decisions will maintain high-quality fishing opportunities, and Lake Ontario will remain a premier sport fishing destination.

Additional information about the status of [Lake Ontario alewife and 2020 DEC stocking plans](#) can be found at DEC's website. ✧

Gov. Pritzker announces \$653,710 in Boat Access Grants

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – Governor JB Pritzker announced \$653,710 in grant funding for six communities to improve public boat access areas in Illinois.

The Illinois Boat Access Area Development Program provides financial assistance to local government agencies for the acquisition, construction, and

expansion or rehabilitation of public boat and canoe access areas on Illinois' lakes and rivers. The program provides up to 100 percent of approved project construction costs and 90 percent of approved land acquisition costs. There is a limit of \$200,000 in grant funding per project per year. Applications for grant assistance were received July 1

through August 19, 2019. Revenue for this program is derived from marine motor fuel tax and boat and canoe registration fees. Local entities interested in the program can download the Boat Access Area Development Program manual at <https://bit.ly/38z5IkV>.

A list of this year's Boat Access Area Development grant recipients and project information is below:

GRANT RECIPIENT	PROJECT TITLE	COUNTY	GRANT AMOUNT
Calumet City, City of	Cal-City Canoe Launch, Little Calumet River	Cook	\$80,000
Cook County Forest Preserve District	Schuth's Grove Canoe Launch	Cook	\$80,000
Galesburg, City of	West Lake Storey Boat Ramp Bathroom	Knox	\$23,450
Jacksonville, City of	Lake Mauvaisterre Boat Access	Morgan	\$200,000
Marengo, City of	Paddle the Kish	McHenry	\$70,260
Marseilles, City of	Marseilles Public Boat Launch	LaSalle	\$200,000



Apply now for Youth Wingshooting Clinics, Pheasant Hunts

Events **March 7** at Pere Marquette and **March 21** at the World Shooting and Recreational Complex

GRAFTON, Ill. – Young hunters between the ages of 10-17 can apply now for the Youth Wingshooting Clinics and Pheasant Hunts scheduled for Saturday, March 7, 2020 at Pere Marquette State Park in Jersey County and Saturday, March 21, 2020 at the World Shooting and Recreational Complex (WSRC) in Randolph County.

The Pere Marquette and WSRC Youth Clinics and Hunts have been popular late winter/early spring additions to the IDNR Wingshooting and Youth Pheasant Hunting Programs. At both events, young hunters will participate in a wingshooting clinic during the morning. National Sporting Clays Association/Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Certified Wingshooting Instructors will teach the wingshooting clinic. Young hunters will practice safe shotgun handling and operation while advancing their wingshooting skills during the clinic. The pheasant hunt

will take place during the afternoon. Young hunters must have successfully completed an approved Hunter Safety Course and have a valid hunting license to participate.

Co-sponsors assist the IDNR in hosting the events, providing funding for the clay targets, target and field shot shells, and lunch for the young hunters. Through the assistance of some of their members, co-sponsors also provide bird dogs, bird dog handlers, and hunting guides.

At Pere Marquette, co-sponsors include Illinois Conservation Foundation; Alwerdt's Pheasant Farm; Bollini Taxidermy; Channel-Seedsmanship At Work; Clemens Insurance; Ducks Unlimited Jersey County Chapter; Friends of Pere Marquette State Park; Fur Takers of America; Green Roof Kennels; Illinois Federation of Outdoor Resources; Illinois National Shoot-To-Retrieve Field Trial Association; Migratory Waterfowl Hunters; National Wild Turkey Federation

Midwest Gobblers Chapter; Olin/Winchester; Pfister Seed Company; Quail Forever Illinois Pioneer Chapter; Todd Parish - Attorney At Law; Ward Financial Services, and Whitworth-Horn-Goetten Insurance Agency.

At the WSRC, co-sponsors include Illinois Conservation Foundation, Friends of the WSRC; National Wild Turkey Federation Randolph County Cutters and Strutters Chapter, and the Okaw Valley Beagle Club.

Permits for the Pere Marquette and WSRC Youth Wingshooting Clinics/Pheasant Hunts are available through the IDNR's Controlled Pheasant Hunting Reservation System. Hunters need to review the "Illinois Youth Pheasant Hunt Information" and the "Illinois Youth Pheasant Hunt Regulations" on the controlled pheasant hunting website prior to applying: <https://dnr2.illinois.gov/controlledhunting/>. ◇

U.S. Senate passes key Recreational Fishing Legislation

Numerous sportfishing industry priorities are supported in this bipartisan bill

Alexandria, Va. – January 10, 2020 – Yesterday, the U.S. Senate passed by unanimous consent America's Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act (S.3051), which includes several wins for the recreational fishing industry.

“Many of us grew up fishing with our friends and family and these memories are what help drive a bipartisan consensus on good conservation policy in Congress,” said Mike Leonard, vice president of Government Affairs for the American Sportfishing Association (ASA). “Last night, the entire U.S. Senate came together to support recreational fishing and natural resource conservation with unanimous passage of the ACE Act. Sens. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) and Tom Carper (D-Del.) were instrumental in moving this historic legislative package one step closer to reality.”

Leonard further said, “The ACE Act supports a wide range of fish and wildlife conservation policies,

including the National Fish Habitat Partnership authorization as well as the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay restoration programs. Enactment of this legislation would be a tremendous win for the recreational fishing community. We urge the House of Representatives to swiftly pass this broadly-supported legislation as it currently stands.”

The ACE Act includes several top priorities for the recreational fishing industry, including:

- Lead fishing tackle protections: Lead fishing tackle, which is commonly used in nearly all forms of fishing and poses no national threat to wildlife populations or human health, would be exempted from unwarranted federal regulations and bans.
- National Fish Habitat Partnership program authorization: This is a state- and locally-driven conservation initiative that funds on-the-ground fish habitat restoration projects which would benefit recreational fishing opportunities. Federally authorizing this program with key policy

improvements will help make sure of the program's future success.

- Chesapeake Bay restoration and conservation: Conservation and restoration programs to help clean up the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries are included in the bipartisan ACE Act.

- Great Lakes research and assessment: The Great Lakes-focused provision in the legislation will help support fisheries data collection in the Great Lakes. It also authorizes the U.S. Geological Survey to conduct biological assessments needed for conserving and maintaining the Great Lakes' \$7 billion fishery.

