

OFAH ZONE “H” report for BPSA Stu Paterson – December 2022

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



1 . BIG CHANGES FOR DEER HUNTERS:

OFAH calls it “incredible news for deer hunters.” The news is about the province improving our deer hunting system, with changes affecting hunters and how and when they get deer tags. Starting in 2023 the province has committed to changes that include new timelines around the application period and draw results, along with new dates for when additional tags and farmer and landowner validations will be available.

According to a letter to OFAH from the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, Graydon Smith, the changes will result in:

- the controlled deer draw application period being open from July 1-31
- draw results available on September 1, which is over five weeks earlier than in previous years
- additional controlled deer tags becoming available September 8
- farmer and landowner controlled deer hunt validations becoming available starting July 10



OFAH Manager of Policy, Mark Ryckman gives the moves thumbs up: “The timing of the controlled deer hunt draw has been a point of frustration for many hunters for a long time because it didn’t give hunters sufficient time to plan, particularly hunters that hunt multiple species in different parts of the province. Minister Smith’s decision to make the draw results available almost six weeks earlier, is incredibly positive news.”

OFAH advocacy was an important driver to the changes the government is making. Minister Smith’s letter to OFAH concluded: “We look forward to continuing to work with you to help remove barriers to hunting in Ontario.”

White-tailed deer are ecologically, economically, culturally, and socially important to Ontario. 190,000 hunters take part in Ontario’s deer seasons each year. They

hunt deer 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. 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.”

more on this here <https://www.ofah.org/insider/2022/11/ontario-changes-controlled-deer-hunt/>

2. BPSA HATCHERY VISITORS:

We don't often get an Ambassador and a Community Hatchery Program (CHP) Coordinator visiting our Bruce Peninsula Sportsmen's Association Fish Hatchery.



BPSA hatchery manager Al Sutter outlined our fish stocking history for our guests including CHP coordinator Matt Burley. We were honoured to host these visitors in mid November. Ontario's Community Hatchery Program supports our fish stocking efforts and those of more than 40 other volunteer run hatcheries province wide, which contribute big time to our sports fishery. More than half of our hatchery operating costs are covered by the CHP.

The CHP Coordinator Burley posted on the CHP Facebook page: "visited the Bruce Peninsula Sportsmen Association (BPSA) Community Hatchery. These community hatchery volunteers are raising Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout to be released locally. This group of volunteers just celebrated a 60th Anniversary - one of the longest running community fish hatcheries in Ontario!"

Left to right hatchery manager Al Sutter, assistant hatchery manager Mike Smith, OFAH NXT/GEN Ambassador Natalie Mechalko, Stu Paterson BPSA Community Relations.



Burley was accompanied by OFAH NXT-GEN Ambassador Natalie Mechalko a 24-year-old University of Waterloo grad with a Bachelor of Environmental Studies in Environment, Resources & Sustainability Honours, with a minor in biology and diplomas in Ecological Restoration and Environmental Assessment. Natalie is a Forestry and Trails Coordinator with Grey County where she works with land managers and trail organizations to manage County forests

and address issues such as accessibility and user conflict. During the visit assistant hatchery manager Mike Smith explained the role of our CHP funded fish grader for NXT/GEN Ambassador Mechalko.



Natalie says “With a background in fisheries and wildlife ecology, I took Hunter Education to further understand hunting as a management tool. I have been looking for opportunities to obtain experience with small game hunting and trapping. I’m excited to learn more through OFAH’s NXT-GEN program. I hope to explore interactions between hunters and non-hunters, hunting awareness and communication on public lands and hunting and fishing access.”



Co-ordinator Matt Burley reviewed future BPSA hatchery plans with manager Al Sutter.



It was a good education for OFAH NXT-GEN Ambassador Mechalko who promises to volunteer with our Wiarton based club. The OFAH NXT-GEN program, launched in 2021, provides volunteer experiences for younger people of all abilities. Their connection with our federation will help offer direct input into OFAH discussions on fishing, hunting and other conservation management topics.

3. RECORD ONTARIO BASS CONFIRMED



A 10.15-pound, 23.75-inch smallmouth bass caught in Lake Erie near Pelee Island by an Ohio angler, is the new Ontario record.

