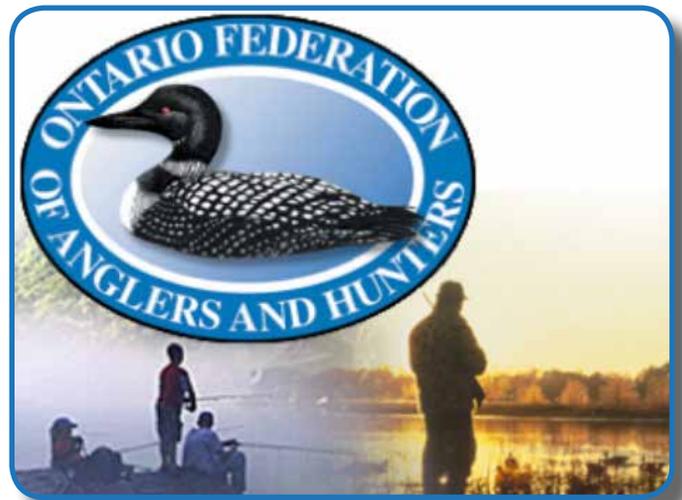


OFAH ZONE “H” report for BPSA Stu Paterson – March 2020

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



1. The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) is reacting positively to provincial rulings on bear hunting. The new rules involve the bear hunt on the Bruce Peninsula.

From OFAH head office...

...“we are pleased to say that Ontario will have a regular, annual spring black bear season starting in 2021”....This announcement caps off a 21-year effort by the OFAH that started with the spring hunt’s abrupt cancellation in 1999. “We fought the cancellation in court for three years and have kept it at the forefront of federation advocacy efforts ever since, lobbying every successive provincial government and relevant Minister. We fought for the limited pilot spring season that was introduced in 2014, then advocated to have it expanded in 2016. With the pilot set to sunset on June 15, 2020, we fought to secure the certainty for our members and the hunting community at large, and now we have it”.



The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) announced it will:

- Make the spring bear hunt a regular annual season starting in 2021. The 2020 spring hunt is the final year of the pilot hunt.
- Reduce the spring season in Wildlife Management Units (WMU) 82A, 83 and 84 for one week from May 1 to May 7 and close the fall season in those same units. This takes effect May 1, 2020. This scraps the fall bear hunt on the Bruce Peninsula. It also reduces the spring bear hunt on the Bruce to one week. Ministry studies suggest cutting back bear hunting on the peninsula will support “this genetically isolated bear population.” There are an estimated 300 bears on the peninsula with less than 100 near the national park. Province wide there are an estimated 85-105 thousand black bears.
- Only require a single report from resident hunters, whether they hunt in the spring or the fall. Takes effect Jan 1, 2021.
- Reduce the minimum distance requirement for placement of bait from rights of way for public vehicular traffic and marked and maintained recreational trails for black bear hunting, from the current 200 meters to 30 meters. Applies to the 2020 bear hunting season.
- Eliminate the special hunting opportunities for non-resident landowners and non-residents hunting with an immediate relative and require persons providing hunting services to residents within a bear management area to obtain a License to Provide Bear Hunting Services. Takes effect Jan 1, 2021.

OFAH says “This is extremely important but it does not mark the end of the OFAH’s black bear advocacy. We’ll keep working to ensure that black bear management in the province is science-based and results in maximum sustainable hunting opportunities while guaranteeing healthy black bear populations for future generations.

We hope to ensure the long-term conservation of bears on the peninsula, while pushing for sustainable hunting opportunities on the Bruce.”

Added information is provided in the decision notices (Black Bear Hunting Regulation Changes - <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/019-1112> and Baiting Changes - <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/019-0022>) and will also be communicated in the 2020 Hunting Regulation Summary.

If you have any questions, please contact wildlifepolicy@ontario.ca.

2. OFAH WELCOMES MOOSE HUNTING RULES:

OFAH wildlife experts have welcomed changes to Ontario moose hunting regs. For decades our federation played an active role in this process after much input from OFAH members. OFAH was the largest organization that helped the province come up with these changes. OFAH always insists that legislation governing fish and wildlife be based on sound science not on emotion.



There will be new Bow hunting moose seasons and quotas. Separate bow and gun hunting moose tags will be available in 13 wildlife management units where separate bow hunting seasons already exist.