This bipartisan legislation is supported by ASA, which encouraged the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW) to quickly introduce and consider the ACE Act last December in a letter sent to the Chairman and Ranking Member. The ACE Act will now go to the U.S. House of Representatives for consideration. ✧

Minnesota to launch new Outdoor Recreation Task Force

The Minnesota DNR and Explore Minnesota are partnering to launch a new Outdoor Recreation Task Force. The group will make recommendations about how Minnesota can connect more people to the health and wellness benefits of outdoor recreation, improve equitable access to outdoor recreation, and better support the state's thriving outdoor recreation economy.

There is mounting scientific evidence of the significant health and wellness benefits of outdoor recreation. In addition, the impact of outdoor recreation to local, state and national economies is well-documented, as is the importance of Minnesota's outdoor recreation opportunities as a key motivator for tourists to visit our state.

Outdoor recreation provides substantial social, economic, and

health-related benefits to Minnesotans. This task force represents a ‘big-tent’ effort to bring together a community of leaders who will make recommendations to make sure Minnesota is second-to-none in outdoor recreation and economic opportunity.

Around the country, 16 states have created offices or commissions on outdoor recreation as a way to collaborate across agency and organizational boundaries to expand the benefits of outdoor recreation for the economy, environmental stewardship, and quality of life. Minnesota's task force will make its recommendations to the DNR and Explore Minnesota by next fall about what Minnesota can do to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities.

“Interest in outdoor recreation is growing nationally due to the many

economic, public health, and social benefits outdoor activities and public lands bring to communities,” said DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen. “New research shows what Minnesotans have always intuitively known: that life is better when you spend some time outdoors. We want to ensure that Minnesota welcomes all people—regardless of ability or background—to participate in that higher quality of life.”

“Recreation in Minnesota, including outdoor activities, is a major sector of a \$15.3 billion tourism economy in our state,” said Explore Minnesota Tourism Director John Edman. “We're eager to collaborate with a diverse group of public, private, tribal and nonprofit organizations to engage more visitors with Minnesota's outdoor recreation opportunities.” ✧

Restoring nearshore habitat in Chesapeake Bay's Middle Peninsula

NOAA and partners are working to restore nearshore fish habitat in the Chesapeake Bay's Middle Peninsula area of Virginia for resilient coastal communities and economies. As a



result of enthusiasm for work in this geographic area, there is a competition to help one or two organizations design a nearshore habitat restoration project to reduce wave energy and erosion in the watersheds of the York and Piankatank rivers and Mobjack Bay.

The Chesapeake Bay is full of special places—including Virginia's Middle Peninsula. Much of this area, which is bounded to the north by the Rappahannock River and to the south

by the York River, is rural. Many residents make their livelihood from farming or fishing, thanks to the region's vibrant ecosystem.

The waters surrounding Middle Peninsula are also treasured by people and wildlife alike, but like many parts of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, development, pollution, and runoff from upstream areas threaten their health. To ensure a healthy future for the habitat found here, NOAA and partners are working to restore nearshore habitat for fish and other Bay species.

NOAA and the Virginia Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve recently convened partners from around the Middle Peninsula to discuss the future for nearshore habitat restoration projects that support resilient coastal communities and economies. At the workshop, participants learned more about each others' efforts,

highlighting where they can work together most effectively.

The workshop also included presentations by experts on the importance of habitat to coastal communities in the area, how to use science throughout restoration projects, restoration project ideas that partners could team on, as well as opportunities for participants to make other plans for future work together.

As a result of enthusiasm for work in this geographic area, the Chesapeake Research Consortium is holding a competition (PDF, 5 pages) to help one or two organizations design a nearshore habitat restoration project in the watersheds of the York and Piankatank rivers and Mobjack Bay. The projects that receive funding will design a "shovel-ready" habitat restoration project to help reduce wave energy and erosion while providing nearshore habitat and coastal resiliency. Funding will go toward development of a project design and monitoring plan, making it easier for the project to receive funds for implementation down the road. ✧

U.S. Senate confirms Aurelia Skipwith as Director of USFWS First African American to Ever Serve in the Position of Director

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Senate voted to confirm Aurelia Skipwith as Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with a bipartisan vote of 52-39. Skipwith has served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks at the Department of the Interior since April 19, 2017.

"Aurelia Skipwith's leadership at the Department of the Interior has been vital in helping us advance the President's priorities for the American people," said U.S. Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt. "I look forward to working with her in her new capacity."

Ms. Skipwith has served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Fish

Wildlife and Parks since April 2017. Previously, she served as Assistant Corporate Counsel at Alltech, Inc., an all-natural animal nutrition company that operates worldwide and has the world's largest algae production system. She then became general counsel at AVC Global, an agricultural logistics and financing firm that she co-founded. Skipwith earned her B.S. in biology from Howard University, M.S. in molecular biology from Purdue University, and J.D. from the University of Kentucky College of Law.

"I am truly honored to serve the American people under the leadership

of President Trump and Secretary Bernhardt," said USFWS Director Aurelia Skipwith. "I am grateful for the confidence that the Senate has placed in me, and I look forward to helping the Secretary advance this Administration's priorities for the Department, for the Service and for American conservation."

In her new role as the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service she will oversee a workforce of over 8,500 personnel charged with the mission of working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. ✧

Invasive yellow floating heart eradicated from two SE Michigan locations

The State of Michigan's Early Detection and Response Initiative has successfully eradicated two known infestations of yellow floating heart, an aquatic invasive plant that is harmful to Michigan's water



resources.

Yellow floating heart was first detected in 2015 in the reflection pond at the Clara Ford Rose Garden in Dearborn. A second, smaller infestation was found in a small pond at the Red Oaks Nature Center in Madison Heights in 2016. Following manual removal of the plants in 2016, no yellow floating heart plants have been observed at either site during monitoring efforts in 2017, 2018 and 2019. An invasive plant is considered eradicated when a site is free of the species for three consecutive years.

Successful eradication, in these cases, was the result of partnerships and site conditions. Effective collaboration between the State of Michigan and staff at the University of Michigan - Dearborn and Red Oaks Nature Center led to the removal of over 1,000 pounds of yellow floating heart from the two sites. Additionally, both sites are small, artificial waterbodies not connected to other waterways, which kept the plant from spreading

and reduced management and monitoring costs.

Eight additional yellow floating heart infestations have been found in Michigan over the last three years, including five sites in Kent County and one site each in Ottawa, Allegan and Ingham counties, and each is being managed with the goal of eradication.

