

OFAH ZONE "H" report for BPSA Stu Paterson – September 2025

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



1. TWO ROD CAMPAIGN INTENSIFIES:

Georgian Bay anglers are not giving up on their quest to allow two rods per person trolling for cold-water species trout and salmon.

The 11-thousand member Zone H of the Ontario Federation of Anglers & Hunters (OFAH) has added its weight to the debate.



At a July meeting in Duntroon, members of Zone H and OFAH Zone G voted unanimously to support two rods for boat anglers on Georgian Bay and the two-rod petition launched by Georgian Triangle Anglers Association member Jamie Barry. "Amend Georgian Bay Fishing Regulations to allow two rods per person."



Barry's petition says in part:

"Georgian Bay is the only part of the Great Lakes, where on the Canadian side, we are limited to one rod per person. Contrast this with other parts of the Great Lakes in Canada where two rods are permitted per person, or even on the American side where three are allowed. This disparity creates an uneven playing field. By changing the rules and allowing two rods per person, we ensure that enthusiasts, especially children, remain engaged and excited throughout their fishing adventures. Increasing rod limits in boats can significantly enhance the fishing experience by increasing any chances of catching fish, maintaining interest and fostering a life long passion for fishing in the younger generation."

Barry points out this proposed change "does not alter the limits concerning how many fish can be retained."

So far more than 1-thousand anglers have supported the petition. If you haven't already done so, please sign the petition at change.org/2_rods_2_fish and spread the word."

Jamie Barry – Georgian Triangle Anglers



Reaction from OFAH head office is positive.

Our federation represents 70-thousand anglers, hunters, conservationists and outdoors enthusiasts.

Adam Weir - OFAH Fisheries Biologist:

"The OFAH has been advocating for two-line rules to be standardized across the Great Lakes for nearly 15 years including establishing a working group on the issue consisting of every MNR management unit. While this eventually led to recent successes in Lakes Superior and Erie, we are still seeking similar changes to Georgian Bay and Lake Ontario and hope our presentation on two-line rules to the FMZ 13/14 Advisory Council helped bring about these long overdue changes."



And on the OFAH Membership Facebook page, a reminder that the TWO ROD ONLINE PETITION is live.

Read more and sign the petition here:

<https://www.change.org/.../amend-georgian-bay-fishing...>

My bottom line. It does seem odd that Georgian Bay boat anglers are limited to one rod, unlike other parts of the Great Lakes where two or even three rods are permitted.

2. MINISTER AT SALMON DERBY

Ontario's Minister of Natural Resources Mike Harris, (seen here with Derek Girodat of Georgian Shores Marina) not only caught a nice salmon visiting the 2025 Salmon Spectacular. He took time out to visit the big derby tent and chat with anglers.



I discussed issues affecting us fisher folks with the Minister and his Policy Advisor.

They included:

- The possibility of adding a rep from the fish stocking community to the SON Governance Council which oversees the commercial fishery in our region.
- The request by SON for a 10% share of money we pay for Ontario Fishing and Hunting licenses
- The need for SON to share the taxpayer supported fisheries research their aboriginal scientists have been doing for the past ten years
- Ways of controlling aboriginal gill netting to reduce the danger of nets being tangled in downriggers of sports fishers.
- The fact SON fishers discarded large salmon from gill-nets laid days before the Salmon Spectacular, simply throwing them into the water for gulls to devour.

Harris said he enjoyed himself so much at the Salmon Spectacular he hopes to be back to fish again next year. I was pleased that the Minister's policy advisor was willing to listen to our concerns.

3. INVASIVES THREAT

It happened at the summer Zone H meeting in Duntroon.

Shaylyn Jordan with the OFAH Invasive Species Program informed us about the hundreds of invasives that threaten Ontario's biodiversity.



For example, water soldier:

- crowds out native vegetation resulting in decreased plant biodiversity.
- can change surrounding water chemistry, which will harm phytoplankton and other aquatic organisms.
- dense mats of water soldier hinder recreational activities, such as boating, fishing and swimming.
- sharp leaf edges can cut swimmers and individuals who handle water soldier plants. Caution should be taken whenever handling the plant.



At the 2025 Owen Sound Salmon Spectacular two reps from the OFAH Invasive Species program were front and center promoting the new Ontario Phragmites Action (OPA) program



This program is designed to manage invasive phragmites across Ontario. OPA promotes mapping and management, based on best practices across northern, southwestern, eastern, and central Ontario. It is designed to reduce the impact of invasive phragmites on the economy, environment, and society.

