

# OFAH ZONE "H"

## report for BPSA

Stu Paterson – March 2022

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



### 1. TAX BREAK ON FISHING/HUNTING TRIPS:

OFAH is enthusiastic about the province's "STAYCATION TAX CREDIT" that allows us to claim a 20% tax break on eligible accommodation expenses until December. How does it work?

Under the Staycation program your family can book a week at a fishing/hunting lodge costing \$2,000.00. Then you can claim a credit of \$400.00. As an Ontario resident you can apply for this refund when you file your 2022 personal tax return and benefit even if you don't owe any tax.

### 2. COVID-19 FOUND IN ONTARIO DEER

In early January our Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) confirmed that the virus that causes COVID-19 was found in five white-tailed deer in the London area. The deer were tested as part of last fall's 2021 Chronic Wasting Disease Surveillance Program.

Hunters are now asking what this means for the hunting community and relationships between the virus and Ontario's deer, other wildlife, and the general public.

From the OFAH perspective the short answer at this point is "we're not entirely sure." That said, federation Wildlife Biologist Dr. Keith Munro in the following OFAH Insider article, delves into what we do know about the situation, how it might be handled going forward and what hunters can do to help with the monitoring and detection of any such diseases in Ontario wildlife.

CLICK HERE TO READ MORE.

<https://www.ofah.org/insider/2022/01/the-virus-that-causes-covid-19-has-been-confirmed-in-ontario-deer/>



3. OFAH has been helping the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) on a study looking at prevention strategies and ways of increasing public awareness of ticks and tick-borne illness. This study involves a survey of anglers, hunters, and trappers. The aim of the study is to gain perspectives and information on the level of public awareness of tick-borne diseases that affect humans and/or hunting dogs.

The findings will be used to help develop future Ontario tick awareness campaigns.

CLICK HERE TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QF6GQLG>

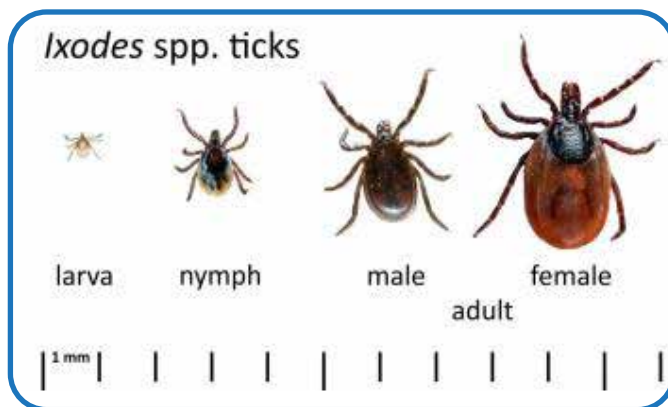


This survey should take about 12 minutes of your time. Your contribution is important. NOTE: when you take part in the survey, you will never be identified individually and OFAH will not provide the names of members and/or newsletter subscribers to the CVMA or any other organization/individual. If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, please email us at [ofah@ofah.org](mailto:ofah@ofah.org)

Lyme disease is a potentially serious infection that you can get if you're bitten by an infected blacklegged tick (also called a deer tick). Not all blacklegged ticks carry the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. Not everyone who is bitten by an infected tick will develop signs and symptoms of Lyme disease.

Most symptoms of Lyme disease in humans usually appear between three and 30 days after a bite from an infected tick. If it happens to you contact your public health unit or speak to a health care professional right away. Each year, Lyme disease awareness month falls in May. In recent years OFAH ramped up communication efforts around Lyme disease and how it affects anglers, hunters, and outdoor enthusiasts. Our focus was on prevention and providing anglers and hunters with examples of what they could do to reduce the risk of being bitten by a tick.

Ontario has compiled an informative site on DEER TICKS <https://www.ontario.ca/page/lyme-disease>



#### 4. WILD PIGS:

Over the last 4 years the province has received more than 9 wild pig sightings a month. Our Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) has launched in-depth investigations into wild pig sightings at 33 locations in southern, central and eastern Ontario.

There have been wild pig sightings north of Wiarton near Tobermory, south of Owen Sound and in Windsor to London to the outskirts of the Greater Toronto Area and into eastern Ontario.

A small isolated group of wild pigs was reported on a private island possibly one of the islands at the mouth of Colpoy's Bay. The latest MNRF report on the issue indicated "all the pigs on that island must be removed by 2024, thus eliminating any future possible escapees."

