

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

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



This report includes coverage of the annual 2019 OFAH Zone H meeting in Kincardine.

1. Our Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) is working with the province on the wild pig/boar issue. We do not want to see populations of these nasty animals spread and become a huge problem as they have in many US states. Wild Pigs multiply quickly. They can be dangerous and can take over a territory destroying crops and spreading disease.

According to Ontario Out Of Doors magazine, some wild pigs have been spotted in Northern Bruce Peninsula near Tobermory. If you spot one or more than one, please try to take pictures, report the sighting to BPSA and to the proper authorities.

OFAH wildlife biologist Keith Munro has reported wild pig sightings near Tobermory, in Flesherton, Aurora and the Parry Sound district. He calls them “an incredibly destructive pest” and says “they represent significant risk to Ontario’s natural flora and fauna as well as to the farming industry.”



Hunting wild boar:

Wild boar may be considered ‘wild by nature’. If Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) reps can’t identify who owns the animal, it may be hunted under the authority of an Ontario Small Game Hunting Licence.

The Ministry is asking the public to report all wild pig sightings. Sightings will play a critical role in understanding the locations and number of wild pigs in the province and will inform those determining future management.

Sightings can be reported to the iNaturalist Ontario Wild Pig Reporting, or via email to wildpigs@ontario.ca.

This is the latest from OFAH on this issue. <https://www.ofah.org/issues/wild-pigs-in-ontario/>.



2. A number of Canadian magazines are starting to publish articles about the wild boar threat in rural areas. Ontario Nature Magazine is one of them. In the article this warning “the best time to deal with wild pigs is NOW before their number and impact grow.” This is a thorough look at the issue.

<https://view.publitas.com/on-nature/fall-2019/page/30-31?fbclid=IwAR08C6Ky5DMvHKzq9pyfavoU5NC78CP205KBHwexQfWI5kWak-c6-ci3vaU>

3. For more on this serious issue check the MNRF “Wild Pig” page at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/reporting-wild-pigs-ontario#section-1>

4. **CORMORANT HUNT:**

Several delegates to the zone H annual meeting asked about the proposed Ontario CORMORANT HUNT. The province has suggested a cormorant hunting season from March 15 to December 31st of each year. Thousands of folks responded to the MNRF questionnaire on this issue. They provided their suggestions on how to organize this hunt solidly backing the idea. There is still no word on if and when it will go ahead. Cormorants remain a main destroyer of fish. Cormorants are indeed a menace to any body of water that has a fish population. Studies have confirmed that these birds can eat one to one-and-a-half pounds of fish per bird per day. Contact your MPP, write letters to the editor, call your radio talk shows to continue to push for this hunt.



5. Zone H Fisheries Chair Dennis Wiseman reported folks with the Owen Sound MNRF office indicated they want to meet annually with community hatchery operators. So they were invited to join the annual Community Hatchery managers meeting that is already set up and supported by OFAH. Ministry club liaison rep Craig Todd was one of those who expressed interest in attending these meetings. Todd is the ministry rep who four years ago told a BPSA meeting “you may want to re-think your priorities and maybe want to find alternatives to stocking fish in the future.”



Wiseman referred to ministry staff changes this past spring that “were not communicated very well...at a time when permit applications were due and forms and instructions still had not been made available.” Dennis recently attended a meeting in Owen Sound about improving and streamlining hatchery permit application forms for 2020.



Dennis noted there is no word on whether the Community Hatchery Program (CHP) and OFAH involvement in it will be extended by the province beyond March 31st 2020. Our fish stocking clubs are asked to submit CHP funding applications starting January 15, 2020. The April 30th CHP application deadline remains in place. BPSA gets more than half of our hatchery funding from the Community Hatchery Program.

Wiseman also reported provincial government financial restrictions are slowing development of the new Fisheries Management Zone 16 council. This council will oversee a huge inland lake and river zone from Tobermory to Windsor east to Toronto and Orangeville.

