

OFAH ZONE “H” report for BPSA Stu Paterson – May 2023

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



LIFE VESTS FOR BOATING

1. OFAH is publicizing the fact Ottawa wants legislation requiring us to wear Personal Flotation devices while boating.

Transport Canada hopes to implement “mandatory compliance of personal flotation devices (PFDs) and life jackets.” Ottawa is hosting regional meetings of the Canadian Marine Advisory Council (CMAC) to discuss the proposal. The Council advises the government on issues related to marine safety.

The ministry reports:

“Focused work on the issue of mandatory wear began in 2019, given the persistent number of fatalities from the lack or improper use of PFDs/life jackets, which account for almost 90% of boating deaths in Canada.”

Currently, boaters must have one life jacket on board per person, but they don’t have to be worn.

Transport Canada has a link for comment: <https://letstalktransportation.ca/>



2. SALMON SPECTACULAR EXPANDS NORTH

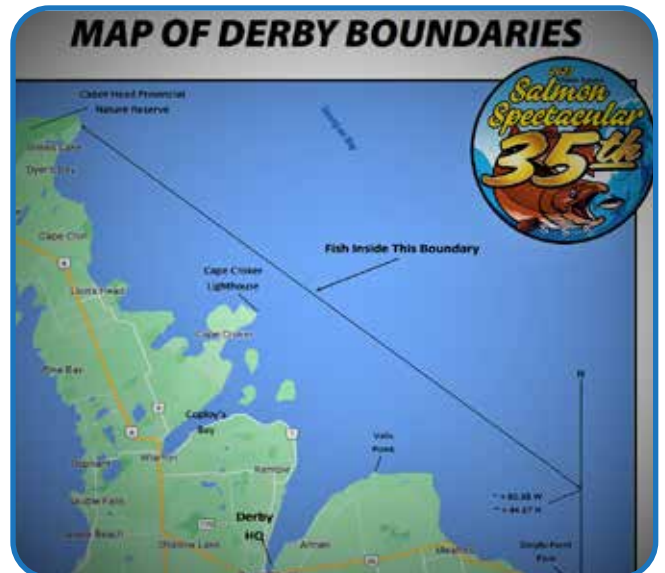
The announcement was made at the annual OFAH Owen Sound Conservation Dinner and Auction. It was revealed that the Owen Sound SALMON SPECTACULAR Derby is expanding north to Cape Chin including Lions Head. Previously the giant derby included Georgian Bay waters from Colpoy’s Bay in the west, to Delphi Point near Collingwood in the east.

Any why is the derby expanding?



Derby co-chair Chris Geberdt: “Hundreds of anglers asked for the derby’s boundary to expand north over the years but it wasn’t considered by derby organizers. We’ve had anglers tell us “the Chantry (derby) has gone into Wiarton bay, why can’t you guys just go up to Lion’s Head?”

When the derby expanded its boundary east to near Craigeleith six years ago, the move generated no angler complaints about driving to the weigh station in Owen Sound. Derby organizers felt comfortable expanding the boundary north. The derby will continue to have just one weigh station at the derby tent at the marina in Owen Sound. This draws anglers to the area of the derby’s sponsors.



This year's SALMON SPECTACULAR will guard against cheating, as the result of a walleye fishing tournament scandal in Ohio. Geberdt reports "Any contending fish will be cut open to be sampled to make sure that there's no tampering with the fish." Last October two fishermen pleaded not guilty to charges related to the discovery that their fish had been stuffed with lead weights and fish fillets at the \$30,000 Lake Erie Walleye Trail tournament in Cleveland.

The Sydenham Sportsmen's Association's derby runs from Friday, Aug. 25 to Sunday, Sept. 3. The derby involves hundreds of volunteers, 250 sponsors and prizes worth more than \$200,000

3. ROUND GOBIES THE ROGUE OF THE FISH WORLD:

The OFAH Fisheries Advisory Committee has been told "the invasive species round gobies are now the bait of choice for salmon and trout in Northern Lake Huron and Georgian Bay." Gobies are one of 185 invasive species in our Great Lakes. Bottom feeding gobies consume zebra and quagga muscles which concentrate toxins. With salmon and trout confirmed as eating the gobies, a ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry employee told me in early March "we are looking into the issue of gobie related concentrations of toxins in sports fish."



