

**OFAH ZONE “H” report for BPSA
Stu Paterson – Feb 2019**

**“opinions expressed in this report are
not necessarily those of BPSA, its
members or directors”**



1. We had a healthy BPSA representation at the January Zone H OFAH meeting in Georgian Bluffs. This quarterly meeting was hosted by the Sydenham Sportsmen’s Association.



(left to right BPSA members Jim McKane (Chair-Great Lakes Fishery Commission) Wayne Musselman, Ian Laughland, Jerry Beaver)

Jim McKane reported on the completion of the 4-million dollar renovation of Denny’s Dam. The work received fab co-operation between SON and other Canadian and US partners. The work will help prevent the spread upriver of invasive sea lamprey.

Jerry Beaver issued an update on our proposed Net Pen pilot project. These pens will enhance the growth and survival rates of some of the fish we stock. He also outlined his Colpoy's Bay angler survey. It determined that it takes much longer to catch a fish in our bay than it did ten years ago. Hundreds of anglers have taken part in the "Jerry Beaver Study". Most report their fish catch is down significantly especially during the last two years.

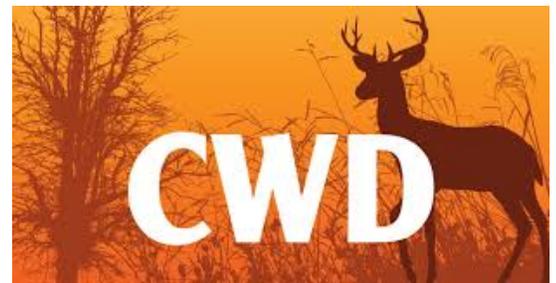


2. In my hatchery report to the zone I indicated that BPSA stocked 124-thousand fish in 2018, 98-thousand rainbow and 27 thousand brown trout. And that we have 42-thousand rainbow trout to be stocked as yearlings in June or July and 32-thousand brown trout, all growing nicely.

I passed on a big THANK YOU to Sydenham Club volunteers who baby-sat BPSA browns for several weeks during a dry spell last summer. In the words of BPSA hatchery manager Al Sutter, "it is great to have an amazing club help us when needed we sure appreciate it".

3. THE THREAT FROM CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE (CWD):

Ontario is surrounded by this dreaded disease. With the discovery of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in Quebec deer across the river from Ontario, only 15 kilometers from Eastern Ontario, there are fears it will spread to our province. CWD cases have been reported in 3 Canadian provinces, (not Ontario) 25 US States, Norway, Finland and South Korea. Nine cases are in Canada's largest deer farm.



(left Keith Munroe OFAH Wildlife Biologist with Zone H Chair Wayne Forgrave)

On news of the Quebec outbreak, Biologist Keith Munro told us OFAH commended the province for its quick action by beefing up CWD surveillance in Eastern and Southwestern Ontario.

He told the zone meeting "your federation will keep pushing for the elimination of deer and elk farms to help keep CWD out of Ontario." CWD is spread in the feces of deer, elk, moose and caribou whose



populations are more concentrated in farms. The farms in question concentrate the waste and increase the danger of the spread of CWD.

We are asking the government to take immediate action in preventing the transport of live captive cervids into and through Ontario, as well as the phasing out of deer and elk farms, with compensation to farmers.

“If governments continue to ignore the risk the deer farming industry presents to Ontario’s wildlife, history has shown us exactly where this will lead.”



The OFAH sent letters to the Ministers of Natural Resources and Forestry and Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, re-affirming the urgency for both ministries to act collaboratively to create clear policies to keep CWD out of Ontario.

Munro brought a clear message from head office, “hunters are taking steps to help keep CWD out of Ontario.”

“As users of the resource, we encourage all hunters in areas of the province where the MNRF is conducting surveillance operations to participate. Without hunters, there is no monitoring and no chance of a rapid response if CWD is detected.”



Whether you hunt or not, we can all help protect Ontario’s deer, moose, elk and caribou. Please visit www.ofah.org/cwd or follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for more information on Chronic Wasting Disease and what you can do, including contact information for the MNRF CWD Surveillance Program.

Keith Munro, OFAH Wildlife Biologist

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4. OFAH has set up a thread that allows you to comment further on the proposed Ontario Cormorant Hunt. The official deadline has passed for comments on the original MNRF study proposing the hunt. The MNRF felt we needed more time to comment:

Go to <https://bit.ly/2QwUR4X> to join the discussion. The Ford government closed public submissions on the proposal in early January. There are way too many of these fish-guzzling birds in Ontario. They quickly destroy fish populations eating 3-6 pounds of fish a day diving over 100-feet to get to their food. For decades OFAH and BPSA have reported that cormorants waste destroys habitat and claimed that a hunt would address the negative significant impacts they have made on Ontario fish populations. OFAH resources management specialist Lauren Tonelli notes “the government has finally acknowledged the need for cormorant control...hopefully future policy will stop protecting overabundant colonies and provide the management tools required to curb the ecological damage they are causing.”



5. In a commentary on the proposed provincial cormorant controls, OFAH President Kerry Coleman says “it is nice to see the government acknowledge the issue and propose action. Actions like egg-oiling and culling need to extend into areas where hunting and firearm discharge are prohibited, such as provincial parks and along municipal waterfronts. OFAH has never asked for the extermination of cormorants. We are seeking ecological balance”.

“Concerns about cormorants have been ignored for far too long. Their ecological impact has been profound”.