In the past Owen Sound and South Bruce peninsula has had success removing tons of phragmites near Oliphant and on the Pottamatomini river.





Invading Species Awareness Program (ISAP)
 Advisor Brook Schryer:
“Phragmites is one of the most aggressive invasive plants globally and spreads rapidly through its root structures that quickly crowd out native species, particularly in wet areas such as ditches, bogs, and fens.”

Over the summer, ISAP technicians worked with the Invasive Species Centre, Nature Conservancy of Canada, and the MNR spreading the word province-wide. This action program issued a call for proposals to the Invasive Phragmites Control Fund, that should convince more people to act on invasives in their communities.

4. ZONE H FISH STOCKERS IN TROUBLE:

The 42-year-old Lake Huron Fishing Club has issued a statement suggesting it could be forced to close its two volunteer run hatcheries. One in Southampton, the other in Kincardine.

The word came from President Kodey Buchanan:



“If we lose any of our usual funding (Steel Dreams, donations, chantry) and continue to have a decline in members/donations, or lose Community Hatchery Program funding, you will see both hatcheries closed in 3 years. This fact is based on our current account balances and forecasts. We have been able to shed about \$12,000.00 a year in expenses over the last 2 years. Which is great but over that time feed has shot up in price.”



“We could be at the tipping point where it’s to late. Hopefully people who fish the Huron shoreline and or Huron tribs. will step up and help fund the fishery they love.

Just remember, when you catch a clipped fish, that they didn’t magically get born without an adipose fin. You would think anglers would want to not only support the fishery, but support our volunteers by keeping these hatcheries going.



Thank you to the volunteers who help keep the fishery strong and healthy.”



Kodey Buchannan – President Lake Huron Fishing Club

www.lakehuronfishingclub.com to become a member or make a donation.

5. GILLNETS:

Ohio banned gill nets on their section of Lake Erie...this resulted in the worlds best walleye fishery. If we banned gill nets on Georgian Bay and Lake Huron, imagine the sports fishery that would result. Ohio banned gill nets in 1984 mostly due to concerns about bycatch – the unintentional capture of non-target species – and their lethal effects on wildlife, leading to a prohibition on the Ohio section of Lake Erie. While gill nets are designed to entangle fish by their gills, their nearly invisible nature in water can also lead to the accidental capture and death of other aquatic animals, including marine mammals and seabirds.



Gill nets are indiscriminate and can accidentally catch and kill many non-target species, including fish stocked for the sports fishery and mammals, turtles, and birds, in addition to the intended fish.

Efforts have been made to encourage the use of more selective fishing gear in Ohio that reduces bycatch and minimizes harm to non-target species.

Delegates to the Zone H summer meeting agreed gillnets are a scourge on our sports fishery. However current laws give commercial fishers the upper hand when it comes to the type of nets they use.

6. EVERS HONOURED:

We are proud to report that our Zone H Chair Mike Evers has been honoured with the OFAH/Jack O'Dette Conservation Leadership Award.

The presentation was made in Peterborough at an in-person meeting of Directors of OFAH Membership.

The OFAH Executive Director Matt Demille made the presentation:

“The OFAH/Jack O’Dette Conservation Leadership Award recognizes the hard work and dedication of a director selected by their peers. Jack O’Dette was a dedicated individual who served on the board for many years, and as our organization’s president in 1965 and 1966. He was an angler, hunter and conservationist, and cherished all conservation activities that would make the OFAH a better and stronger organization.

The latest winner is very deserving of this award. He originally joined the board through his zone executive committee in 2007, and then continued on as a director in 2016, eventually becoming chair in 2021.



De Mille noted that, Mike Evers has been of great value to the board over the years, and a champion of head office staff including the policy team, who have worked with him on many issues. His passion, advice and insights have benefitted the OFAH as a whole, particularly his knowledge and expertise on our Land Use/Access/Trails Advisory Committee. He has followed up a successful career as a conservation officer

by giving back to our natural resources through leadership with his local Barrie District Hunters & Anglers Conservation Club, Zone H, and the OFAH board of directors. Join me in congratulating the recipient of the 2024 Jack O'Dette Conservation Leadership Award, Zone H Chair Mike Evers."

