



Historic Acton comes to life with gigantic mural at Mill and Main

- Photo by Ted Tyler.

Science Matters

- by David Suzuki



Fish stocks face stormy times

In the movie *The Perfect Storm*, fishermen brave a brutal Atlantic storm in a desperate search for the swordfish they need to catch in order to feed their families. On the surface, it may appear to be just another empty Hollywood spectacle, but underneath all the special effects is a message of conservation and sustainable use of our marine resources.

Overfishing has greatly reduced the size and abundance of swordfish. Forty years ago, the average size of swordfish caught was over 100 kg. Today, it has dropped by two-thirds. As a result, fishermen are travelling further and spending more time at sea looking for fish.

But swordfish are not the only commercial fish species in trouble. When I was going to high school in the 1950s, a teacher told us, "The oceans are a limitless source of protein." They may have seemed that way then, but now fish stocks have plummeted around the world. From Newfoundland cod to British Columbian salmon and Chilean sea bass, once-plentiful fisheries are failing, usually as a result of overfishing. Worldwide, 66 per cent of individual fish stocks are either fully or over-exploited.

At one time, fish and other aquatic species had places of refuge - areas where they could feed and breed without interference from humans. Today, extensive commercial

fishing, destructive techniques like bottom trawling, changes in ocean temperatures, pollution and other factors have left little room for fish to live and grow. Meanwhile, instead of conserving fish stocks, fisheries management practices have focussed on maximizing catch sizes and in the event of a stock collapse, finding other species for fishermen to catch.

One way to help many depleted species recover and pave the way to more sustainable fisheries practices is to create marine protected areas. These areas are the underwater equivalent of parks, where fishing and other resource-extraction activities are prohibited.

Currently, there are very few such areas. In

British Columbia, they represent just .01 per cent of coastal waters. But they can have a tremendous impact on the diversity and abundance of marine life. Researchers have found that some fish populations in protected areas increase in abundance by as much as 1,300 per cent! One of the most successful is near the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida. The area has been closed to fishing for 40 years - not for conservation, but for safety and security concerns. Still, results have been spectacular and the area is now lush with life. Anglers are pulling in record-sized fish from the surrounding waters.

Currently, there are very few such areas. In British Columbia, they represent just .01 per cent of coastal waters. But they can have a tremendous impact on the diversity and abundance of marine life. Researchers have found that some fish populations in protected areas increase in abundance by as much as 1,300 per cent! One of the most successful is near the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida. The area has been closed to fishing for 40 years - not for conservation, but for safety and security concerns. Still, results have been spectacular and the area is now lush with life. Anglers are pulling in record-sized fish from the surrounding waters.

Currently, there are very few such areas. In British Columbia, they represent just .01 per cent of coastal waters. But they can have a tremendous impact on the diversity and abundance of marine life. Researchers have found that some fish populations in protected areas increase in abundance by as much as 1,300 per cent! One of the most successful is near the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida. The area has been closed to fishing for 40 years - not for conservation, but for safety and security concerns. Still, results have been spectacular and the area is now lush with life. Anglers are pulling in record-sized fish from the surrounding waters.

Aquaculture, which involves raising fish or other marine organisms like farm animals in pens or containers, is often billed as a good way to reduce stress on depleted wild fish stocks. However, aquaculture's benefit to wild fish stocks fluctuates greatly depending on the type of fish raised and the method of farming.

A recent article in the journal *Nature*, for example, re-

ported that aquaculture for herbivorous or omnivorous species such as carp and molluscs can greatly contribute to global fish supplies. However, the opposite is true for other types of aquaculture activity, including shrimp and salmon farming. The scientists conclude that these farms, "potential damage to ocean and coastal resources through habitat destruction, waste disposal, exotic species

and pathogen invasions, and large fish meal and oil requirements may further deplete wild fisheries stocks." Clearly, this is not a sustainable alternative.

Consumer awareness and action can help. There are several good sources of information to find out exactly what types of fisheries are the most sustainable and have the least impact on ecosys-

tems. One is the Seafood Watch Chart from the Monterey Bay Aquarium at www.mbbayaq.org. Another is the US-based National Audubon Society at www.audubon.org.

Consumers have a choice. We can all help reduce pressure on wild stocks and we can start by choosing better options than simply throwing swordfish or farmed salmon on the grill.

T.J. CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION
 CUSTOM SIDEWALKS FLOORS STEPS POOL DECKS DRIVEWAYS ALL REPAIRS
CALL LARRY (519) 853-0540
 FOR FREE ESTIMATES

Braida & Henry
 BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS
Serving the Community for 40 Years
 67 Mill Street East Acton
 853-1160

BNR TOWING CAA
24 Hour Service
 • Flatbed Service
 • Lockout Service
 • Boosting & Gas
853-5848

Dan C. Dolliver
 ONTARIO LAND SURVEYOR
 Legal & Topographic Surveys
 54 Mill St. E. Tel. 853-2502 Fax 853-1504

VILLAGE Rent-A-Car
 FROM \$99 A WEEK
856-0000
 286 Alma Street, Rockwood

CONSTABLE RIDDLE'S CORNER
 With Village Constable **Bill Riddle**

PARENTS... WHERE ARE YOUR CHILDREN?
The Halton Regional Police receive complaints from the citizens of this community on a regular basis, about damage being done all over the town. Also, requests to stop people loitering at different gathering places both in the Downtown core area and other areas of this town.
 The police officers try in various ways to tell the youth who hang around to move along and try hard to keep an eye out for those who damage the property of others or property of the town. But the police are not baby-sitters. If your child is just hanging around he or she may not be the one doing the damage but do you know that for certain, and are you going to be surprised when you get the call from the police station to come down and get your child. Damage is being done by some of these youth. Many of their peers know who is doing the damage but do nothing to stop the damage being done or calling the police and assisting to prosecute the offenders. Many do not become involved in their civic duty because it is not the "cool" thing to do, even though it costs you the parents more and more money in taxes and insurance.
 The citizens and the officers who patrol the town of Acton must work together to keep our town safe. Many citizens do help, but, a great many do not want to get involved.
IT IS YOUR TOWN, BE A PART OF MAKING IT A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE.

JETLINK
 Door to Door Airport Service

Tyler Transport Ltd.
 379 Queen St. E.
853-1550

PETE'S AUTO PAINT AND RESTORATION
 Cars and Trucks of All Sizes
 For a Free Estimate Call:
Peter Hargrave
 Proprietor
856-9356
 4923 7th Line, Eramosa RR 4 Rockwood

Royal Fishing Tackle
 For all your fishing needs
853-2460
 In the Royal Jug City

NELJIS CONSTRUCTION LIMITED

 ROAD BUILDING
 EARTH MOVING
 R.R. #1 Acton **853-0960**

YOURWAY MUFFLER PLUS

 Custom Pipe Bending
 Lic. Safety Inspection Stn.
17 Agnes St. Acton 853-0900



CUPCAKES AND TREATS: The Acton Baptist Youth Group had lots of treats for hungry Trunk Sale patrons this past Saturday. Beth Passmore, left and Jennifer Landsborough tempted passerby's with these baked goods. - Angela Tyler photo