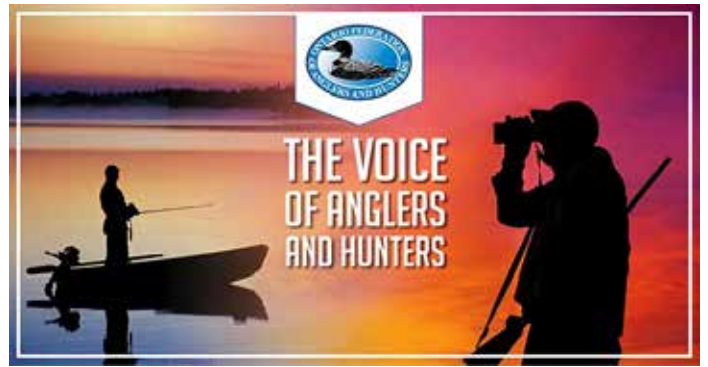
The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH), which operates the Ontario Record Fish Registry, confirmed the record after Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) biologists X-rays, confirmed the fish was free of foreign objects.
more here:

https://oodmag.com/record-bass-confirmed/?fbclid=IwAR13reZaiANqp4hLYUH_Y6T5-an2YRSMRUaEGIN6ceUDXNdhYP5HoeDch6E

4. INTERNING WITH OFAH

OFAH staffing grows every summer, with more than two dozen students, interns, or seasonal staff hired for our programs such as:

- The Invading Species Awareness Program (ISAP),
- Tackleshare,
- Get Outdoors summer camps
- The OFAH | Mario Cortelucci Hunting and Fishing Heritage Centre.



Our Invasive Species Team hires students hosted by partner organizations who do their own hiring, but some work out of our head office and are hired by OFAH. Permanent and contract positions are available as well.

From OFAH head office: “As a non-profit non-government conservation organization and representing the fishing and hunting community, we are particular in what we look for in candidates. We often see applicants who could have been successful at getting an interview, or interviewees who could have been successful at the interview but weren’t. A couple of us who frequently hire for the OFAH Fish and Wildlife Department have put together this guide to help applicants understand some of the things the OFAH is looking for. And, most of this advice will also help with any job application in the conservation and environmental fields.”

If you’re interested in working with OFAH, follow along on social media and frequently check the jobs page, but in particular through March/April (summer jobs and internship) and October (winter internship).
<https://www.ofah.org/insider/2021/06/inside-look-how-to-get-a-job-at-the-ofah/#>

5. Paperless Membership

OFAH MEMBERSHIP DOWN A BIT SINCE COVID

If you have not renewed your membership or have not joined OFAH here’s a suggestion.

“Make it a “3-year” for a chance to WIN A JEEP!”

Head office reports “we are committed to this... your new or renewing 3-year OFAH membership, monthly or auto renewal sign up, or a Life Membership buy, is automatically rewarded with a chance to win a \$48,000 Jeep.” No other organization could possibly put in the time or professional expertise to tackle all of the issues facing anglers and hunters.

Make it a “3-year” for

Your chance to
WIN

a 2-door Jeep Wrangler.



Valued at over \$48,000
Draw date January 20, 2023

The issues we tackle are many: cormorants, moose and deer management, gun legislation, invading species, tackle ban proposals, Chronic Wasting Disease, Lyme Disease, access to Crown Land, the rise of anti-fishing and hunting agendas that threaten your outdoors way of life. \$25 is a commitment that every angler and hunter can afford to make for an OFAH membership that provides the value of information in Ontario OUT of DOORS Magazine and in outdoors liability insurance. The best aspect? Being part of an outdoors community that values your respect for conservation, fishing and hunting traditions.

6. OFAH AT SPORTSMENS SHOW

Following a nudge from OFAH Zone H, head office will resume our federation participation at the giant TORONTO SPORTSMEN'S SHOW. Our zone executive voted to urge our renewed participation at these big shows in hopes of attracting new members. OFAH did not take part in any of the big outdoors shows during the pandemic. 2023 marks the 75th anniversary of the giant show. Head office is working with the show promoter to raise show awareness through Ontario Out of Doors and all other OFAH media outlets.

OFAH Executive Director Angelo Lombardo:



"We are excited to return to the Toronto Sportsmen's Show as it celebrates its 75th anniversary...the show is a staple event for the outdoors community...we look forward to having a significant presence and the opportunity to connect with many anglers, hunters, and outdoor enthusiasts under one roof."

With more than 300 exhibitors you can expect a wide array of products and attractions

including - fishing seminars - a MNRF casting pond - retriever demonstrations - and the latest in hunting, fishing and outdoors gear



7. HOUSING ACT IS ECOLOGICAL INSANITY!



The Doug Ford government has passed a housing bill that it says will help pave the way for 1.5 million new homes in the province over the next decade. The bill brings with it unprecedented changes to how land use planning is done across Ontario. An OFAH friend told me this Bill 23, the "More Homes Built Faster Act," is bad news for fish and wildlife habitat.

OFAH is concerned that this bill will create an open season on critical ecosystems and habitats and is a fundamental shift in land use policy, that will lead to the destruction of wetlands, woodlots and other critical fish and wildlife habitat.

According to Environment Climate change Canada, wetlands: "support a disproportionately high number of species and are often very productive" as compared to other ecosystem types. Wetlands filter nutrient-rich and polluted waters, protect against flooding and control the dispersal of groundwater, sequester carbon from the atmosphere, and provide vital habitat to a variety of native organisms. Many valued wild game animals, including moose and waterfowl, are reliant on wetlands for food, breeding habitat, security, and more."