Yellow floating heart is a rooted aquatic plant with floating leaves that are heart-shaped to almost round. It is often identified by its distinctive, yellow flower with five fringed petals. Because of its potential to form dense mats that shade out native plants and impact boating, fishing, and swimming, yellow floating heart is a prohibited species in the state, making it illegal to buy, sell, or possess.

Yellow floating heart is also on [Michigan's watch list](#), which includes plants and animals identified as posing an immediate or potential threat to Michigan's economy, environment, or human health. These species either have never been confirmed in the wild in Michigan or have a limited known distribution.

Michigan's Early Detection and Response Initiative relies heavily on citizen reports of invasive species on Michigan's watch list. Watch this short [MI EnviroMINUTE video](#) for tips on how to identify yellow floating heart. If you see this plant or any other aquatic watch list species, report sightings to EGLE-WRD-ANC@Michigan.gov.

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy's Water Resources Division leads the invasive aquatic plant Early Detection and Response Initiative in collaboration with the Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Natural Features Inventory, and Michigan State University Extension.

The initiative's goals are to prevent the establishment and spread of invasive aquatic plants on Michigan's watch list and pursue local eradication when possible and practical. These actions are guided by the state's Response Plan for Aquatic Invasive Species in Michigan. Funding for the initiative comes from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and State of Michigan general funds. For more information on invasive species in Michigan visit Michigan.gov/Invasives. ✧

Red Cliff band receives grant for new fishing dock

BAYFIELD, WI – A commercial fishing dock is one step closer to being renovated and expanded in Red Cliff. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded \$543,140 to the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians for work needed on the dock. The funds will be used for improvements to both the existing fish dock, as well as the road access to it.

Red Cliff Chairman Rick Peterson says, "It's going to move us forward on two fronts. Officials say the award is part of HUD's Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG) Program, which is a nationally competitive program that supports many community developments and affordable housing activities, from new housing for families to community amenities.

Right now, any fish the tribe reel in is sold to a local distributor which then makes its way to the restaurants. Tribal officials say this new dock will streamline that. The project will allow licensed tribal fishers to earn a higher income on their catches, as well as give tribes more local control on their fishing industry and distribution of fresh fish. ✧

Spring Turkey Applications

Hunters should plan ahead for spring by applying for the second lottery for 2020 Illinois Spring Wild Turkey Season permits. The application deadline for the second lottery is **January 13**. Go to the IDNR website for more information at <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/Pages/TurkeyHunting.aspx> ✧

Select U.P. streams no longer have increased brook trout limits

An experimental regulation that allowed for 33 streams in the UP to have a 10-fish daily possession limit for brook trout is no longer in effect. During its regular meeting on January 9 in Lansing, the Michigan Natural Resources Commission voted to return the five-fish daily limit to those streams, effectively immediately. The regulation expired October 1, 2019, [and the commission then voted in November to extend it](#). DNR biologists had recommended against re-instituting the 10-brook trout daily possession limit on the select streams because of concerns based on biological and social science. The newly approved regulation means all Type 1 streams, which are designated trout streams, in the Upper Peninsula are back to having a five-fish daily possession limit for brook trout. The streams with previously higher daily possession limit represented about 8% of the total mileage for Type 1 streams in the U.P.

The 2020 season on Type 1 trout streams will open April 25. ✧

Ice Fishing Safety

Ice fishing can be great fun, but safety should be taken seriously. Review important ice fishing safety information on the I Fish Illinois website: <https://www.ifishillinois.org/programs/ice.php> ✧

Salmon in the Classroom Program in Michigan

Nearly 300 Michigan schools, and 30,000 students, are raising Chinook salmon in their classrooms, (SIC) from eggs to smolt—then releasing them in the spring. Caring for the young salmon encourages students to think and care about conservation, and creates a connection between caring for their fish and caring for their local environment. With classroom activities on relevant topics correlated with your curriculum, SIC can be a part of any 3rd-12th grade classroom. Younger grades can focus on habitat niche, life cycles and seasons; while high school students can dive into water chemistry, natural resource management and stakeholder role-playing. SIC allows your students to see something they never would in the wild, creating a lasting bond with nature in the process. ✧

Wisconsin: Free Fishing Weekend **Jan. 18-19**

Fish anywhere in **Wisconsin** without a license or trout stamp on **Free Fishing Weekend, January 18-19**. Take advantage of this free opportunity to introduce your friends and family to fishing. All the waters of the state will be open to free fishing; however, all usual regulations will be in force. This includes all inland waters and **Wisconsin's** side of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River. ✧

Did you know?

Lake Superior Snippets

- Superior is the broadest freshwater lake in the world. It could tuck within its shoreline New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and most of Connecticut combined.
- There are 350 known wrecks. Fall storms create 30-foot waves.

DEC adopts Hudson River Research Reserve Management Plan

DEC has adopted the [2019 – 2024 Hudson River National Estuarine Reserve \(HRNERR\) Management Plan](#) to guide the conservation and stewardship of federally designated and state-protected tidal wetland sites along 100 miles of the estuary. The 2019 - 2024 management plan provides a foundation for education programs, professional training, research, public access, and resource stewardship.

The [Hudson River Research Reserve](#) is operated as a partnership between DEC and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NOAA designated the reserve in 1982 as part of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System, a network of 29 protected U.S. coastal areas that promote sustainability and improve coastal management through research and education about estuaries.

The reserve includes four tidal wetland and upland complexes that span the middle 100 miles of the tidal Hudson River, with two sites in Rockland County (Piermont Marsh and Iona Island), one in Dutchess County (Tivoli Bays), and one in Columbia County (Stockport Flats). At the Norrie Point Environmental Center, DEC conducts management-oriented research, environmental monitoring, habitat restoration, training for decision-makers, and education. The sites and programs are managed by the Research Reserve in partnership with DEC and its Hudson River Estuary Program, and the Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation. ✧

Another Lake Superior Snippet

- Duluth is the 17th biggest port in the U.S., despite being iced-in three months a year. It ships more than 40 million tons of materials annually; half of which is iron ore.

