

FISH STOCKING

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Sport fisherman often ask why the Ministry of Natural Resources does not stock more lakes, or why we do not stock certain lakes in which they are having only limited success. The reasons are many and we will try to explain a few of them.

Before a lake is stocked a survey is carried out to determine it's area, depth, chemical characteristics, spawnings sites, etc. At the same time several nets are set in the lake to determine fish species and population levels. Once this is completed the lake can then be placed in one of three categories.

- 1) A "put and take" lake in which there are no suitable spawning sites for the desired species, but that will be able to support a population of the stocked species.
- 2) A lake that is suitable for certain species but that at present, contains undesirable species which would make stocking unsuccessful. Lake Superior with the lamprey reducing the lake trout population would fall in this category. Undesirable species such as lamprey must be eliminated or reduced drastically before such a lake can be restored to it's former level of productivity.
- 3) Lakes that are suitable for the species to be stocked, with adequate spawning areas, food species, and other non-competitive species. After stocking, such a lake should develop a self sustaining population of the introduced species.

Once we have evaluated the biological aspects of fish stocking, we then must consider a set of non-biological criteria, such as public demand, accessibility of lakes, and availability of stock.

Most fishermen want relatively easy access, so there is always a greater demand for stocking accessible lakes than for the more remote lakes. Lakes to be stocked must have public access. Lakes surrounded by private property without public access are not considered for stocking. Most fish species are stocked either as fingerlings or yearlings from Ontario hatcheries.

Sometimes disease will strike the broodstock of a hatchery and deplete the main source of eggs. This has happened recently at the Dorion fish hatchery. Because of the decontamination procedures required we cannot expect to obtain fish from Dorion until 1978 or 1979.

Lakes in which anglers had poor success

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often are not suitable for stocking to increase the population. If conditions were suitable the population would likely be at a higher level. Any fish stocked will be affected by the same agency which prevented the original population from reaching a high population level, for example insufficient food, competition from other species, inadequate spawning sites, excessive predation, or unfavourable water temperatures.

The Ministry endeavours to stock as many lakes as possible within the framework of constraints described here. Lists of stocked lakes are available on request from our offices in Terrace Bay and Manitouwadge.

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