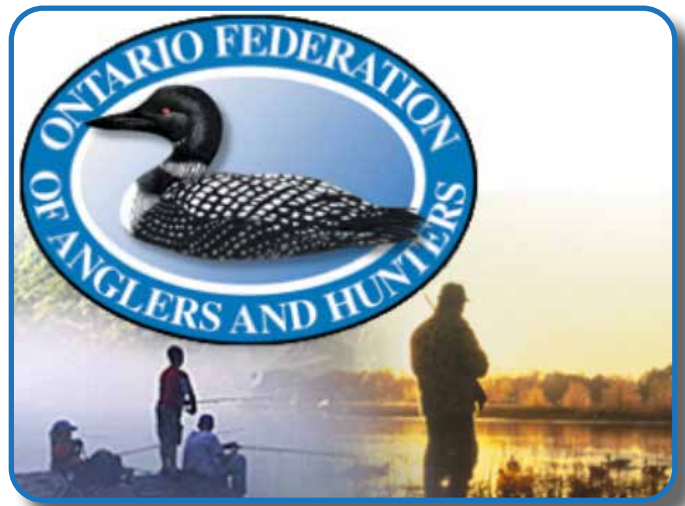


OFAH ZONE "H" report for BPSA Stu Paterson - December 2020

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



1. For three decades OFAH pushed for government action to keep Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) out of our province. The province finally responded. Last year the MNRF (Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry) adopted a new CWD Prevention/Action Plan that includes many OFAH suggestions.

Deer hunters are playing an important role in this year's CWD surveillance. CWD surveillance programs are taking place south of us in an area bounded by Amherstburg, Windsor, Sarnia and St Thomas. The other CWD sampling zone is in Eastern Ontario south of the area in 2018 where the deadly disease was discovered in Quebec.



If you take part in the deer hunt in that southwestern Ontario zone, contact the roving MNRF crews at 1-888-574-6656 and they will pick up your deer head for study.

OFAH biologist Keith Munro says "if hunters don't submit samples, we have no way of detecting CWD early enough to ensure it doesn't take hold in Ontario."

CWD is infectious, incurable and 100% fatal to deer, moose, elk and caribou. CWD can't be detected in fawns so MNRF will only accept samples from yearling or adult deer. Sampling crews will be on the job until the end of December.

If you see any animal including deer that appears to be sick or you find a dead animal, call the MNRF Resources Information and Support Centre at 1-800-667-1940



2. OFAH directors earlier condemned this action now there's MNRF reaction. In early fall I had a chat with a MNRF Conservation Officer (CO) at the Ministry office in Owen Sound.

The subject was the netting by First Nations folks this year in the sanctuary at Colpoy's Creek north of Wiarton. A 200 foot run of native gill net was in place on May 21st 2020, for 24-hours in the sanctuary at the mouth of Colpoy's Creek. The Conservation Officer told me "I really sympathize with you guys who work so hard stocking fish. But they are allowed to do this, they can fish anywhere at any time". He admitted he and the other conservation officer for our region were aware of the action and that the MNRF Tips Line did have many complaint calls about this First Nations action.

This action was in a sanctuary where non-natives would be severely punished for fishing there. At the scene of the netting one of the native folks who laughed while admitting responsibility for the netting said “we can do this, we have the right to do this”. It is well known that First Nations consider our stocked fish invasive species. Earlier another CO told a BPSA member “it was no big deal that the natives are netting in the sanctuary at Colpoys” because they giving some of their netted fish to a food bank.

The OFAH President Rob Hare was quick to react.

“We feel it is important for our outdoors community to know about these issues which keep on going year after year...the governance council which controls these commercial folks appears to do nothing to keep them following the rules”

Another OFAH director familiar with First Nations issues said:

“Unfortunately the political pendulum has swung too far to the right. It is not politically correct to call First Nations out on issues like this. It appears that most politicians are very reluctant to address concerns over the miss-use of the natural environment for fear of losing their seats. The Governments, Federal, First Nation and Provincial deal government to government and feel they do not need to consult with the public.”



OFAH often comments on issues involving First Nations and fish stocking volunteers. In 2019 Matt DeMille OFAH Manager of Fish and Wildlife Services said:

“There continues to be conflict between members of the commercial sustenance fishery and non-Indigenous resource users....tensions remain high on all sides over real and perceived disagreement about fishery management....the MNRF continues to advise all stakeholders and First Nations communities involved to exercise patience.”