OFAH biologist Brook Schryer reports "some studies link round gobies to botulism type W." He says muscles are filter feeders filtering toxins out of the water accumulating such metals as mercury. In turn gobies are eaten by waterfowl resulting in botulism moving up the food chain. At our recent Zone H meeting in Orillia delegates said they are anxious to see new studies on the fish we eat considering the gobie issue. At the 2022 Salmon Spectacular anglers reported seeing scars on the mouths of fish indicating the fish had been bottom feeding these toxin concentrating muscles as well as gobies..



At the Toronto Sportsmen's Show we spotted artificial Round Gobie baits "designed to put more fish in your cooler". These baits are legal. Possessing live round gobies is ILLEGAL!



4. GILLNETS:

A Michigan group representing recreational anglers and conservationists is lobbying state and federal officials to stop the expanded use of gillnets by commercial fishers. The Coalition to Protect Michigan Resources (CPMR) claims regulations governing the state's commercial fishery have turned away from science and stewardship by allowing "tribal members" to expand their gillnet use in their commercial fishing operations. The coalition says existing rules prevent over-harvesting and maintain a sustainable fishery. It adds "gillnets kill indiscriminately and are lethal for much more than just a targeted species of fish." State and federal governments responded saying the sports fishing group is only concerned about its members narrow interests and that's why they are objecting to expanded gillnet use.



**See someone fishing or spearing fish in a sanctuary?
Help protect our fish and wildlife! Don't hesitate to call
the MNR Tips Line.**

Conservation Officer TIPS LINE 1-877-847-7667

From April 1, 2005-March 31, 2019 the TIPS line received 109,811 calls which generated 58,749 reports for officers to investigate. The tips line is available 24/7/365. Every call to the MNR Tips line is reviewed by a Conservation Officer. All information is valuable and appreciated. In recent months unidentified citizens have been spotted spearing spawning rainbow trout in the sanctuary at Colpoy's Creek.

5. SANDHILL CRANES

Responding to requests from hunters, OFAH is not giving up pushing for a Sandhill Crane hunting season in Ontario. The federation's Small Game Migratory Bird Advisory Committee does this through the Ontario Waterfowl Advisory Committee (OWAC). This is a committee lead by the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) which discusses and investigates waterfowl issues in the province. OFAH has ensured that a discussion regarding a Sandhill Crane hunt is on the agenda at each OWAC meeting. The major barrier to enacting a Sandhill Crane hunt in Ontario is that international harvest guidelines require a permit system or similar method for limiting harvest. OFAH has convinced the Wildlife Service to commit to "looking into the possibility of a federally governed permit system for Sandhills." At an OFAH board meeting one scientist said "it will be a long time before we have a regulated sandhill crane hunt."

However, farmers can legally hunt the big birds with special permits. In 2022 in Grey-Bruce the Owen Sound Field Naturalists 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 thought to be due to the lack of snow cover during the count and an abundance of cornfields.

Speaking of lobbying...



In 2020, after lobbying by OFAH, the MNR opened a cormorant hunting season to address the overabundance of fish guzzling cormorants. The hunt runs from September 15 to December 31, allowing for 15 birds to be shot a day. The OFAH Small Game Advisory Committee discussed the benefits and issues surrounding this hunting season and staff dealt with media to ensure accurate information was being reported. Another win for our federation.



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

24/7 MNR tips line
1-877-847-7667
ontario.ca/MNRtips

A photograph of a woman wearing a dark cap and a green shirt with "CONSERVATION OFFICER" on it. She is sitting in the driver's seat of a car, holding a white mobile phone to her ear. The car's interior and window are visible.

The report, published every three years, and compiled by Canadian and American governments, rates the lakes on nine different indicators and gives each lake an overall grade.