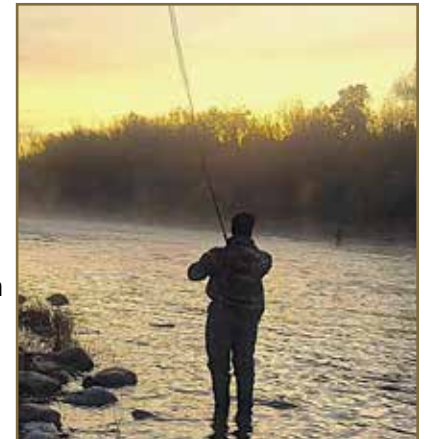
Mike said he was totally surprised by this recognition and humbly accepted the honour noting "I have only been doing what I think is best for our important cause."



7. GRAVEL PIT CONCERNS:

OFAH speaks alongside a Grey County citizens group on gravel pits near the Saugeen River.

The Saugeen is one of the most productive sports fishing rivers in Canada. The Saugeen Preservation Society worries about two new pit applications between Hanover and Durham, and the proposed expansion of another.



I echoed the group's concerns before West Grey council on behalf of the OFAH. *"OFAH supports an interim control bylaw that would pause these applications for one year. We suggest carefully studying and creating West Grey policies, to control aggregate projects. A key policy aspect is enacting a 2-kilometer setback from any waterway.*

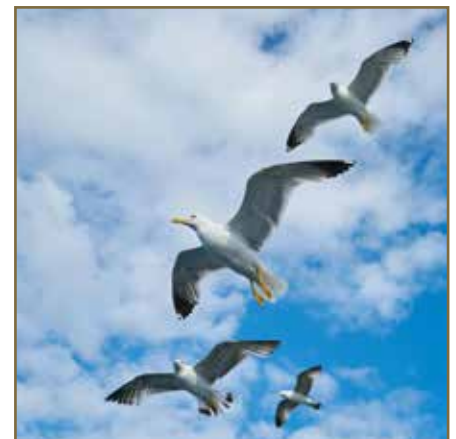
We urge West-Grey Council to halt further aggregate mining until policies are developed to protect the environment and its citizens. Then carefully study the implications these projects would have on this important watershed."

The Preservation Society worries about the pit's negative effect on the environment and nearby property values. The groups Al Ashton says *"we know if you are within a half kilometer of a gravel pit your property value goes down by at least 25%. We're talking about millions of dollars of property value loss to people who live near these pit sites."*

OFAH is concerned that one proposed gravel mine plans to take 7,920,000 litres of water a day (5,500 litres a minute) from the ground for washing stone near the river, something the group says the environment won't be able to handle. West Grey Council delayed for one month, any decision on a one-year pause, on gravel pit applications.

8. AGGRESSIVE GULLS:

An increase in aggressive seagull behavior along the Lake Huron shore has left locals feeling frustrated and anxious for action. The birds migrated from the beach to High Street, going after adults and children to steal their food and ice cream. People complain the gulls shove their beaks into the ice cream while still in their hands. One resident says she was chased by multiple birds to her car— even after she tossed her cone in the garbage. Saugeen Shores Mayor Luke Charbonneau says he is aware of this issue and is actively looking for solutions.



Brenda Reany at the Southampton Post Office sees people attacked daily. “Many have been small children. You can see that they are absolutely terrified. Breaks my heart. Wish something could be done to change this.”

Seagulls are one of many birds protected under the Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994 in Canada.

The Saugeen Shores police issued a public service announcement reminding the community about this Act and the penalties associated if a seagull is disturbed, injured or killed. This caution came out after someone broke a bird’s wing by hitting it with a chair at the main beach in Port Elgin.

The fine for injuring or killing a seagull is \$460 and can result in criminal charges.



9. STUDENT VOLUNTEER HOURS:

All students in Ontario secondary schools are required to complete a minimum of 40 hours of community involvement in order to graduate and receive an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). The purpose of this is to encourage students to develop an understanding of the various roles they can play in their community.

Our federation has announced a new program which will benefit students and get them involved in outdoors pursuits. The OFAH Foundation is now offering Ontario high school students the opportunity to earn volunteer hours through online, self-paced modules focused on invasive species, biodiversity, and community clean-ups. Fill out the registration form below to sign up for our virtual volunteer program. Once registered, you’ll receive a link to access the Google Classroom and a schedule for the required live virtual session.

Start earning your volunteer hours today!

Virtual Program Dates: May 1 – October 10, 2025

Contact OFAH | Get in Touch with Us

10. SOLID MNR DETECTIVE WORK:

Two Sudbury area residents have been handed fines of \$1,660 each and forfeited their rods and reels to the Crown, after pleading guilty to overfishing walleye on the North Channel. The Ministry of Natural Resources reports Adam Taylor of Lively and Robert Krueger of Sudbury pleaded guilty to catching and keeping more than their daily quota of fish and to catching and retaining fish of a prohibited size. In court it was detailed how Taylor and Krueger were returning from fishing the North Channel of Lake Huron when they were contacted by a conservation officer in the Town of Spanish. An investigation revealed the two had caught and retained eight walleye in total, five of which were of prohibited size.



