

OFAH ZONE "H"

report for BPSA

Stu Paterson – June/July 2023

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



OFAH REPORT FOR BPSA June/July 2023 - Paterson

1. BLACK BEARS ON THE BRUCE PENINSULA

OFAH set aside a full page in its magazine Ontario Out of Doors (OOD), on the issue of black bear populations on the Bruce Peninsula. See page 15 in the June 2023 edition. Two articles outline how our federation has presented the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) with a list of steps it could take on black bear management in our region:

"to ensure we have the strongest black bear management system possible and to guarantee bear hunting opportunities in the future on the Bruce Peninsula"



Even though bear sightings are above average in Grey-Bruce so far this year, bear populations are down on the peninsula over the last 10 years. Estimates put the number at approximately 400 bears from Southampton north to Tobermory. So OFAH has expressed concern about declining populations and is offering to help. One federation suggestion is that the province consider the fact bears here are isolated from the rest of the province and lack genetic diversity. OFAH wants the MNRF to consult with hunters and landowners on its suggestion to re-locate...they call it "translocate" bears here from other areas of the province. And before any new provincial action is taken, that the ministry launch consultations with hunters and landowners on this and its other suggestions.



If you care about bear populations in Grey Bruce read OOD June 2023 edition page 15. Study this issue. If you want to present your opinions contact the MNRF Fish and Wildlife Policy Branch at:

Fish and Wildlife Policy Branch 705-772-8508 or

Midhurst District (Zones 13, 14, 15, 16)

Midhurst MNRF: (705) 725-7500 - extension 4

Owen Sound MNRF: (519) 376-3860 - extension 3 or 4

Contact your MPP Toll Free: 1-800-461-2664

2. BEARS BACKGROUND –

MNRF on the black bear population on the peninsula:

“there has been a decline in bear numbers human-caused mortality should be reduced to support sustainability of this genetically isolated population”

Government staff, working with the Bruce Peninsula National Park and the Saugeen Ojibway Nation, have been assessing the status of the local black bear population. They use bear sampling sites. They visit the sites weekly in late spring and early summer to collect hair samples. The samples are sent for DNA analysis to determine the sex and number of new or returning bears. Hair traps are a non-invasive, and the information is used to estimate Ontario's bear population. Sites for the surveys are chosen to be representative of the larger landscape within each Wildlife Management Unit.



Ontario is home to a healthy and sustainable black bear population. There are an estimated 85,000-105,000 black bears in the province. About 400 in Grey-Bruce. Black bears on the Bruce represent a genetically isolated population, due to the fragmented geography of the area. Research indicates this population is at substantially higher risk than bear populations in other parts of the province, due to its isolation and a high rate of human-caused mortality. There is concern current harvest rates may contribute to population decline. To reduce the pressure on black bears in the Bruce Peninsula, the government reduced (with input from OFAH) the bear hunting season in Wildlife Management Units 82A, 83 and 84 to one week in the spring and closed the fall hunting season entirely. It continues to monitor and collect data to see if the changes have had the desired effect on the bear population in this area.

In recent months bear sightings have been “up significantly” in Grey-Bruce. In March OPP killed a bear that was trying to enter a cottage at Mallory Beach near Wiarton. The Ministry said “the bear was expressing fearless behaviour, would not leave the area and was humanely dispatched.”

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's Bear Wise website advises people to call 911 in an emergency involving a bear. Otherwise, call the Bear Wise reporting line at 1-866-514-2327. It's open between April 1 and Nov. 30, 24/7. At other times of the year, call the local MNRF office.

The BEAR WISE site says: “Emergencies include when a bear tries to enter a residence, enters a schoolyard while school is in session, stalks people and lingers, wanders into a public gathering, or kills livestock or pets and lingers. Police may ask for ministry assistance during daylight hours.”



3. NEW OFAH PRESIDENT

Rick Moore is an enthusiastic angler and hunter who promises to ensure that decisions affecting fish and wildlife are science based. In northwest Ontario, Rick worked for 30 years in administration with Confederation College. Rick is married with two sons and three grandsons.