Neither BPSA nor OFAH endorse this tactic of commercial netting in a sanctuary. While we do support food banks, BPSA volunteers do not put in hundreds of hours a year raising and stocking fish with the aim of donating the fish to a food bank.

The thousands of fish BPSA stock every year are designated for the sports fishery which pumps hundreds of thousands of dollars a year into the Grey Bruce economy. One study suggests each fish stocked is worth 30 dollars to the community where it is stocked. If you see questionable activity such as fishing in a sanctuary or poaching, please contact the MNRF Tips Line.



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

**Do you have
INFORMATION
that can
HELP SOLVE
a case?**

A woman in a dark uniform and cap is talking on a mobile phone. She is looking towards the camera.

24/7 MNRF tips line
1-877-847-7667
ontario.ca/MNRftips

3. It is well known that you will be penalized if you don't report your hunt results. OFAH reminds us that HUNTER REPORTING IS MANDATORY.

All hunters who are issued a tag to hunt deer, elk, bear, wild turkey or wolf/ coyote (in Wildlife Management Units where a tag is required) must complete a hunter report. You are required to complete a hunter report even if you didn't take part in the hunt or harvest an animal.

Consequences:

Hunters who fail to report or who provide false or misleading information may be subject to penalties including fines and being unable to purchase a license or tag the following year. Hunter reports can be completed online or by calling 1-800-288-1155. Hunters will not be able to submit a report after the following dates.

- The deadline for deer hunters is January 14, 2021**
- For resident black bear hunters December 14, 2020**
- The fall wild turkey deadline was November 14, 2020**
- The elk deadline was October 18, 2020**



4. OFAH advice to anglers and hunters during a pandemic



OFAH urges all anglers and hunters to fully cooperate with officials and follow all measures to help slow the spread and protect Ontarians from COVID-19. Visit Ontario's COVID-19 information page here and the Government of Canada's page here to ensure that you are fully informed on the latest developments and guidelines related to COVID-19. Not abiding by these

measures can come with hefty fines and penalties, and can also reflect negatively on the fishing and hunting community.

As much as we all want to see fishing and hunting continue so anglers and hunters can take advantage of the physical and mental health benefits these activities bring in this public health emergency, these activities can only take place within guidelines provided by public health officials. Your OFAH board members want our outdoors community to be a part of the solution to help save lives, protect our economy, and regain some kind of normalcy in our lives as soon as possible.

BPSA President Kevin Harders recently updated our members on club operations. Kevin says " We ask you to stay safe and continue to practice proper social distancing guidelines as per the Covid-19 protocol set in place by our municipalities and provincial government. Limited fish stocking and hatchery feeding and maintenance continues with small groups involving well masked volunteers under strict Covid-19 operating rules. We decided to cancel the two year-end meetings and re-evaluate in January. We are keeping everyone updated via our monthly newsletter." BPSA Newsletter link:

<http://bpsportsmen.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Oct-Fur-Fins-Feathers-2020.pdf>



5. Due to the Covid-19 CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC DECLARATION and with the safety of participants in mind, OFAH Zone meetings and conferences including the federation annual board meeting were postponed while some meetings were done remotely. The summer Zone H meeting scheduled for Orillia, one of five federation meetings I cover every year for BPSA, was cancelled. At head office most federation staff were working from home. Executive Director Angelo Lombardo noted “we are making every effort to remain full speed ahead with our conservation workloads. We are working to enhance the OFAH digital experience to keep you connected”.



The OFAH Annual General meeting was a virtual experience which I covered for BPSA. See my report at this link: <http://bpsportsmen.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/OFAH-July-2020.pdf>

There’s no word yet on when the zone H OFAH quarterly sessions will resume.

6. During a visit to Peterborough John Yakabuski, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry has described our Bruce Peninsula club as “a Community Hatchery Program supported group with 51 volunteers who donate over 1,500 hours a year to raising and stocking 74,645 Rainbow Trout fingerlings, 23,078 Rainbow Trout yearlings and 27,270 Brown Trout fingerlings a year” in southwest Georgian Bay.