6. OFAH supports extended season for snowshoe hare-

The MNRF closed the hunting season for snowshoe hare in much of Northern Ontario on June 1 of last year. Previously the hunting season was open until June 15. But the MNRF claimed the closure was to protect young hare from being orphaned during their first weeks.

photo credit New Hampshire Fish and Game Dept.



OFAH scientists suggest the decision was based on a non-peer reviewed field guide that did not include any supporting literature on research on the issue in Ontario.

Federation biologists say “given the findings of Ontario based studies, and the fact that snow-shoe hare have an average gestation period of 37-days, the hunting season could safely be extended to at least April 30”. OFAH concludes “the ministry’s justification for shortening the season didn’t withstand scientific scrutiny”.

7. OFAH has issued an advisory reminding us to not regularly feed deer in winter.

While EMERGENCY FEEDING is acceptable when natural food is unavailable due to severe weather, we know that:

- deer can become dependent on human handouts
- predators are attracted to deer feeding areas
- changes in winter diet can result in metabolic

changes in deer that can lead to death.

Please check the OFAH DEERSAVE PROGRAM

www.ofah.org./deersave

Shortly after release of the OFAH deer feeding advisory, New England states including Vermont and New Hampshire issued this information:



.....Winter is a stressful but natural part of the life cycle of deer. This winter's deep snows and cold temperatures may tempt some people to feed deer in a misguided attempt to help them. But feeding deer is not only illegal in New Hampshire it can also be fatal for the deer.

New Hampshire wildlife officials recently found 12 deer dead after they had been fed corn in winter. A deer's digestive system slowly changes throughout the year to follow their natural feeding patterns. They do not have the proper bacteria in their gut to digest corn and other high-calorie low-fiber foods in the middle of winter, so all 12 of these deer bloated and died. The BEST thing you can do for deer in these stressful times is to leave them undisturbed by dogs or people in their wintering areas. If you are a landowner, you can also work with a biologist or forester to promote proper softwood cover for deer wintering areas.....



8. Reports continue of wild boar sightings in some parts of Ontario. Our federation has set up a special email address (wildboars@ofah.org) to receive your reports so MNRF can try to track them and shoot them. OFAH says it wants MNRF to provide consistent messaging and action in regards to wild boar. Wild boar remain a threat to Ontario's biodiversity. OFAH is working on a new anti-boar policy.



9. At the recent zone meeting there was a report on the Williams Treaty Settlement which means big bucks for First Nations folks including bands near Orillia.

This is what the Barrie On-Line Newspaper reported on the settlement:

....." The Williams Treaty Settlement Claim was officially signed by Rama and six other First Nations, known as the Williams Treaties First Nations.

The settlement, which has been years in the making, is meant to rectify the "injustices" of the 1923 Williams Treaty.

The new pact includes \$1.11 billion in compensation, including \$666 million from the federal government and \$444 from the province. It also entitles each of the First Nations to add up to 11,000 acres of land to their reserves and ensures they can restore historic harvesting rights ".....

The seven Williams Treaties First Nations are: Alderville First Nation, Beausoleil First Nation, Chippewas of Georgina Island, Chippewas of Rama, Curve Lake First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation and Mississaugas of Scugog Island.

This is the link to the full report -

<https://www.barrietoday.com/local-news/historic-11-billion-williams-treaty-signed-in-rama-1126149>

10. News briefs from our recent Zone H meeting:

- the province has added the Mother's Day and Father's Day weekends to the list of license free fishing days for Ontario residents
- the Ford government has removed a \$2.00 service fee on your fishing license purchase
- the province has cancelled a scheduled 2% fishing license price hike
- the province has added a "print your deer or moose tag from home" option to its license purchase system
- OFAH has 79-thousand members - our Zone H has just under 12-thousand members
- our BPSA Kids Fishing Chair needs to contact Dennis Wiseman Zone H treasurer to explain our need for a 400-dollar grant to help us stage our 2019 Kids Fishing event

11. OFAH has had several requests to hold more coyote workshops.

A federation sponsored coyote information meeting was held south of us a few years ago. The problem is, funding for these sessions is no longer available. If you know of a club or farm organization willing to host and sponsor such a day-long meeting, please contact OFAH head office. This is coyote breeding season so make sure your small pets are on leash and protected.



- 12.

You may have missed the February 3rd meeting in Durham where licensed gun owners had a chance to discuss federal firearms legislation with Bill Blair, Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction. The session was organized by MP Larry Miller who gets full marks for the determination he showed in making this meeting happen. At least 15 BPSA members attended. Miller said “this was an important topic for many residents in the riding...it is important that this Government had an opportunity to hear their concerns.”



Miller has been critical of the government’s Bill C-71, saying measures in the bill are a back-door way for Ottawa to create another firearms registry, while doing little to tackle illegal firearms and gang violence.

13. Upcoming OFAH meetings include the annual March 14-16 in Mississauga, the April 21st zone H session in Orangeville and the June 7 meeting in Barrie. The location of the Zone H annual meeting September 28 remains TBA. The club hosting this annual meeting receives one thousand dollars for expenses and a 500 dollar donation from OFAH.

To wrap it up something to think about as we look forward to getting our boats out in about seventy days.

“a trout is a moment of beauty known only to those who seek it”

Stu Paterson reporting on OFAH for the Bruce Peninsula Sportsmen’s Association.

Photo credits: Paterson Media, New Hampshire Outdoor Life, Vermont Fish and Game Dept., New Hampshire Fish & Game Dept., Alaska Fish & Game Dept., OFAH, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

BPSA - now celebrating 57 years of conservation