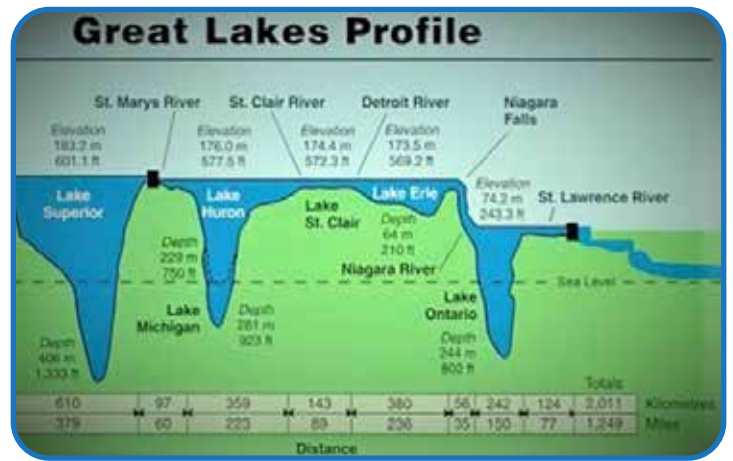
mixed results. Coastal wetlands are healthiest in northern lakes, but changes in the food web caused by invasive species are having impacts.

Toxic chemicals are also generally on the decline in the Great Lakes, though concentrations still pose risks in some areas. Other indicators looked at drinking water, swimming, nutrient levels, groundwater impacts, and the fallout from land use changes.

Overall, Ontario's two northern lakes, Superior and Huron, received good and unchanging ratings. Lake Ontario was assessed as fair and unchanging to improving. Declines in contaminants in fish and fewer beach closings were cited as improvements. Erie didn't fare as well, being rated as poor and unchanging. While credit was given to the walleye fishery, it was noted high nutrient levels and associated algal blooms are continuing. Lake Michigan was rated fair and unchanging for its diversity, swimming, and recreational use.

<https://binational.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/State-of-the-Great-Lakes-2022-Report.pdf>

OFAH was front and center at the Toronto Sportsmen's Show which resumed after a 3-year absence. Attendance was said to have been "a record" with more than 40-thousand people including dozens from Grey Bruce. It was an easy day trip as the site is only 2 1/2 hours away. Lots of new boats, motors, fishing equipment and firearms on display.



OFAH was very visible with volunteers and staff encouraging new membership signups, promoting youth archery, and informing us about invasive species.



There were lineups at the OFAH archery display as this sport has taken off especially among young people. With 5,000 involved in Ontario, the OFAH NASP program has become the Federation's largest youth-oriented program in its history. The National Archery in Schools Program "doesn't discriminate based on athletic or academic ability gender or background. NASP runs during school hours with both elementary and secondary students taking part.

I had constructive chats with Ray Blades editor of Ontario Out of Doors and Angelo Lombard the OFAH Executive Director. He promises to continue to check my reports and will let me know if there they contain any incorrect info.

8. FIREARMS:



In the spring edition of Ontario Out of Doors, the Federation's Angelo Lombardo pointed out that "lobbying on behalf of hunters on the firearms issue has been front and centre to our efforts."

The Executive Director noted that in recent months the national conversation around Bill CF- 21 reached a fever pitch and OFAH was there taking part in the conversations around how to address the issues with the bill.



For example OFAH Manager of Policy Mark Ryckman testified before the Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. This is part of Ryckman's testimony.

"Firearms are not the disease, particularly in a nation like Canada with robust gun laws. Gun violence is often symptomatic of much bigger societal issues. Taking firearms away from law-abiding Canadians will not reduce the issues that fuel criminal activity and demand for illicit firearms..... model-based firearm prohibitions will continue to fail, as they won't be able to have a detectable impact on reducing gun violence or enhancing public safety. Hopefully the Standing Committee will now undertake broader

consultation with gun owners, including Indigenous communities – something they should have done a while ago on Bill C-21, which still includes a ban on handguns and what the government refers to as ‘assault-style rifles’.