The sport fishing licence daily catch limit for walleye on the North Channel is two, with none between 41 to 56 centimetres. Taylor’s and Krueger’s fishing rods and reels were seized, along with the fish.

And in our region. An angler from Midland, Michigan pleaded guilty to catching and keeping 22 yellow perch over the legal limit. He was fined \$2,000 and is prohibited from obtaining a fishing licence or engaging in any fishing-related activities in Ontario for two years. All his fishing equipment used that day was seized.

On February 11, 2025, a conservation officer encountered the individual while ice fishing on Lake Simcoe. An inspection revealed that the man had caught and retained 72 yellow perch, 22 more than the daily sport fishing licence quota of 50.

If you want to report a natural resources violation, you can contact conservation officers by calling the MNR TIPS line at 1-877-847-7667. You can also call Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-TIPS.

Learn more: <https://news.ontario.ca/.../ontario-protecting-lake...>

An advertisement for the MNR TIPS line. It features a woman in a green uniform and a dark cap, sitting in a vehicle and looking at a smartphone. The background is dark with yellow and white text. The text reads: "Do you have INFORMATION that can HELP SOLVE a case?" Below this, it says "24/7 MNR tips line 1-877-847-7667 ontario.ca/MNRTips".

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11. FIREARMS SURVEY:

A Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF) Leger survey found that most citizens believe tougher measures to combat illegal gun smuggling from the United States is the most effective way to fight gun crime. 55% of those surveyed believe tougher measures to fight smuggling is the best way to fight gun crime. This greatly exceeded the 26% who believe banning the sale and ownership of various gun models and the associated buyback program is the best way to fight gun crime. The CTF release pointed to several police unions that are against the buyback, and the \$756 million cost estimated by the Parliamentary Budget Officer.



Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters
Manager of Policy Mark Ryckman:

“the general public is waking up to the reality that, at a time when many Canadians are struggling and our economy is under threat, their government is willing to spend billions to buy firearms from law-abiding individuals...not only will this fail to reduce gun violence and improve public safety, it’s also an ‘opportunity cost’ that misdirects funding that could be better used to improve border security through increased staffing and new technologies, address gang violence and justice reform.”

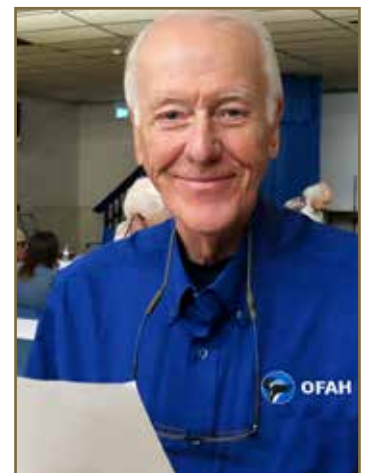
“The government finds itself trapped by sunk costs and unrealistic promises, and probably feels there’s no way out but through. And that’s a terrible way to make public policy.”

12. At the virtual September OFAH Membership annual general meeting, Executive Director Matt De Mille asked us to spread the word about joining our federation.



“An organization’s strength is often measured by its size — because numbers matter. Numbers bring relevance, credibility, and clout. In advocacy, numbers represent political currency. The more members we have, the more weight we carry when pushing for policy that benefits Ontario’s anglers and hunters. Our size also makes OFAH a valuable partner in the eyes of sponsors and advertisers, which leads to better perks and member benefits. To grow stronger, we must keep our members, welcome back those we’ve lost, and reach new ones. That’s why we’re launching a growth campaign, with incentives for new members and referral rewards for those who help bring them in. You, our current members, are key to this. Whether you’ve been with us for a year, 10 years, or 25-plus, you already know the value of an OFAH membership. Share what you know. Spread the word to your friends, family, and networks. By growing our community, we grow our impact — and that’s strength in numbers.” Matt DeMille OFAH Executive Director

This is my fourth OFAH Zone H report for 2025. I hope to have two more for you before Christmas on the concerns and issues facing Zone H anglers and Hunters. Have a safe, successful fall hunt. Keep smiling it is easier than frowning.



Stu Paterson – Director Membership section - OFAH Zone H
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