On January 1st hunting WILD PIGS became illegal in Ontario. This follows years of hard lobbying by OFAH. IN 2019 our federation demanded urgent action on the issue pointing out the significant threat wild pigs pose. The non-stop pressure paid off. These critters are restricted under the Invasive Species Act and the province set up a team of technicians that responds to high priority reports of wild pigs. A new Wild Pig Surveillance Program now supplies volunteers with trail camera kits placed in locations that are thought to have this invasive creature. Cameras were installed around Lanark county, Larose Forest, and the South Mountain area of eastern Ontario. The data collected from the cameras should give the MNRF and the OFAH a better idea of where the pigs are, and provide information leading to solutions on how to deal with this very destructive animal.

Erin Keon, an MNRF research scientist says "Wild Pigs spread diseases, so they carry a number of pathogens and they can spread this to other livestock, native wildlife and in some cases, even humans." It appears wild boars are escaping from farms and multiplying. 10 or more wild boars were recently spotted near Pickering, rooting up people's lawns and fields. Ontario averages three to four wild pig sightings a week in the spring, summer and fall, and two to three a week in the winter.

"Based on the reports MNRF has received thus far, it's likely that there are numbers of wild pigs scattered across southern, central and eastern Ontario," MNRF spokesperson Jolanta Kowalski told CBC News. "The majority of wild pig sightings appear to be recently escaped livestock, including domestic pigs, pot bellied pigs and farmed Eurasian wild boar."





For more see page 16 in the February 2022 edition of OUT OF DOORS magazine.  
To report any WILD PIG sightings go to [wildpigs@ontario.ca](mailto:wildpigs@ontario.ca)  
and iNaturalist Ontario wild pig reporting.

## **5. SPORTS FISHING:**

An interesting report by the OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee launches a kit designed to “KEEP COMMUNITIES FISHING.” Due to ongoing fishing bans, the committee provided insight and feedback towards the development of a document to address issues experienced at the municipal level and to help avoid further angling restrictions.

Sports fishing is a time-honoured tradition for families and great for people’s health by getting them outdoors. There are 1.4 million licensed anglers in Ontario who contribute more than \$2.2 billion annually to the provincial economy. Our businesses and local economies rely on tourism created through fishing.

Municipal Angling Toolkit

### **KEEP COMMUNITIES FISHING**

This OFAH tool kit will help municipalities target unwanted behaviour, avoid fishing bans and access restrictions, and to keep communities fishing.

### **LITTERING**

- Provide accessible garbage and recycling bins with frequent pick up and removal
- Signage in known angling and/or problem locations
- Coordinated cleanups (fishing clubs, community groups)
- Fish cleaning stations

### **TRESPASSING**

- Clear signage, in multiple languages with graphics, indicating where fishing is restricted
- Additional lighting
- Fencing and gated entry
- Docks, fishing nodes, and piers
- Provide contact information for enforcement (Crime Stoppers 1-800-222-8477, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry TIPS line 1-877-847-7667)

### **PUBLIC URINATION/DEFECATION**

- Provide public washrooms or portable toilets
- Social media clean-up campaigns (i.e. responsible/respectful angling outreach)
- Increase enforcement of parking bylaws

### **OTHER IDEAS AND RESOURCES**

Have regular meetings and seek input from stakeholders including residents, fishing clubs, enforcement, municipal staff, the MNRF, and the OFAH. Publish an accessible municipal map of key locations, including garbage receptacles, public washrooms, where to fish, rules, etc.

## **6. SET FINES AND TICKETABLE OFFENCES:**

More than a year ago the MNRF provided the opportunity to comment on their proposal to increase set fines for certain recreational and commercial fishery offences and establish new ticketable offences. The OFAH fisheries advisory committee reacted calling for increasing fine amounts, but also highlighted the need to enhance enforcement capacity across the province. The committee proposed establishing new ticketable offences, recognizing that the ministry should also take this opportunity to revisit and rethink other legislative issues in involving sports fishing under the Ontario Fishery Regulations and Fisheries Act



## 7. MULTIPLE LINES FOR COMMON CARP - CHUMMING

In June 2019, the MNRF posted a proposal to allow the use of multiple lines when fishing for Common Carp and clarify existing provisions as they relate to chumming. A decision on this proposal has been made, and new regs have been implemented. The MNRF agreed with many of the recommendations provided in OFAH feedback. Carp fishing is one of the growing segments in Ontario recreational fishing.