Minister Yakabuski has renewed the Community Hatchery (CHP) program for another three years. The Community Hatchery Program is funded by the province and operated by the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. Half of our BPSA hatchery costs are covered by the CHP.



7. OFAH welcomes news on the issue of plastics in our water. The province is investing \$375,000 in Pollution Probe. It’s an effort to help combat plastic pollution in Ontario’s Great Lakes and tributaries.

Funding will propel production of plastic-capturing technologies to isolate the some 22 million pounds of pollution which enters the lakes annually.

Environment, Conservation, and Parks Minister Jeff Yurek made the announcement at the Toronto Zoo.

“I am proud to support this important initiative with Pollution Probe, which will help safeguard our precious water resources and the ecosystems that depend on them, for future generations.” The zoo is working with Pollution Probe on the Great Lakes Plastic Cleanup, an initiative geared towards further addressing the plastic pollution problem.

Technologies known as Seabins and LittaTraps, are to be used in up to 12 provincial marinas, including:

- The Harbour West Marina and Cobourg Marina on Lake Ontario
- The Erieau Marina on Lake Erie
- Mitchell’s Bay Marine Park on Lake St. Clair
- The Bridgeview Marina and Sarnia Bay Marina on Lake Huron
- The South Bay Cove, Hindson Marina, Point Pleasant Marina and the Township of Georgian Bay on Georgian Bay/Lake Huron



Seabins are skimmers. They attach to docks and are capable of collecting more than eight pounds of surface waste per day. Invented by two Australian surfers, Seabins were launched as a pilot project in Toronto's Outer Harbour Marina in 2019.

LittaTraps are established in storm drains, where they collect debris before it enters the waterway. They catch debris larger than five millimetres and boast a projected 25-year life span.

More than 80% of shoreline litter surrounding the Great Lakes is plastic waste.

8. We were saddened by the news of the shooting of a white moose in Northern Ontario. During the last week of October, an unknown hunter shot and killed a white cow moose along with one other moose in an act that is being called "senseless."



The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry is seeking the help of the public in finding the person who killed the majestic animal on Nova Road near Kilometer 18, east of Foleyet.

The regional Crime Stoppers groups says "Hunting is a privilege and should not be taken for granted....As a community let's catch the people responsible for this senseless act." White moose are extremely rare, and like other stark white creatures lack their usual colour due to gene mutations that lead to full albinism – no pigment and red eyes – or leucism, which is drastically reduced pigmentation. It is illegal to kill white moose in this wildlife management unit. If you see an illegal action involving fishing or hunting call the MNRF tips line. It 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

9. The annual OFAH/Ontario OUT of DOORS 2020 Trail-Cam Photo Contest is underway. The contest offers participants a chance to win a brand new trail camera.

This is the trail-cam pic by Guy Buckley that won the honour in 2019.

The camera of 2018 winner Andre Coture captured a deer with perfect framing

Those who complete the online ballot can submit as many as two photos per entry. For contest rules click [here](#)

<https://oodmag.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Trail-Cam-Contest-Rules-2020.pdf>



As your OFAH rep since 2005 I have covered more than seventy five OFAH meetings on behalf of BPSA completing more than forty OFAH reports for BPSA members. I reported on issues, trends and newsworthy items of interest to anglers, hunters and folks concerned about fish, wildlife and conservation.

My effort has been more than numbers. I felt passionate about what I was doing trying to create reports with high interest factor for our members. You have often heard me say “BPSA not being involved with OFAH is like Canada not belonging to the UN.” So I obviously feel OFAH is important.

It has been a lot of work. But I am not complaining. I have enjoyed every moment. At OFAH conferences I managed to talk about BPSA issues with six MNRF Ministers and four opposition party MNRF critics. On my urging one Minister agreed to visit our club to discuss issues of concern.

Now it is time to pass the torch. I am stepping away from this assignment. It is time to hand it over to a younger person with the time and energy necessary to do a stupendous job for BPSA members.

I will remain active with my emceeing and news release communications work for our club. But time is up on my OFAH responsibilities. It has been a fascinating learning experience! It was been an honour to represent you for fifteen years. A big thanks to Kat and our editors for all you have done helping bring our OFAH reports to life!

Thanks for your support!!!

**Yours in conservation, Stu Paterson – Paterson Media
“live” from the Oxenden Bureau**

