

OFAH ZONE "H"

report for BPSA

Stu Paterson – October 2022

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



1. HARRISON PARK - BIRD FLU OUTBREAK GREY-BRUCE



Close to 100 waterfowl at Owen Sound's Harrison park have been euthanized after tests confirmed the presence of highly contagious Avian Influenza.



Six residential swans were spared. The park's bird sanctuary remains under the control of the Canadian Food Inspection agency which heads ongoing monitoring at the site. Bird flu is caused by a virus that infects domestic poultry, wild geese, turkeys, ducks, shore birds and upland game birds.



News of the outbreak follows the March outbreak of highly pathogenic Avian Influenza in a flock of chickens in Cape Croker north of Wiarton.

OFAH and health experts warn hunters to "Avoid hunting game birds and waterfowl

in outbreak areas...do not touch or feed wild birds by hand." Health Canada reports "Bird flu may, on rare occasions, cause disease in humans. Transmission to humans has occurred through close contact with infected birds or heavily contaminated environments."



2. EXPANDING BEAR HUNTING:



Studies are under way that could lead to increased bear hunting opportunities in parts of southern Ontario. Across the south this summer, the number of bear/human contacts were described as "above average." In August OPP reported 40 bears were killed by vehicles on Highway 400 between Honey Harbour Road, Georgian Bay Township and Parry Sound. At the Zone H annual meeting in Orillia former federation president John Ford said "it's not uncommon these days to see a bear in an Owen Sound back yard." OFAH reports increased bear sightings south of Parry Sound, in the GTA, Guelph, London and Grey-Bruce. OFAH is pushing for an expansion of bear hunting in Southern Ontario in areas where hunting is not now allowed. The province is counting bear populations with results expected next year.

Says federation wildlife biologist Keith Munro "we are prepared to offer scientific proof if it exists, to back our request for an expanded spring bear hunt."



3. WILD PIG THREAT:

OFAH is not letting up on trying to control WILD PIGS. The federation wants us to look out for these rapidly multiplying creatures! We want folks to be engaged by putting out our own trail cameras to look for them. Over the last two years there have been WILD PIG sighting near Wiarton and Lion's Head. Cottage life magazine reports "In rare cases, wild pigs have been known to attack and kill humans. Wild pig populations have established in many southern states, including Florida and Texas. It's estimated that the pigs account for \$1.5 billion in economic losses to the agricultural industry each year in the U.S. There are also sightings in Minnesota and Manitoba, two regions that border Ontario. Once established, it can be extremely difficult to get rid of wild pigs as they reproduce every six months, giving birth to litters of four to 10 piglets."



OFAH biologist Brook Schryer says "They're exceptionally intelligent, they can understand when they're being hunted. Let's say it's during the day, they'll start to adapt by being more nocturnal because they understand that they're not being hunted at night."

Wild pigs cause severe damage to the environment and economy through direct competition with native species, the destruction of agricultural crops, and potentially spreading diseases. Early detection and rapid response are vital to prevent their establishment in Ontario. It is legal to kill wild pigs if you are protecting your property as long as you believe on reasonable grounds, that they are damaging or about to damage your property.

The OFAH and the hunting community are the loudest voices calling for action on wild pigs and for the conservation of Ontario's wildlife, fish,

and native ecosystems. This needs to be clearly communicated so the public understands that Ontario's hunters are not part of the problem, but are in fact part of the solution, even if that doesn't include pulling the trigger.

If you think you've seen a wild pig, take a photograph, mark your location, and contact the Invading Species Hotline at 1-800-563-7711 or info@invading-species.com. Also please send photos to stupaterson@hotmail.com

Our federation has prepared instructions on how to set up a field cam to capture WILD PIG photos

<https://www.ofah.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/WildPigs.pdf>

For more information on wild pigs, visit www.invadingspecies.com/invaders/wildlife/wild-pigs-2/

4. FISHERIES ACT CONCERNS:



Adam Weir OFAH Fisheries Biologist gave an interesting presentation at the summer federal Zone H meeting in Barrie. His focus was concerns the federation has over the fish and fish habitat protection provisions of the Federal Fisheries Act.