He complained that FMZ’s 13 and 14 councils (dealing with Georgian Bay and Lake Huron) have not met since September of 2017. But he did note a video conference will occur at the Owen Sound Upper Great Lakes management unit office November 12. This session will deal with a walleye technical report and Salmon Stocking Background Report. Then there will be a 2-day meeting November 30 and December 1st in Owen Sound. This session will focus on the goals and objectives of the two plans worked on by the zone councils.

6. At the zone annual there was criticism of the suspension of the MNRF Brown Trout stocking program which affects Lake Huron, Georgian Bay and the Upper Saugeen River. Zone fisheries chair Dennis Wiseman emphasised “this decision should have involved local stakeholders and community fish hatcheries (such as our BPSA hatchery).” He stated “cancellation of brown trout stocking, just because there wasn’t a stocking plan or an FMZ16 to develop one, doesn’t justify a unilateral decision by MNRF staff that aren’t familiar with our fishery in Grey-Bruce.”



Other difficulties encountered...include confusion and difficulties in egg taking, fish stocking and aquaculture operation permits.

Referring to the fact the MNRF Owen Sound office now has no biologist the zone fisheries chair said “ biologists are usually involved in fish population studies, tree planting plans and stream enhancement activities...all of which are now unknowns to the groups that are normally involved.”

7. At the summer zone meeting we passed a resolution about the full time fish and wildlife biologist issue. The motion read as follows “ that OFAH Zone H supports the efforts of the six conservation clubs representing over 2-thousand members, to have a full-time fish and wildlife biologist reinstated in the Owen Sound MNRF office.” The resolution was approved unanimously. It was passed on to federation headquarters seeking the boards support to have the ministry get a biologist back into the Owen Sound office, and also into those offices across the province that are in similar situations.

8. At the zone annual there was a discussion of the news that the province is allowing commercial fish farmers 20 year licenses. The province extended aquaculture licenses from 5 to 20 years. Queen’s Park also restructured public land tenure from 5-year land-use permits to 20-year leases for net-pen farms. This at a time when community hatchery member clubs like ours are restricted to only 1 year licenses. The meeting heard that this restriction is designed to please certain communities that consider us to be stocking invasive species and have indicated they want our stocking halted.



Commercial fish farms are big business. Ontario’s fish and shrimp farmers grow more than 100 million meals of eco-friendly protein every year. The sector has an economic contribution of more than \$122 million, and provides jobs and prosperity to many of Ontario’s rural, northern and Indigenous communities.



9. At the zone annual Eldon Hawton of the Blue Ridge Moose Hunters in Northern Ontario gave us a presentation on Ontario moose management.

Some points he made:

- we are being misled when the province tells us that 4-per cent of moose deaths are caused by licensed hunters
- MNRF must communicate with native bands to convince them to agree to establish their annual moose harvest as well as agree on reporting methods
- base moose hunting rules on science not emotion

- restore trapping of wolves and coyotes in all 40 townships where trapping bans now exist as listed in the MNRF Eastern Wolf Recovery Plan.

Our Federation remains very active regularly giving input to Queen’s Park on moose population and hunting issues. For more check this link

<https://www.ofah.org/fishing-hunting/hunting/moose/action>



10. In wake of voting at the zone H annual meeting our 2020 OFAH Zone H executive is as follows:

Chair - Wayne Forgrave - Midhurst - on OFAH board

1st Vice Chair - Mike Evers - Innisfil - on OFAH board

1st alternate-2nd Vice Chair - Wally Motz - Port Elgin

2nd alternate Director - John Ford - Owen Sound

Secretary Treasurer - Dennis Wiseman - Owen Sound

For the third time since 2005 I was asked to become a zone director. I am honoured to be again considered but prefer to continue covering five OFAH meetings a year and completing nine OFAH reports for BPSA. I told chairman Wayne that becoming a director would mean also attending federation board meetings and taking on the responsibility of reporting to zone meetings on a committee I would be assigned to. I really don't have time to do a proper job of being a director.