Says Rick “I have fished, hunted and enjoyed the outdoors all my life. Fly fishing for Atlantic salmon, hunting waterfowl and upland game birds (especially with my Britney spaniel alongside) and time spent at hunting camp for big game. All are fond memories. Today will find me on Lake of the Woods fishing with the whole family, providing the next generation with what I hope will be good memories for them all.

As president I will to do my part to ensure OFAH continues to be the voice of hunting, fishing and conservation now and for many years to come in Ontario.”



4. OFAH WELCOMES GREAT LAKES FUNDING:

During US President Joe Biden’s spring visit to Canada, the feds announced funding of \$420 million over 10 years to speed-up restoration and protection of the Great Lakes through a Freshwater Action Plan.

The funding will pay for cleanup of 12 of the remaining 14 Areas of Concern in the Great Lakes by 2030, and reduction of phosphorous loadings to Lake Erie.

The 12 Areas of Concern include Thunder Bay, Nigipon Bay, Peninsula Harbour, St. Mary’s River, St. Clair River, Detroit River, Niagara River, Hamilton Harbour, Toronto and Region, Port Hope Harbour, Bay of Quinte, and the St. Lawrence River.

OFAH welcomes the funding.



But OFAH Fisheries Biologist Adam Weir notes:

“This is a step in the right direction, but the reality is that this is a fraction of what our US counterparts are contributing. Our neighbour to the south spends roughly the same amount as Canada’s ten-year plan each year and, since 2010, the US Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has provided billions of dollars for projects.”

5. FISHING SURVEY RESULTS:

A FISHING IN ONTARIO survey that’s done every five years, reveals that the most fishing activity in our province takes place on Georgian Bay, Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. The Ontario Recreational Fishing study reported we have 795,733 active anglers who spend \$1,618,217,000.00 a



year on their sport with walleye the most popular species caught on open water or ice fishing. And the amount of fishing activity in southern Ontario was 3.3 times higher than that of the north. The stats are reported in the July edition of Ontario Out of Doors, a print arm of OFAH.

6. TACKLESHARE – alive and well

TackleShare is a program that has been run by the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters since 1998. It has been enjoyed by thousands of users. With help from Ontario Power Generation OFAH delivers TackleShare, which promotes fishing as a fun, family activity that can be done anywhere in Ontario. Check out your nearest TackleShare outlet in Warton at the Public Library where you and your family, at no charge, can



borrow and use top notch fishing tackle. Tackleshare

has a new video showing you how to properly hook a live minnow. It outlines the advantages and disadvantages of each method. The aim? To help you keep your minnow alive longer and catch you more fish. Here it is:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNWe9h89aH0>

TACKLESHARE SPONSORS

Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters: <https://www.ofah.org/>

Ontario Power Generation: <https://www.opg.com/>



7. CONTROLLING SEA LAMPREY:

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission's (GLFC) sea lamprey program resumed its full stream treatment schedule last year after a reducing its lamprey control schedule during the pandemic. That's according to Commission Chair Jim McKane who recently provided a lamprey control update to members of the Sydenham Sportsmen's Association.

McKane reported that in 2020 control efforts were reduced as crews faced travel restrictions resulting in only a few streams treated. Commission staff use lampricides, selective pesticides, to kill lamprey larval. He reported that across the Great Lakes lamprey populations increased during the pandemic but noted "with another full year of treatments this year the control program expects to have sea lamprey populations back to pre-pandemic levels within a few years."



Since the 1950's lamprey populations have been reduced by 90%. The Commission celebrates 10 years this summer at the Owen Sound Salmon Spectacular with its community outreach display which explains the importance of its efforts to control lamprey populations. It is clear without the commission's lamprey control program our thriving Great Lakes sports and commercial fisheries would not exist. The Commission led the (\$4,000,000) 4-million dollar renovation of Denny's Dam in Southampton with repairs designed to prevent the spread of lamprey upstream.

8. MNRF MINISTER ON FISHING & HUNTING:

In an interview with Ontario Out of Doors magazine, Graydon Smith of Gravenhurst said he has a “deep and unyielding respect” for anglers and hunters. The Ontario Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry said he “understands and appreciates why they do it because of where I grew up, and how I grew up. I appreciate the respect that anglers and hunters have for the natural environment, for fish, for wildlife, and for conservation efforts. It’s incredibly important to foster and support hunting and fishing in Ontario.” Smith said he enjoys the relaxation factor while fishing as well as “the enhanced appreciation you get for nature and the outdoors.”