GLSFC Nominations

**Nominations and elections for GLSFC officers and directors are due this year. All positions are open for 2021 - 2022
Present positions are filled with the following folks:**

Officers

President: Dan Thomas

Vice President: Open

Secretary: Mike Sanger

Treasurer: Tom Couston

Directors:

Illinois: Bob Gaik

Indiana: Mike Schoonveld

Michigan: Open (Tom Hamilton, deceased)

Minnesota: Dave Koneczny

New York: Tom Marks

Pennsylvania: Ed Kissell

Ohio: Rick Unger

Wisconsin: Bob Wincek

Ontario: Darryl Choronzey

Ballots will be emailed next month to all clubs, paid up and in good standing

Michigan DNR offers classes in Fishing, Hunting, etc

Want to try something new in Michigan's great outdoors and need some help getting started? Or maybe you just want to brush up on your skills and learn some tips and tricks from the pros? The Outdoor Skills Academy can help! We offer expert instruction, gear and hands-on learning for a range of outdoor activities, from hunting and fishing to hiking, birding and much more. Classes explore each topic in-depth, for a full day or more, with knowledgeable and skilled instructors leading the way. Participants will receive a certificate of completion for each class, with special recognition for Outdoor Skills Academy "graduates" who complete multiple classes.

Both beginners and those with more experience are welcome. Most of these in-depth classes are designed for adults, youth ages 16 and older, and children over 10 who are accompanied by an adult. See the

age requirements for each class before signing up.

Click on the blue titles for more info, times, fees, etc.

Fishing Classes

[Mitchell State Park - Hard Water School \(Ice Fishing Class\), Jan. 25-26](#)

[Mitchell State Park - Advanced Hard Water School \(Ice Fishing Clinic\), Feb 21-23](#)

[Mitchell State Park - Hard Water School \(Ice Fishing Class\), March 7-8](#)

[Mitchell State Park - Bass Fishing for Beginners Clinic, May 17](#)

[Mitchell State Park - Fly Fishing Clinic, May 23](#)

Hunting Classes

[Mitchell State Park - Whitetail Food Plot and Habitat Mgmt. Clinic, May 17](#)

[Mitchell State Park - Bear Hunting Clinic, July 26](#)

[Mitchell State Park - Bear Hunting Clinic, Aug. 2](#)

[Mitchell State Park - Bear Hunting Clinic, Aug. 8](#)

[Mitchell State Park - Hunting Whitetails Naturally, Aug 22](#)

[Mitchell State Park - Trapping Clinic, Nov 1](#)

Other Outdoor Recreation Classes

[Hoffmaster State Park - Picture Perfect Photography Workshop, Feb 15](#)

[Hoffmaster State Park - Bluebird and Nest Box Basics, Mar 14](#)

[Mitchell State Park - Wild Mushroom Clinic, May 3](#)

[Mitchell State Park - Backpacking 101, Jul 11](#)

[Mitchell State Park - Wild Mushroom Clinic, Sept. 27](#)



The Ontario Atlantic Salmon Program — Ignorance or Stupidity

Opinion by Darryl Choronzey, Ontario GLSFC Director

The Province of Ontario has been stocking Atlantic Salmon in an attempt to achieve self-sustaining reproduction not just since the spring of 1986, but as early as the late 1800's. Tens of millions of Atlantic salmon have been stocked in their various life stages from eyed eggs, fry, fingerling, yearling, advanced yearlings and even full aged adults. The results can best be described with words such as disappointing, dismal and even disastrous. Year after year after year taxpayer dollars have funded an experiment that has shown no evidence of even minimal success. That is unless you perceive less than two dozen fish returning to a major waterway such as the Credit River west of Toronto, where millions of Atlantics have been stocked as a success.

Atlantic salmon disappeared from the Lake Ontario tributaries in the late 1880's due to river degradation in the form of dams, pollution, clearing of surrounding forests and to some extent over-harvesting. Those rivers that could not support Atlantics in the 1880's are in worse shape today than when those last Atlantics disappeared before the turn of the century. It's called population sprawl and urbanization expansion. The big Lake Ontario tributaries especially west of Toronto will never support Atlantic salmon restoration. Not now and not in the future. The Atlantic salmon is not a rainbow trout, Chinook salmon or brown trout. It returns to

its natal stream at a different time and demands the best water conditions that the main rivers in this experiment can never provide.

Roger Greil the aquatic manager at Lake Superior State University is the only fish culturist to achieve any real form of success breeding Atlantic salmon in the Great Lakes and creating a sport fishery. Greil bases his success on three distinct reasons.

- **imprinting** His eggs are fertilized, hatched and all fish raised and released at one site on the St. Mary's River for maximum imprinting.

- **-size at stocking** All Atlantics released at the university's lab are held from 18-20 months again not only for maximum size and maximum survival, but maximum imprinting.

- **location (temperature)** The waters flowing down the St Mary's River are perfect for this type of experiment. Always cold, always clean, always moving.

Roger knows more about the needs, methods and problems faced with raising Atlantics in the Great Lakes than anyone.

He also readily admits that he has achieved some degree of success, but he has special circumstances present at his site not found anywhere else on the Great Lakes. He also notes that he is not utilizing Atlantic salmon to create a sport fishery first, but as a study animal in his classroom. Atlantics are difficult to rear and are not a creature to expect optimum survival either in the hatchery or once released in the wild.

Roger also mentioned time and time again the fact that Atlantic salmon were adversely affected by a diet of alewife when feeding in the Great Lakes. Like most salmonids, but particularly true with Atlantics eating alewife led to thiamine deficiency, which in turn related in very poor survival from egg to fry when the fish were hatching. In fact, when alewife were the main source of food for Atlantics in Lake Huron he suffered losses from 80 to almost 100 percent. In the wild this related to almost no chance of spawning success.

The Early Years-

Atlantic salmon restoration has been attempted since the very first signs of their possible extinction in Lake Ontario back in the 1880's. Samuel Wilmot first began stocking Atlantic salmon back in 1865. Since then millions upon millions of Atlantics have been stocked in rivers such as Bronte, the Credit, Duffins Creek, Bowmanville, the Humber, Moira, Lynne Creek, Salmon, the Wilmot ...just

about every tributary on Ontario's north shore. Has natural reproducing self-sustaining population ever been established after more than 125 years of effort? The answer is no!

1987 - 2004

From 1987 to 2004 the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources embarked on a major program to once again attempt to develop a natural reproducing self-sustaining Atlantic salmon population. It proved to be another failure.

Often the OMNR will attempt to explain the reason for the failure noting that adequate numbers of Atlantics were not utilized. At times they note that stocked fish were possibly too small when stocked to meet their target. The answer is simply no. Over almost a 20-year period more than **2,463,000** Atlantics were stocked. Yes, **124,920** were eyed eggs, but more than **2,200,000** were live fish ranging from fry, through to yearlings, right through to adult age classes. The fish just didn't survive in any real numbers. In an attempt to identify any type of survival the Ministry of Natural Resources even carried out a special 'fishing survey program' whereby certain anglers were allowed to carry special permits to fish closed waters in an attempt to locate any surviving adults.