Here is a link to the main thrust of OFAH input on this file

https://www.ofah.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/FFHPP-WaveTwo-OFAH-Feedback_PWWR_Restoration-Priorities-jun30-22.pdf

5. DERBY SUCCESS:

This year's Owen Sound Salmon Spectacular reported 500 more fish caught compared to 2021.

The derby's Chris Geberdt, a Zone H director, told the zone annual meeting in Orillia, 2,300 fish were processed at the weight station. This he says suggests an increasing baitfish supply and the success of fish stocking by clubs like the Sydenham Sportsmen and the Bruce Peninsula Sportsmen. 4,200 anglers took part .



As Geberdt told the Owen Sound Sun Times, more than 55,000 attended the tent over the 10 days of the event. The two Saturday fish fries and seniors day on Wednesday attracted 6,000 people combined. Saturday night's closing fish fry saw more than 3,000 pounds of fish served with the lineup wrapping around the tent.



Murray Garniss of BPSA and his 12.28 pound pound rainbow trout he caught in Colpoy's Bay, topped the rainbow category winning a sparkling new boat motor and galvanized trailer along with a plentiful package of fishing stuff. The



Owen Sound Sun Times reported: Garniss won the Fred Geberdt Memorial Package, which includes a 14-ft. G3 boat and trailer, 15 hp. motor, graph, downrigger and replica mount. "It is pretty exciting. I have never won a prize like this before," Garniss said. "I have been fishing in the derby a lot of years." Murray told me he was fishing in 30 feet and had his lure at 15 feet when the big bow hit. Congrats Murray!! At least five other BPSA members have won this rainbow trout category in the past.

6. OFAH has passed on details of a new report card on issues facing our Great Lakes.

For example:

- Pollution
- The safety of eating Great Lakes fish
- Invasive species: Sea lamprey have been reduced in numbers, but zebra and quagga mussels are creating negative impacts on nutrient cycling and plankton populations.

On the condition of Lake Huron:

- Fish populations and lower food web organisms in off-shore waters, have remained low for 15 years. In near-shore waters fish populations including walleye have not been negatively impacted. Quagga mussels are contributing to offshore food web shortages.



Adam Weir, OFAH Fisheries Biologist “Environmental stressors and associated interactions persist. Excess nutrients from intensive agricultural practices, invasive species such as quagga and zebra mussels, and chemicals of emerging concern, including microplastics and pharmaceuticals, threaten fish and wildlife populations, public health, lifestyle benefits, and the economy of the Great Lakes.”

Many challenges remain on the lakes we all depend on so much for so many reasons.



This link has more <https://oodmag.com/checking-up-on-the-great-lakes/>

7. A SPREADING INVASIVE:

Freshwater jellyfish were first reported in the Great Lakes 70 years ago, with sightings from Manitoulin Island and Espanola. Recently divers spotted them in Ramsey Lake in Sudbury. John Gunn, of Laurentian University’s Living With Lakes Centre, said reports of freshwater jellyfish are becoming more common. He said they eat plankton and there haven’t been any reports of them doing harm.



8. OFAH’s Mat Demille, Director of Policy and Programs is critical of Ottawa’s Firearms

By-Back plans which include compensation for “assault-style” firearms banned two years ago through an Order-In-Council (OIC).



Says De Mille “If the government moves forward with a buyback program and chooses an overly simplistic compensation framework such as the one they’ve proposed, there must be an appeal process for firearms owners who feel that their firearms are being significantly undervalued.”