## 8. BLACK BEAR HUNT - OFAH INPUT:



In 2020, then Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry John Yakabuski announced that the government was consulting on a full return of the spring bear hunt for the 2021 season. On March 13, 2020, the MNRF posted a notice on the ERO announcing that a decision was made to reinstate a regular annual spring black bear season starting in 2021, in addition to some other changes to bear hunting in the province. This decision followed approximately two decades of advocacy on the part of the OFAH. Federation reps. spent much time discussing black bear management on our Bruce Peninsula, which saw the fall season cancelled and the spring season reduced to a single week starting in 2020. At the committee's direction, OFAH

staff prepared a letter to the MNRF highlighting the need for increased management attention to that population of black bears in Grey-Bruce, to ensure both sustainable hunting opportunities and the continued conservation of our bear population.

## 9. DEER HUNTING SEASONS:

White-tailed deer are ecologically, economically, culturally, and socially important to Ontario. 190,000 hunters take part in Ontario's deer seasons each year and do so for a variety of reasons including time with family, practicing long-standing traditions, engaging with nature, and obtaining healthy meat while contributing an estimated \$346.5 million a year to Ontario's economy. These hunters help maintain deer populations at sustainable levels and monitor for wildlife disease threats such as chronic wasting disease. OFAH directors welcome the idea that deer are getting the management attention they deserve. The federation Big Game Committee reviewed proposed changes and offered the following comments to ensure that any changes to deer seasons reflect the desires of deer hunters and support sustainable hunting opportunities.



### An OFAH BIG GAME COMMITTEE REPORT:

"Proposed changes to Ontario's deer seasons are extensive, both in the types of changes (the creation of new seasons, the extension and shifting of existing seasons, and changing the allowed firearm types) as well as geographic scope (affecting over forty wildlife management units.)"

"Each of these changes will interact with specific hunting practices, traditions, preferences, experiences, and socio-economic constraints of hunters in these individual WMUs. We are satisfied that in areas where a high proportion of the landscape is privately owned, the views, attitudes, and preferences of landowners, including farmers, will also play a role in the implementation."



## 8. CRANE HUNT:

The possibility of a Sandhill Crane hunt taking place in Ontario in areas like Manitoulin Island, has been boosted with requests from other parts of Canada for a hunting permit system being established on other species of birds.

Roy Polsky of OFAH at a recent OFAH zone D meeting said, “the CWS (Canadian Wildlife Service) is looking at the possibility of issuing a hunting permit (for sandhill cranes). At least they are still looking at it. But a hunt is at least three years off. It may be a while, but hopefully we will get there.” Sandhill cranes are currently protected under the Migratory Birds Act.

Lauren Tonelli, resources management specialist with OFAH, told The Manitoulin Expositor “there has been some talk about exploring permits in the prairie provinces for a Tundra Swan hunt. Enough people are interested there that a hunting season has been requested.” Tonelli added, “provinces on the east coast are asking the CWS to consider having a permanent hunt as well for the murre, a seabird. And we are pushing for a sandhill crane permit for a hunt on a more country-wide basis. It is encouraging that in other areas, similar permits for a hunt season have been requested. We haven’t heard anything from CWS on our request for a sandhill crane permit system”.

In Grey-Bruce the Owen Sound Field Naturists for the first time spotted sandhill cranes with a group of 700 observed during the groups December bird count. The presence of the cranes – now common during the summer months – was likely due to the lack of snow cover during the count and an abundance of cornfields.



**10.** Do you know a university or post-grad student currently researching fish or wildlife in Ontario? You can help us help them with their research, by sharing the news that the submission deadline is approaching for the OFAH and partners fish and wildlife research grant applications.

This year our federation is awarding the following three grants worth \$4,000 each:

The OFAH/ Dave Ankney/ Sandi Johnson Award for Avian Ecology

The OFAH Zone G Wildlife Research Grant

The OFAH Zone H Fisheries Research Grant

The OFAH is committed to supporting students and their research, which provides the science needed to inform and support sound fish and wildlife conservation management in Ontario.

Visit [www.ofah.org/grants](http://www.ofah.org/grants) for more details and the online application

**COMMENTARY:** I have agreed to provide six OFAH reports a year for BPSA members. Please enjoy these reports designed to be important to anglers and hunters who belong to BPSA.

*Stu Paterson is an OFAH and BPSA member and outdoors writer living in Georgian Bluffs*

*photo credits: Thunderstock Outfitters, Paterson Media, OFAH, MNRF*