The Atlantic catch results as expected proved to be a complete failure.

Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Stocking 1987 / 2004

Year	Fry	Fingerling	Sub Yearlings	Yearling *	Adult	Eggs
1987		1,009				
1988		21,850	27,145			
1989		51,379	24,403			
1990	1,600	36,291	21,760			
1991		55,195				
1992		59,685				
1993	15,000	39,166	19,520			
1994	17,310	49,502				
1995		90,286	44,744			
1996		116,194	4,394			
1997		138,565		504		
1998	21,423	129,427	500	157	16,287	
1999	13,000	164,414		274	12,036	
2000	140,313	116,768		175	13,618	
2001	9,131	195,437		140		
2002	5,511	242,239	1,299	576	44,000	
2003	5,500	123,620	84,128	460	38,979	
2004	25,300	217,804	5,000	338		
Totals	252,488	1,536,354	454,142	92,828	2,624	124,920

Grand Total- 2,463,356

It should have been obvious to anyone working on the program at that time that the Atlantic was proving to be one big dud. Sure there were a lot of fry and fingerlings being stocked yearling and advanced yearlings being stocked as

well. Millions of fish being raised and stocked and nothing coming back.

Now go back again and look at why Greil was getting results. **Imprinting , stocking size, location/temperature.**

This just wasn't happening in Ontario and it still isn't. Greil's fish again are hatched, raised and released at the same location for perfect imprinting. Greil carried all his fish over to advanced yearlings 18-20 months of age. His location on the St. Mary's is cold and comfortable year round.

At the time of this experiment, I was raising rainbow and Chinook in Owen Sound and visiting Burlington frequently. I also happened to have a high/low thermometer with me in the truck. Many times I stopped to take water temperature upstream of the Queen Elizabeth at both Bronte Creek and the Credit. During July and August temperatures were more often in the low to mid 80's. Not only lethal but chowder cooking time for any Atlantics that ever did survive and decide to try and enter the rivers. Rivers west of Toronto just don't cut it and that was being proven. I also got similar high temperatures at Duffins and even Bowmanville during the summer months.

Again, these rivers are great rainbow streams, but rainbow for the most part enter the tributaries from late September around until late April. Atlantics are a different critter with a different date book. Summer temperatures are lethal on these fish. The tributaries west of Toronto are totally unfit for Atlantic salmon introduction.

It is interesting to note that not once in those 8 years did the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources attempt to contact Roger Greil to discover why he was succeeding and they were failing.

MNR/OFAH Buddy Up

In late 2005 or early 2006 I received a phone call from a good friend of mine 'at the time' named Jerry Smitka. Smitka was a retiring Ministry of Natural Resources biologist and along with Jack Imhoff another biologist was promoting a new venture being conjured up between the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters concerning the Atlantic salmon. Jerry asked if I would support it. There was talk of old mounts on the poolroom wall. DNA samples from long extinct Lake Ontario Atlantics and even possible excursions to South America planned to possibly bring back some original genetic stock. He also asked if I would support the program?

My reply was simple. No thanks. It was the same same beast, possibly with a few genetic changes, faced with the same problems. Same stocking practices and in my opinion the same results would be achieved. It was and still is my opinion that the rivers and Lake Ontario would not support a viable Atlantic salmon sport fishery and would not support natural self-sustaining reproduction.

Over the years there would be plenty of hype by both parties. Plenty of photo shoots with politicians that knew very little about the fish that they were carrying down to the river for the cameras. There also was plenty of talk of planting trees, turning stones in rivers and getting kids

involved. There were even press releases in the early days of the program from the parties involved about the number of fish that had been stocked by the partnership?

I've yet to see a press release on the actual number of Atlantics that returned to the river. The surviving fish just never materialized in any numbers to the river or to the fishermen, in the lake or the river.

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and their associate experimenters also again passed out the permits to 'distinct' angling individuals to fish during the closed seasons and in sanctuaries in an attempt to find these Atlantics. These seek and search privileged angling trips were suspended under the protests of the public.

Back about three years ago, I was exchanging Christmas greetings with a friend of mine, Chris Goddard the Executive Secretary of the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission. As usual, the subject got around to Atlantics. Only this time Chris suggested I sit down with Mike Morencie Ontario's new Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife supervisor.

The first of a number of meetings was arranged and I flew up from Florida to meet the new head of fish and wildlife. He knew in advance that I was concerned and was adamantly against the Atlantic program from the start.

At the first meeting, I suggested that at least half the scientists involved and responsible for the program should be fired or shipped out. I also noted that the smart move would be to immediately flush every Atlantic salmon being held in ministry hatcheries at the time down the toilet, explaining that he would achieve the same results....almost zero, but save the cost of rearing, babysitting and feeding the beast.

I noted that only Greil at the Soo had achieved any real success due to the all important factors of genetics, proper size at release, proper stocking, proper imprinting and the fact that the Sault Rapids have that all important 'cold' water factor in June/July and August the time when Atlantics first return back to his hatchery and their release site. He also listened to my concerns on thiamine deficiency due to a diet of alewife in Lake Ontario. I strongly suggested that his staff contact the one person that knew more about Atlantic salmon than anyone in the Great Lakes...Roger Greil. Surprisingly, up until this time that I write this report, no one in the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has ever made contact with Greil.

In a follow-up phone conversation I asked for the latest Atlantic return figures for the Credit River. I was given a new contact name to receive the numbers. Low and behold when I made the call I was informed I would have to wait the like rest of the press and would get the numbers months later when the release was made public. Was this Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources co-operation at it's finest???

I immediately hung up the phone and called Mike Morencie who promised the results in a day or two. I honestly expected low return numbers of a hundred or more. To say I was shocked at what really returned to the Streetsville dam is putting it mildly. A grand total of **33 Atlantics** had been captured in 2011 at the Streetsville dam. Millions of fish stocked in more than 25 years and **33 Atlantics** were all that could come back to their major stocking river.

But the story only gets worse.

More one on one meetings were held with Mike. At times, even Doctor Chris Goddard sat in. Mike was more than co-operative. We discussed a lot of issues relating to the Atlantic program. At one sit down, the thiamine subject was brought up. Mike mentioned tests had been done and Chris immediately noted that test that had been carried out were in fact not effective for testing for the problem??? Again, I noted that no one up until this particular meeting and even today had bothered to contact Roger Greil on the problems and solutions related to raising Atlantic salmon in the Great Lakes.