More on the issue here

<https://oodmag.com/buyback-program-compensation-proposed/>

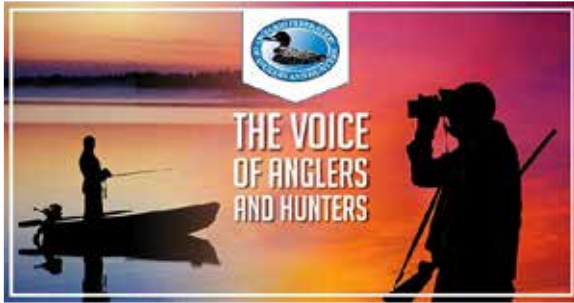
9. In our federation magazine's photo contest, a recent Ontario Out Of Doors #PhotoFriday winner was Terry Dubois of Wasaga Beach, whose son-in-law, Francis Tanaka, caught and released this giant freshwater drum (also known as sheepshead) using a jig and worm in the French River. If you have hunting and fishing memories to share, please submit your photos for consideration in #MemoryBank, and you could win an Ontario OUT of DOORS mug!



10. MEMBERSHIP DOWN:

Our Zone H OFAH has 11,655 members, down 245 from last year. Overall our federation has 75,000 members down about one thousand from last year. At the zone annual meeting delegates disagreed with the the federation decision to not take part in large outdoors shows such as the Toronto Boat Show and

The Toronto Sportsmen's Show. We agreed that it is important to be front and centre to remind potential members that we are still active representing the interests of the outdoors community. A resolution bearing that message is heading to the OFAH board.



11. Your new Zone H 2022-23 OFAH executive: Chair - Mike Evers

1st vice chair - Chris Geberdt

2nd vice chair - John Ford

Secretary-treasurer - Wall Motz (until a replacement is found)

First alternate director & Past Chair Wayne Forgrave

Second alternate director - Rob Little

Third director - Stu Paterson (pending a police security check)

12 Zone H congratulates Wally Motz:

At the 2022 zone annual meeting in Orillia Zone H Chair Mike Evers announced that our zone secretary-treasurer Wally Motz is stepping away from that position, a position he has held for 26-years. Evers congratulated Wally for his "years of outstanding volunteer service to our zone, service he performed in an exemplary manner." He continued "Wally you have done a tremendous job for our federation. You guided half a dozen Zone H chairs when they took over the chairs job."

Motz said he will stay on in the post until a replacement is found. Noting this is an important position for our zone, Evers revealed he is in discussions with a retired police officer who expressed interest in the secretary-treasurer post. Wally took time out to announced that he and his wife Alva are celebrating 67 years of marriage.



Wally and Alva posed for a congratulatory photo with Evers

Zone H of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters covers a wide range of territory from Tobermory to Orillia and Orangeville to Kincardine.

13. Zone treasurer Motz announced he has received thank you notes from five hatcheries that benefited from a \$600 Zone H donation to support their 2022 kids fishing events. A sixth stocking club that has not responded, will not receive the Kids Fishing support money next year. This summer I wrote a thank you note to Zone H expressing our BPSA appreciation for the \$600 donation.

14. National Hunting Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day was on September 17, 2022

We are urged to wear camo during National Hunting Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day. Canada was built on the railroad, fishing, hunting, and trapping.

What is this day all about? It's an official day set in law to respect and recognize hunting, trapping and fishing as part of Canada's national heritage.

OFAH is a proud supporter of this special day. OFAH is the oldest and largest non-profit, non-government fish and wildlife conservation organization in Canada. OFAH's mandate is to support fish and wildlife conservation and time honored traditions of fishing and hunting.

I covered three OFAH on-line meetings so far this year for BPSA and two in-person sessions in Orillia and Barrie. There is no way I can cover in these reports, all of the topics discussed at these meetings. However I do try to touch on key issues that are important to and affect BPSA members who are part of our hunting, fishing and conservation movement.

At the Orillia meeting, Zone Chair Mike Evers announced he is including our BPSA OFAH reports in his Chairs reports package that goes out four times a year to Zone H clubs.

Stu Paterson: OFAH rep for BPSA, BPSA Community Relations Team, freelance outdoors writer living in Georgian Bluffs