On the importance of conservation, something to which OFAH is deeply dedicated “conservation is a deeply personal thing. take those steps in your life to make sure that what you hold near and dear is preserved and maintained. Conservation is understanding the environment and taking responsibility to ensure it’s left in better shape than when you found it.”
That’s something all our volunteer conservation groups strive for.

9. Over the last 5 years the province has received more than 10 wild pig sightings a month.

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

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.



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 2022, 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 restriction 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.

10. IT IS TICK SEASON:

There have been more than 3,000 cases of Lyme disease in Ontario since 2021. OFAH and the Ontario Government remind us “there is an increase in cases of Lyme and other diseases transmitted by ticks...simple, precautionary measures can reduce the risk of getting bitten by a tick. This includes being vigilant in wooded or grassy areas, even in your backyard, and doing routine tick checks after enjoying the outdoors.”



How to prevent bites

- **Wear light-coloured clothing, so it's easier to spot ticks**
- **Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants tucked into your socks, and closed-toed shoes**
- **Use an insect repellent containing DEET or icaridin**
- **Check yourself, your children, and your pets for ticks after being outdoors. Any ticks found should be removed**
- **Put clothes on high heat in a dryer for at least 10 minutes before washing clothing after spending time outdoors**

How to remove them

Ticks are very small and hard to see. When found, they should be removed immediately using fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to your skin as possible, officials said. Afterwards, wash the area with soap and water and then disinfect the area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or an iodine swab.



If you have any health concerns after a tick bite, consult a health care provider as soon as possible. Most cases of Lyme disease can be treated successfully with antibiotics.

If left untreated, Lyme disease can make you feel tired and weak. In severe cases, it can affect your heart, nerves, liver, and joints, and, in very rare cases, cause death. With OFAH membership comes special Lyme Disease insurance coverage. With a confirmed diagnosis you will qualify for a specific benefit that will pay a lump sum if you are first diagnosed with Lyme disease while insured under the OFAH AD&D special policy. The benefit amount is \$2,500.

For more information on ticks and Lyme disease, visit [here](#).

11. MIDLAND CLUB 100 YEARS

The Georgian Bay Hunters and Anglers an active Zone H OFAH affiliated club, is celebrating its 100th anniversary. The milestone will be marked on Saturday September 16, 2023, the same day as the National Hunting Trapping Fishing Heritage Day celebrated across Canada. This century old club will host a full schedule of activities and events inside and outside the clubhouse. Instructors will be on hand to show visitors how to hunt and fish. Club ponds will be open for fishing. The archery range will allow participants to learn the basics of using a compound bow and or a crossbow.

The outdoor gun range will be open for participants to learn about firearms safety, the care and usage of firearms such as air soft rifles (pellet guns), and shot guns. No PAL required.

Directors from OFAH Zone H are expected to attend the celebrations to wish the Midland club another successful 100 years of conservation.



12. OFAH MEETINGS:

In September I hope to attend my first in-person OFAH BOARD meeting as a Director. It's in Peterborough September 7 & 8 and will be the first face -to-face Director's meeting in 3 yrs. The most recent on-line board session involved 55 people from across the province. 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.



The address is 82571-82599 Side Road 6, Owen Sound.

These meetings provide an opportunity to connect with OFAH at the Zone level and hear about both local and provincial fish and wildlife issues. Join us to learn more about what is going on in our area while you share your passion for the outdoors with like-minded individuals. Every OFAH member who signs in at the meeting will be eligible to win a \$75 attendance draw. These meetings are open to the public. For more info. please contact Zone H Chair Mike Evers at d_evers@rogers.com.

Thanks to Kat McCulloch who skillfully edits these reports. These days there are HUNDREDS OF subjects I could tackle for inclusion in these reports. Hopefully the ones chosen are of interest to our anglers, hunters, sports shooters and conservationists with BPSA and across Zone H.

*Please have a Happy Healthy Summer
Stu Paterson on OFAH for BPSA*