11. At and zone H annual there was a brief report on the Owen Sound Salmon Spectacular.



Wayne Hollett of Wroxeter (right) Chris Jackson of Desboro (left)



The largest brown trout ever weighed in at this derby.

The largest salmon 29.5 pounds entered since 1999 was caught by Wayne Hollett of Wroxeter (right). It won him the 16 foot boat, motor, trailer package. The biggest trout was a 20.62 pound laker caught by Chris Jackson of Desboro (left) who was awarded the 14-foot boat motor and trailer.

Next year's 33rd annual Salmon Spectacular Derby, considered the largest event of the year in Grey Bruce, runs for ten days from August 28 to September 6, 2020.



12. Zone chair Wayne Forgrave reminds hunters to always carry your PAL with you while hunting. MNR and the OPP have the right to ask for it. You must carry it while handling a firearm. Wayne reminds us "failure to produce it will result in a fine and forfeiture of your firearm until you produce it."

13. OFAH Zone H has just over 12-thousand members. That's up 2 per cent over last year. Our zone has 11,555 members who have been with the federation for over 25 years. The overall OFAH membership is 78,070.

Our federation is using a wide variety of marketing and messaging tools including direct mail, TV, radio, newspaper and magazine advertising (Ontario Out of Doors), tradeshows, telemarketing, billboards, email and social media such as Facebook. Our membership appeals are reaching more generation X and Y people. The more members we have the stronger we are in terms of getting out the message of hunters, sport shooters, anglers and trappers.

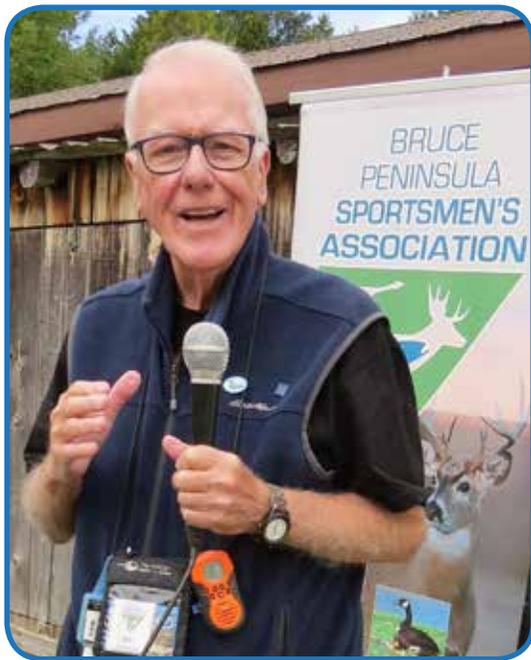


14. OFAH INSURANCE: We are reminded of new OFAH exclusive enhancements to our member insurance program which is automatically included with your yearly membership.

These include LYME Disease. That's right all OFAH memberships now include Lyme Disease medical coverage? We spend hours sitting in the woods, enjoying shore lunches while fishing, covering vast areas walking in fields and woods, and handling harvested wildlife. Each time we go out, there is a risk of crossing paths with ticks. Other enhancements include Medical and Travel Expenses coverage, and USA coverage. Contact Brian McCrae at head office if you have questions on this.



The next OFAH Zone H meeting is at 10am on January 12, 2020 hosted by the Sydenham Sportsmen's Association at the group's clubhouse in Georgian Bluffs. This is nearby and a good opportunity for BPSA members to take part and express our views on the issues confronting our fishing, hunting and conservation projects.



Stu Paterson reporting on OFAH for BPSA

.....The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) was established in 1928. OFAH is Canada's leading conservation organization, as well as a non-profit registered charity. The Federation lobbies for the protection of wildlife and Canadian outdoor traditions. OFAH is considered one of the top lobby groups in Canada.....