Normandale

These days, most of the public believes that Normandale Hatchery is ‘the’ home of the Ontario Atlantic salmon program. That belief is wrong. It’s just one of the homes. The problem is Normandale has been renovated mostly for Atlantic salmon, with a smaller portion allotted to raising rainbow trout and chinook salmon.

Annually production of Normandale Atlantic Salmon-
400,000 4-5 inch fry
150,000 10-11 month yearlings
75,000 advanced yearlings
Total Atlantics 650,000

Again, I requested and received the annual costs to operate Normandale. The reply from the Ministry was prompt and not surprising. Normandale’s annual operating cost has been established at **\$386,500**. I’ve been raising trout and salmon for more than twenty years. With the various species, sizes, numbers and hatchery space allotment I estimate the cost of raising the Normandale Atlantics at a minimum of **\$300,000** of the total operating costs of the Normandale facility annually.

The Normandale fish are all destined directly for Lake Ontario tributary stocking by the Ontario government. This being established, I asked the numbers and costs of Atlantics being raised for the so-called other groups such as the OFAH, Sir Sanford Fleming, Metro East Angler’s Ringwood Hatchery, etc.????

Wow! Did I get a surprise?

Harwood Fish Hatchery

Harwood is one of, if not the largest of Ontario’s brood stock factories. Unlike our American neighbours around the Great Lakes who utilize wild fish stocks when collecting

eggs for their fisheries programs, Ontario for the most part depends on large numbers of adult brood stock for the hatchery egg needs. It’s also Harwood that is the major Atlantic salmon source of eggs, fry and fingerlings for most of their experimental Atlantic salmon needs.

Again, I requested from the MNR the number of fish produced, number of brood retained and the annual cost of the Harwood hatchery. Again, Mike Morencie and Kevin Loftus the Manager of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Fish Culture produced the requested records.

The first report I received was frightening. Here’s a chart for from the Harwood facility that has absolutely nothing to do with Ringwood for the fiscal year 2012/13. It’s just one year mind you, but Harwood has been the eggs source for the Atlantic program almost its inception.

Harwood egg/fry/fingerling/yearling output... from fall 2012 spawn	
Belfountain	27,562 fry/ fingerlings
Belfountain	31,176 eyed eggs
Credit River	63,162 eyed eggs Credit River
Sir Sanford Fleming	59,395 fry/ fingerlings
Ontario Streams	10,838 eyed eggs
Ontario Streams	14,269 eyed eggs
Sir Sanford Fleming	74,000 fry
Sir Sanford Fleming	27,960 spring yearlings
Sir Sanford Fleming	43,607 fry
Ringwood	25,291 fry/fingerling
Islington	46,734 fry
Humber	57,881 eyed eggs
Bronte	37,117 eyed eggs
Cobourg Creek	38,476 eyed eggs
OFAH classroom	9,950 fry
Coderington Research	35,345 green eggs
Total....	602,759

You have to remember that a number of these destinations, besides Ringwood, Sir Sanford Fleming and the CRAA are also utilizing the actual fish and even eggs to raise and release Atlantics. These volunteer clubs end up picking up most of the funding to carry the fish over to fall fingerlings. One also has to realize again, that all Atlantic eggs and fish produced at both facilities require brood stock. Atlantic salmon have always proven to be a tough fish to raise in the hatchery, starting with the fertilization of the egg. That was the reason for my request for the number of Atlantic brood stock being kept at Harwood.

When the answer came, I was again more than surprised. The number of Atlantic brood stock in Harwood consists of

3 strains, 14- year classes, which totals out at **4,544** brood stock. The ministry also noted at the same time that over at Normandale an additional 2 strains, 7 year classes which totaled at another **3,355** Atlantic brood stock. I would say **7,899 Atlantic brood stock** are a lot of hungry mouths to feed for 365 days a year.

Harwood's annual operating costs were given to me at **\$422,835** for that year.

Total Atlantic Salmon Stock Produced at Harwood 2005-2012

The total of the fish raised and released at Ringwood and Harwood Hatcheries for this experiment since **2005 and 2012** is astronomical **4,413,858** fish and an additional **1,924,178** eyed eggs stocked as well.

Total Atlantic Salmon Stocked From 1987-2012

Now add those numbers together with those stocked between 1987/2004 and we now have a total of at least **6,742,000 fish and at least a minimum of 317,000 eyed eggs stocked in Lake Ontario's north shore tributaries since the start of this idiotic program.**

(all figures provided by Great Lakes Fishing Stocking Data Base <http://www.glf.org/fishstocking/rangesearch.htm>)

Pitiful Credit River Returns

So where are the fish? Right from the start of this program the Atlantics have failed to survive, failed to return in any numbers to their release sites, and even failed to provide any resemblance of what could be referred to as a sport fishery.

The **Credit River** system by far receives the largest annual stocking of Atlantic Salmon and has been the focal point of stocking efforts. In the past, the **Credit** has been 'the' river to experiment and it's only getting worse! In **2011** more than **390,000** Atlantics were stocked in the Credit, along with **144,000 eyed eggs**. In **2012** the Credit received **567,919 fish** and additional **439,000 eyed eggs**. A simple word for this travesty...asinine!

What returns have come back to the Credit?

- **In 2011 33 adult salmon returned to the first barrier at Streetsville**
- **In 2012 20 adult salmon returned to the first barrier at Streetsville**
- **In 2013 9 adult salmon returned to the first barrier at Streetsville**

Millions upon millions of fish stocked and 9 Atlantic Salmon come home to the Major Atlantic stocking site in Ontario!

Bowmanville Creek

At Bowmanville Creek, more than 11,000 chinook, coho and rainbow trout were hand lifted over the Bowmanville dam by volunteers in the fall of 2013. Out of that number only 4 Atlantics were found.

The All New Oregon Weir To Count Atlantics At Duffins Creek

And let's not forget the much touted Oregon fish weir shipped from the west at a cost of **\$200,000** or more.

Well, the high money contraption was erected and lo and behold the sum total as of this November was a total of **7 Atlantic adults** at the costly imported construction.

Funny, but worrisome is the fact that I contacted the biologist at the Toronto Conservation Authority before the weir was delivered and inquired what his high water temperature levels were in the river close to Lake Ontario and he noted often as high as **85 degrees Fahrenheit**.....duh that's better referred to as Campbell soup water when it comes to Atlantic salmon.