The current moose tag draw will be replaced by a new point-based process after consideration of comments received. A detailed description of the process will be available later in 2020 at Ontario.ca/moose.

- Hunters will apply to the moose tag allocation process with a \$15 application fee.

- Draw points will be awarded based on the total number of years a hunter has applied and been unsuccessful in the draw. Continuous applications aren't required. Being issued a bull or cow tag through the draw or receiving a tag transfer will reset a hunter's points to zero in that year.



Hunters have expressed concerns about the timing of the gun hunting season for moose in southern Ontario since it was changed in 2017. These concerns were repeated during the Moose Management Review consultation. With the implementation of calf tag quotas across the province, the season will be shifted back to its previous start to begin the third Monday in October.

Elimination of special non-resident moose hunting opportunities:

Non-resident landowners and immediate relatives of Ontario residents will only be able to acquire their own tag to hunt moose by purchasing a hunt from a tourist outfitter.

There will be more restrictive party hunting rules for moose hunters. After consideration of comments received, current party hunting rules for moose hunters will be maintained.

This is the link to the official OFAH page on this subject
<https://www.ofah.org/fishing-hunting/hunting/moose/action/>

3. There was discussion about the upcoming OFAH annual conference at the winter Zone H OFAH session hosted by the Sydenham Sportsmen. At the annual there will be the usual reports from all federation committees and I will report on them. I will also report on the issue of Tick-borne illnesses such as Lyme Disease.

Each time we go out, there is a risk of crossing paths with ticks. Some OFAH members suffer from Lyme disease, and many more are exposed on a regular basis. This can be said, too, for other outdoor activities such as canoeing, camping, birding, hiking, berry picking, gardening and even walking your dog. The OFAH wants to remain a leader in this conversation as a driving force that helps bring better prevention, testing, diagnosis and treatment of tick-borne illnesses to all Canadians.

CTV has done a story on how Canadian tests often fail to identify this horrendous disease while US tests are much more successful:

<https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/canadian-has-brain-of-70-year-old-after-flawed-test-let-disease-go-undiagnosed-for-years-1.4847954>

4. From the Manitoulin Expositor:

The Manitoulin Ice Showdown was a smashing success. Dozens of OFAH members took part. There were more than 700 anglers in the hard water action having the chance at a ton of prizes. Renowned fishing show broadcaster Bob Izumi and his family said they “fell in love with the place” and who can blame them!

5. Pressure is mounting in Michigan for a cormorant hunt similar to the one in the works for Ontario.

State sponsored research established a link between cormorants preying on fish populations and a fish decline in the Saginaw Bay, and the Les Cheneaux perch fishery and the Great Lakes in general.

Michigan’s Department of Natural Resources concludes “stocking of trout and salmon is impractical when cormorant numbers at stocking sites become excessive, and this continues to happen throughout lakes Michigan and Huron”.

“We desperately need cormorant control,” said Don Kain, who is the lead administrator for the Facebook group “Save Our Fish,” which is focused on environmental issues that affects fisheries. “I believe this is a huge problem. I don’t want all cormorants killed, but we clearly need population control.” Groups such as the Lake Huron Citizens Fisheries Committee have been vocal and involved in pushing for cormorant control.



The Ontario proposal to allow the cormorant hunt has passed first reading at Queen’s Park: Proposed amendments to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997, received First Reading in November 2019 in the Legislature. The legislation says in part “cormorants have been detrimental to fish populations, island forest habitats, other species and aesthetics. To respond to these concerns, the Ministry is proposing a hunting season for double-crested cormorants in Ontario. This new population management tool would allow those who hold a small game license to hunt these birds”.

In its lifetime one cormorant will eat what five-hundred walleye will eat. Cormorants eat their own weight in fish every day.

Our BPSA position on this hunt is:

...“cormorants are damaging fish populations for both sports and commercial fishing. We don’t suggest a mass cull but population controls are necessary to protect our fishery”....

If passed in its present form, the legislation would designate double-crested cormorants as a game species, create a province-wide annual hunting season from March 15 until Dec. 31 and allow anyone holding a valid Ontario Outdoors Card and small game hunting license, to kill up to 50 cormorants per day (1,500 per month or more than 14,000 per season).