Bill 23 will allow a government takeover of 7,400 acres of farmland and natural areas and strip environmental protections that protect wildlife, keep our drinking water safe, guard wetlands, and ensure flood protection.

To pave part of the Greenbelt Queen's Park is undermining the planning power of municipalities, forgoing requirements for public meetings and overriding the ability of communities to appeal decisions.

Changes under the Bill introduced with little public input, make it easier to get development projects approved with less involvement from environmental and municipal bodies, which have been key parts of the application process to ensure local and public interests are protected.



Under the Bill, the majority of wetlands in southern Ontario would no longer be eligible for any sort of protection.

Tim Gray, Executive Director of Environmental Defence: "It's pretty much a catastrophic attack on planning that looks to blow up the system."



Bob Bowles naturalist in Zone H: "It's an attack on us! Doug Ford imposed the bill before doing any research on the topic. This bill will negatively impact the entire Greenbelt and destroy precious wetlands and wildlife habitats, which need to be saved."

Andrew McCammon, Executive Director of the Ontario Headwaters Institute: "The public sees through this naked assault on environmental safeguards, wetlands, agriculture, conservation lands, sound planning, and green development standards."

THE BRUCE TRAIL CONSERVANCY: "Bill 23 could result in the permanent loss of the Bruce Trail and the conservation corridor containing it. This is a serious concern for the Bruce Trail Conservancy and those who enjoy the iconic 900 km Bruce Trail."



OFAH : "Given the breadth and scope of the proposed changes within Bill 23, we wrote to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy and strongly urged them to defer a clause-by-clause review of the Bill, in order to adequately assess the evidence provided in its entirety. OFAH staff submitted an official response for all proposed amendments that are relevant to OFAH members, anglers, hunters, and anyone who values Ontario biodiversity and natural spaces." This document was unavailable at deadline for this report.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

The Bill is panned by environmental and conservation groups, and municipal stakeholders. They claim it will destroy critical regulations put in place to protect the environment, while doing little to achieve the housing targets the PCs are using as the justification for this drastic shift in policy.

Have your say on this bill here:

<https://you.leadnow.ca/petitions/stop-bill-23-protect-the-greenbelt-and-build-real-affordable-housing?fbclid=IwAR0IRyyw9ecoquVtC55STMNUtQHggyKLC7yrLUNRZ2GRyqx6JOWIQtoDm6s>

The above item includes excerpts from “BILL 23 - the More Homes Built Faster Act” published in The Pointer by Rachel Morgan, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

8. From OFAH head office:

The Feds have introduced a significant amendment to Bill C-21 at the committee stage that, if adopted, would expand the definition of a prohibited firearm to include semi-automatic rifles and shotguns “designed to accept a detachable cartridge magazine with a capacity greater than five cartridges of the type for which the firearm was originally designed”.

During committee discussion in late November, there was obvious confusion among government officials about what would and wouldn't be included. The definition of firearms as proposed is extremely broad and will almost surely include many traditional hunting firearms. A clause-by-clause debate of the amendments continues.

WHAT CAN YOU DO? Since the news broke, OFAH members have been asking what they can do to push back against this. The amendment still needs to go through several steps of the parliamentary process before it is final. In the meantime, OFAH asks you to contact your local MP and express your thoughts on the situation.

We've made doing so easy.

CLICK HERE to access an easy-to-use online form where you can select your MP from a dropdown menu, customize your comments and hit send and have them land in their inbox.

<https://www.ofah.org/firearms/c21-action/>

The form will automatically CC the Minister of Public Safety Marco Mendicino, all Ontario Senators, all members of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, and Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau.

9. Our Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound MP Alex Ruff joined us to bring Happy Birthday wishes to our BIG 60 party. Alex has a monthly survey question in his latest newsletter that relates to the Bill C-21 provisions on rifles and shotguns. Ruff asks: “Do you support the recently proposed Liberal amendment to Bill C-21 (Handgun freeze) to now include a ban on the majority of semi-automatic hunting rifles”? Have your say on his website: www.alexruffmp.ca



10. CHRISTMAS 2022:

With the Christmas period approaching, let's take time out to give thanks for all we have in this beautiful region where we live, fish, hunt and volunteer, hoping to make our community a better place. Personally I had one of the best fishing days ever on Colpoy's Bay this year as my buddy and I landed more than 30 salmon during a five hour outing. I hope you and yours have some good down time over the coming weeks. Thanks again to Kat who manages to skillfully edit these reports.



Please have the very best of the Christmas season! I look forward to continuing with these reports for BPSA members in the new year.

The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) is Ontario's largest, non-profit, fish and wildlife conservation-based organization, representing 100,000 members, subscribers and supporters, and 725 member clubs.

Stu Paterson - outdoors writer - OFAH liaison for BPSA - Chair Community Relations for BPSA, Director OFAH Zone H.

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