Wrong Rivers / Wrong Techniques:

Now look back at what I said about Roger Greil and his reasons for success at Sault Ste. Marie on the American side at his university. He raises the right fish, to the correct size, imprints them perfectly and releases them at the same location. Ontario has not met these criteria at any of their locations. Roger raises, rears and releases his fish under perfect conditions. His fish are hatched, raised and released at just one site. Those reasons are why he achieves perfect imprinting. His fish are also raised to approximately 18 - 20 months of age for optimum survival. When his surviving adults do come home they are greeted by perfectly cold water conditions due to the fact that Lake Superior empties in to the Soo Rapids at his home base. Again, **Ontario is not able to replicate this at any of their sites.** Ontario's Atlantic salmon are reared at Normandale and Harwood or hatcheries at Ringwood, the CRAA hatchery, Sir Sanford Fleming or a few school hatcheries. The Atlantic yearling plus fish that go into Ontario streams for the most part are imprinted to those hatcheries. The fish raised by volunteer clubs are not reared to proper smolting age, but as fall fingerlings. In his years of study, Greil found no returns from anything but yearling plus Atlantics and again they were imprinted from birth and released at the same site.

Just as important is the cold water factor at the Soo Rapids. This is not the case on any of the large Ontario rivers like the Bronte, Credit, Duffins or others. Atlantic salmon return to the river as pre-spawning adults in June, July and August. Those Ontario rivers are at lethal temperatures at that time of the year. Fish chowder is more the results than fish survival.

With the Ontario program, the vast majority of fish are stocked too young and too small for any long-term survival and then we dump them by the millions into rivers that are not receptive to the creatures. The present rivers are in no way as clean or as cold as they once were when the fish went extinct back around 1887. Dams are still evident on most rivers, forests have been cut and cleared, temperature has risen and for the most part urban sprawl has either polluted

them or made them lose their much-needed high oxygen requirements.

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and their partner super-seed their river systems with far too many fish. Even if the young fish fail to survive long term, they will still decimate wild trout stocks that are hatching. You can only put so much water in a barrel or fish in a confined river or tributary. Millions upon millions of Atlantics have been stocked in the upper Credit and this does not help, but hinder hatching brown trout or brook trout and the fishery in that river. Common sense should have dictated smaller numbers when stocking, but common sense seems to be thrown out the window in an attempt to show some form of success for the program.

Our American Neighbours

As already noted in my opinion Roger Greil at Lake Superior State University has shown the most significant success with Atlantic salmon survival and resulting returns. Remember, his eggs are obtained at his site on the St. Mary's River from returning wild stock. Those eggs are then hatched and the young fish retained at the same site until they reach smolting age 18 - 20 months, then are released at the same exact same site for maximum imprinting.

The St. Mary's River is without a doubt a perfect location for experimenting and producing an Atlantic fishery. The waters are cold, clear and well oxygenated from Lake Superior located upstream. It is the only site on the entire Great Lakes that allows for this degree of success for rearing and releasing Atlantic salmon. The fact also has to be made that the St. Mary's River's 'bottleneck' physical structure and conditions drastically improves the sport fishery. Roger releases only approximately 50,000 advanced yearlings annually.

The **State of Michigan** experimented with Atlantic salmon in the past and cancelled their program for decades. Noting Greil's success and to fill the void of their reduced Chinook fishery they are now experimenting on a 'controlled' Atlantic program capped at approximately **100,000** Atlantic salmon 'advanced' yearlings per year. The majority of those plants will be stocked in the cold waters of the St. Mary's River. Again, stocked in a perfect site, but without Greil's imprinting success capabilities. Michigan State Atlantics are reared at the **Platte River hatchery** and then stocked in the St. Mary's River. When questioned, Michigan authorities noted if they don't achieve the desired results the program would be cancelled after no more than **6 to 7 years**. Ontario has been carrying out this folly for more than **25 years** with no success whatsoever.

New York State has been stocking Atlantics consistently for years and has had some success, but unlike Ontario, rears and releases the vast majority of their fish as advanced yearlings (15 months) and 8 to 10 month old advanced fall fingerlings. They seldom stock more than **60,000 fish** annually in total and prefer to raise them to 14-16 months of

age. It is important to remember that New York State utilizes the Salmon River including Beaverdam Brook for the largest percentage of their stocking numbers for imprinting purposes. Cold water streams.

Again, there is a marginal Atlantic salmon sport fishery off New York State waters, but they stock minimal numbers of quality sized fish and imprint them properly utilizing the Salmon River where the greatest number of fish are released. It is interesting to note also that creel censuses and DNA sampling last year carried out by New York State indicated that all Atlantics caught by anglers were tested and came **entirely** from New York State stocked fish!!!

All this accomplished with a fraction of the fish raised and a fraction of the costs compared to Ontario's foolish Atlantic experiment!!!!

Remember, our neighbouring American states raise fish for fishermen, for tourists and for the economy. Their programs are run as business, not as an experiment!!!

False Impressions

Over past decades that I've been than following the Atlantic program. A lot of communication has been received from Wisconsin to Newfoundland. I've talked and met with top fisheries people on both sides of the border. Not surprising, not one person on the American side of the Great Lakes had any idea of the actual dismal success of the Ontario program. In fact, most believed the program and returns were going great guns. It seems no one on our side of Lake Ontario ever mentions the dismal returns to the Credit or Duffins or even Bowmanville. I sat in on one Lake Ontario meeting and listened to Ontario reps talk about the 'new' Duffins Creek weir being shipped from west coast, yet absolutely no mention of the dismal Atlantic Credit returns of 2011 and 2012.

One boss at the United States Fish and Wildlife Service even noted they were thinking about putting smaller Atlantics in some of their streams to achieve the same success as Ontario. What he had heard was the fry plants were producing great results.

When I mentioned the true returns he replied with the phrase "**someone over at the MNR must have a nose that's growing**".

When discussing Atlantics with the **Credit River Conservation Authority**, there was more concern about the vanishing brook trout than Atlantic salmon. I mentioned over stocking the waters above Norval, yet it seemed they were oblivious to the millions of Atlantics being stocked on top of the brown trout and brook trout in the Credit headwaters, areas they were really concerned about.

Never, since the start of this program have I ever talked to one person outside of the Ontario program who was informed of the actual returns rates. Plenty of talk about

stocking numbers and so-called river enhancement, but never about returning fish numbers.