ANGLER HUNTER CONCERNS IN WESTERN ZONE H



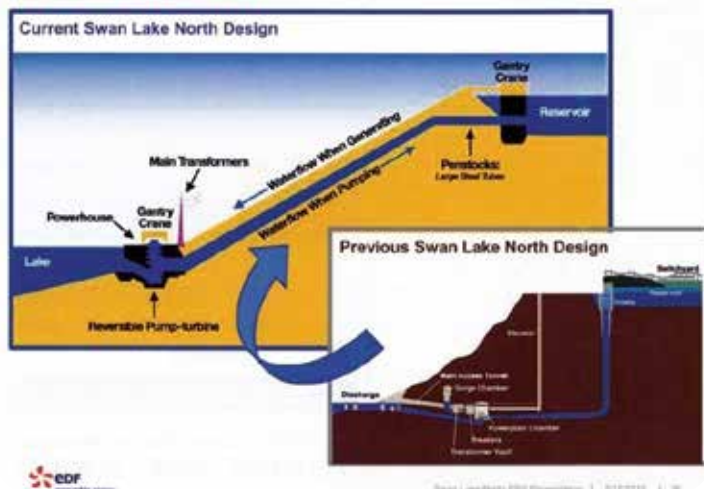
In Orillia delegates to our April meeting were interesting in hearing about a proposed Fish Farm. Here in South Bruce Peninsula, we await results of studies on a property 10 kilometres from our hatchery. A developer GB Salmon, wants to build what’s being called “the world’s largest landlocked fish farm.” The 500,000 square foot farm would take 1.8 million litres of water a day from Colpoy’s Bay. It would return 1.5 million litres a day. Citizen concerns focus on the quality of the water returning to the bay, and the temperature of that water.

South Bruce Peninsula Mayor Garry Michi told me the developers “get an F for FAIL when it comes to communicating with the town and its residents about the project.” Michi says “we have pristine water...so we are patiently awaiting an update on studies of the site.”



Concern continues over the TC Energy proposed pumped Storage Project slated for Miliary property at Meaford. Huge quantities of water will be pumped into giant tanks. When electric power is needed, the water will return to Georgian Bay passing through turbines creating electricity. Conservationists worry about the effects on fish, the quality of water returning to Georgian Bay and the temperature of that returning water.

PROJECT DESIGN



9. IN PRAISE OF WALLY MOTZ:

That’s pronounced “moats” he tells me when I met Wally Motz in 2003 at the OFAH annual conference in Hamilton. I was gathering material for my outdoors radio talk show and he had stories.

Wally was proud to tell me of his success in court. Wally is an avid hunter. He was hunting geese when he was harassed and threatened by a passerby. Provincial laws prohibit harassment (Provincial laws are not bylaws) of a hunter who is legally hunting. In Wally’s case he had permission from the property owner to hunt, but a stranger threw rocks and swore at him as he was targeting geese at Point Clark near Kincardine. At first the OPP refused to pursue the case. Wally persisted and he eventually won in court. The harasser was fined \$650.00 in what was the first case of its kind in Ontario. Says Wally “I was the first hunter in Ontario to benefit from that legislation...I was thrilled to win for the rights of future hunters.” At the time of the case, OFAH the said the court ruling “reinforces the need for increased enforcement of the Fish &



Wildlife Conservation Act which states that it is an offense to harass any angler or hunter while fishing or hunting, regardless of race or ethnicity.”

Wally made his mark in the courts and at OFAH. He is a respected federation director and was awarded a life membership. For 28 years he has volunteered in the challenging post of Zone H secretary/treasurer. Now he is stepping aside.

All of us at Zone H have thanked Wally for his dedication and solid efforts helping make our federation an even more effective voice for anglers and hunters.



10. LONGER DEER SEASON - GRIFFITH ISLAND

The federations Mark Ryckman has done several media interview on the issue of longer deer hunting seasons on the islands at the mouth of Colpoy's Bay including Griffith Island home of a successful fishing and hunting lodge. Mark was responding to claims island deer hunt periods are longer than deer seasons on the neighbouring mainland. One hunter was quoted on the issue: “there seems to be one deer season for the rich and a shorter season for the rest of us.” The islands are privately owned and OFAH concluded these extended seasons have no impact on the sustainability of the deer hunt on neighbouring lands.



The next quarterly OFAH Zone H meeting is slated for 10am on July 9, 2023 at the Sydenham Sportsmen's Association clubhouse in Georgian Bluffs.

Thanks to Kat McCulloch who skillfully edits these reports. My next OFAH report should be ready by the end of June. These days there are probably 200 subjects I could tackle for inclusion in each report. Hopefully the ones chosen are of interest to our anglers, hunters, sports shooters and conservationists with BPSA and across Zone H.

Stu Paterson OFAH liaison for BPSA

Photo credits

Paterson Media, OFAH, N.Y. Dept. of Conservation