6. FIRST NATIONS AND COMMERCIAL FISHING:

Dan Elliott Chair of the OFAH Indigenous Relations Liaison Committee and Vice Chair of OFAH has been in touch and tells me that recently OFAH and MNRF reps discussed relations between fish stocking clubs and First Nations commercial fishers in Grey-Bruce region.

OFAH's Matt DeMille reported:

.....“There continues to be conflict between members of the commercial sustenance fishery and non-Indigenous resource users. Although tensions remain high on all sides over real and perceived disagreements about fishery management, there is no obvious indication that the degree of conflict is on the rise. In fact, in many cases there is more and better dialogue today, particularly between the MNRF and SON, that will hopefully lead to better long-term outcomes (and a reduction in conflict). The Ministry is undertaking consultation on the development of a plan for stocking in Lake Huron-Georgian Bay.

The MNRF continues to suggest that all stakeholders and First Nations communities involved in fish stocking planning, exercise patience and participate in these discussions with an open mind and willingness to find a path forward.

The MNRF Upper Great Lakes Management Unit is benefitting from the help of two Indigenous Advisors who are working to improve relationships between the MNRF and First Nations”.....



7. The 2020 regional Community Hatchery Program (CHP) workshop scheduled for March 24th in Collingwood was cancelled due to the virus threat. BPSA reps were scheduled to attend along with delegates from community hatcheries in Georgian Bluffs, Wiarton, Thunder Bay, Sarnia, Port Elgin, Southampton, Islington and Kincardine. Clubs represented at these meetings include BPSA, the Sydenham Sportsmen's Association, the Bluewater Anglers, the Georgian Triangle Anglers Association and the Lake Huron Fishing Club.



These meetings give hatchery volunteers a chance to share information on issues such as trout and salmon feeding, controlling water temperature and flow, and fish disease in hatcheries.

Matt Burley CHP co-ordinator reminds us to keep our hatcheries in public view through regular news releases about our hatchery activities. He told me in a recent phone call he was pleased with our front page story about the Honda generator presented to BPSA through its affiliation with the CHP. Matt said this is the kind of positive publicity we welcome.



BPSA Hatchery Manager Al Sutter tested the unit and reports even at half throttle it provided enough juice to keep our hatchery running during a power interruption.

The Ontario Community Hatchery Program has issued its 3rd video spotlighting members and their fish rearing activities..

The latest “Hooked on Hatcheries” video is about raising walleye:

<https://www.facebook.com/communityhatcheries/videos/299361634365170/>

This year the CHP which is operated by OFAH, boasts 38 members including BPSA.



8. Outdoors summer jobs. Know a student who loves to share their passion for fishing? Queen's Park is hiring leaders for the MNRF Learn to Fish program available across Southern and Central Ontario. Learn to Fish leaders will teach participants how to identify fish, cast and more. They will even provide hands-on fishing instruction!

Applications will be accepted until April 3rd.

<https://www.gojobs.gov.on.ca/Preview.aspx...>

9. See someone fishing in a sanctuary? Don't hesitate to call the MNRF Tips Line. Conservation Officer TIPS LINE 1-877-847-7667 Help protect our fish and wildlife! From April 1, 2005-March 31, 2019 the TIPS line received 109,811 calls which generated 58,749 reports for our officers to investigate.



The tips line is available 24/7/365. Every call to the MNRF TIPS line is reviewed by a Conservation Officer. All information is valuable and appreciated. ontario.ca/mnrftips

The next two OFAH meetings I will attend on your behalf (if they are not cancelled) are the annual conference May 26-28 and the spring Zone H session at the Orillia Fish and Game Conservation club on April 19th.

If you have yet to check out Ontario Out of Doors Magazine (OOD) you can link here for the online edition. <https://oodmag.com/news/2020-fishing-regulations-released/> OOD is the magazine arm of our federation and continues to be the Canadian leader among outdoors publications.

Many of us are looking forward to getting boats out and landing some spring rainbows and salmon. Best of luck to all!! Thanks to the people behind these reportseditors Jim Martell, Bruce Beacock, Al Hunter, Kevin Harders. And to Kat McCulloch who puts together the final product. More OFAH news in a few weeks

With files from MNRF, OFAH, Paterson Media, The Manitoulin Expositor, Postmedia, Natural Light Photography



Stu Paterson reporting on OFAH for BPSA