On one other note, one Ontario biologist noted that in the mid-80's it was brought up that that the original program should restrict their numbers to a maximum of only 50,000 yearling plus and only utilize two cold water rivers east of Toronto to attempt the experiment in the first place where the better conditions could be found. The suggestion was turned down and then the mistakes began.

The Lake Fishery

Since the late 1980's we've now stocked close to **8 million Atlantics** and over 300,000 eyed eggs. Just what has that provided the Lake Ontario open water angler? The simple answer, is very little recreational benefits and very little return to the economy. In both cases, almost nothing. As already noted, New York, utilizing bigger sized smolts and better imprinting practices has developed a minor sport fishery. On the Canadian side of the lake the results have been dismal. Ontario's most recognized fishing guides Randy Scott and Wayne Andrew's are pioneers on the lake and have been guiding on Lake Ontario consistently for more than four decades. This past year from May until mid-September the longtime guides captured only **two Atlantics** each, while harvesting upwards of a thousand steelhead and Pacific salmon each. When it comes Atlantics the results were worse than pathetic. These professionals fish almost every day of the week from spring until early autumn and again caught a grand total of only four Atlantics.

The open water fishery for Atlantics is a bust.

The Alternatives

Like, I've already noted, I've been following the Lake Ontario Atlantic salmon program since it's inception in the late 1980's. The idea of self-sustaining natural reproducing Atlantic salmon on Lake Ontario's north shore is asinine. Everything today is wrong for this creature. No matter what anybody would like to believe the rivers waters are nowhere near the conditions of the late 1880's when the original stocks went extinct. Atlantic salmon for the most part return to the rivers in June/July/ and August. Today, the major rivers to the west of Toronto reach lethal water temperatures in this period and would for the most part kill any Atlantics entering them, let alone attract them to enter.

The Credit River, the experiment's main focus site, still has two major dams at Streetsville and Norval that are closed to other species. These dams not only stop natural migrations, but also increase water temperatures to the lethal level. The same river has a number of water filtration plants on its banks. The river is not even close to the river of the 1880's.

As a matter of fact, no river on the northern shore is of better quality today, than the rivers of the 1880's. Simply look at population growth and the pollution that goes with it. All the trees planted and rocks placed cannot bring these rivers back to their pristine state prior to the 1880's. Sorry, but it's

impossible. **The tributaries west of Toronto are the worst examples.**

The Atlantics are not a Pacific salmon or steelhead that run the rivers in fall, winter and spring depending specie. Atlantics first enter the tributaries in June, July and August and few if any of our rivers are cool enough for their survival today, especially the Bronte, Credit and Duffins Creek.

Again, stocking Atlantic salmon younger and smaller than advanced yearlings at a minimum of 8 inches in length leads to nothing but death of these fish.

Why in hell's name are we wasting value hatchery space, expensive funding, lost fishing opportunities and lost tourism dollars to the economy on this program?

The obvious solution is to raise a maximum of no more than **50,000 advanced yearlings**. Only **two quality streams east of Toronto** should be chosen as release sites that are more suited to beast. These two streams have to be **east of Toronto** for any type of success.

With the program reduced from over a million Atlantics annually, both Normandale and Harwood fish hatcheries could be utilized in a much more productive manner for not only the fishery but the economy that goes with it hand in hand. The reduction would free up space and funding.

Presently, thanks to a working arrangement between the Ontario Steelheaders, Lake Huron Fishing Club and the Ministry of Natural Resources 70,000 disease free Chambers Creek strain steelhead are being held at the Chatsworth facility. A portion of these steelhead (1,000) should be implemented into the MNR brood rearing program. Future yearling trout from this strain could be stocked in larger numbers in tributaries on Lake Ontario and Lake Huron. Rainbow trout are a proven species that survive, provide year round fishing in both the open water and streams. A minimum of 100,000 could take up some of the hatchery space that would be made available with the removal or reduction on present Atlantic stockings.

Ontario would also be wise to also re-introduce the annual stocking of approximately 50,000 – 60,000 coho salmon '**smolt**' that could utilize the additional space made available by the 'intelligent' decision to drastically curtail the present Atlantic program.

There's more waste with the present Atlantic program than just what is happening in Provincial run facilities. Take into account the fact that more than 100,000 Atlantic salmon are presently being raised at facilities at Ringwood, Sir Sanford Fleming College and the CRAA operations. At the two volunteer run facilities alone, with Atlantics out, the tanks now producing no viable results could be utilized with additional rainbow (Ganaraska and Chambers Creek strain) **and properly reared coho 'spring smolt'**. Check and you

will discover that the Americans for the most part utilize larger advanced yearling 'smolt' for their stocking purposes and their over all success.

Time For A Drastic Change

After more than 26 years of playing and experimenting with this creature, it's time to stop or drastically reduce the program. It's time to run the fishery like our American neighbours do, not as a grand experiment, but as a fishery for the angler and as a business to generate tourism dollars back into the economy.

As a fisherman, I look at stocking almost 7 million Atlantic salmon and stocking almost 2 million eyed eggs over the last 26 years and then getting a return of 9 Atlantics salmon back to Streetsville in 2013 as idiotic.

Everyone talks about the Liberal's billion dollar Gas Plant Fiasco. As a fisherman, I look at the Atlantic Salmon experiment as a travesty. A travesty that I estimate we have invested more than **5 million dollars** to date from Ministry of Natural Resources coffers alone.

That doesn't even include in my estimation the Sunshine salaries, research salaries and everything the MNR has tied in to this project that are connected with this experiment as well.

It's a lot of money for wasting more than two and half decades of hatchery space, wasted fishing opportunities, wasted tourism revenue, other wasted revenues that could have related to the a successful fishery and finally no fish.

Even worse, since the inception of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources / Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters partnership, the program has been reaching deeper into taxpayers' pockets by obtaining funding from other outside government agencies such as the **Ontario Power Generating, LCBO, Ontario Environment, Great Lakes Fisheries Commission and the Trillium Foundation. Millions of addition dollars are now going into this program if you check. Once again this are all taxpayer agencies.**

Millions upon millions of taxpayer dollars wasted and 9 lousy Atlantic salmon came back to the Streetsville dam on the Credit River last year. ✧

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The long-running fight over water withdrawals in Michigan escalated on two fronts last week as the appellate court ruled that Osceola Township had the authority to deny Nestle zoning approval for a pumping station that would transport water for its bottling operation.

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End