

Fishing licence has its good points too

By ART BRIGGS-JUDE
While the Ontario resident sport fishing licence is viewed as an inconvenient government tax by some people, there is no doubt its introduction a year ago has given our fresh water fishery a much needed boost.

Apart from the \$9 million annual revenue that will be

pumped back into the resource, this user pay concept has created an added awareness amongst the fishing public of the problems and conditions affecting the sporting activity they so dearly enjoy.

In the past the yearly costs of the Ministry of Natural Resources' fishing programs were

part of this province's annual budget.

As such, any allotment to sport fishing was dependent not only on priorities within their ministry, but on any number of demands in the many other branches of the provincial government.

Thus if it was a particularly hazardous fire year, a large portion of the Natural Resources' budget was used to finance the extra costs involved in fighting fires.

Consequently other programs and plans such as fish studies, expanded stocking, spawning rehabilitation, and law enforcement were scaled down accordingly.

Similarly the outbreak of forest

pests such as the recent Gypsy Moth plague dictated the Ministry's priorities in that regard.

The all-time high water levels recorded in 1986 on the Great Lakes is another example of how the provincial pie was cut.

This emergency situation necessitated nearly \$2 million in MNR funds to be allocated for flood and erosion control including the issuance of a million bags of sand to help protect residential property.

Locked into an Ontario budget that included even highway construction expenditures the Ministry of Natural Resources was open for mounting criticism.

Yet while MNR's Fisheries

Branch was hard at it trying to come up with solutions to maintain the sport fishery in some areas, the problems were being compounded in other ways.

Deteriorating water quality, added fishing pressure, acid rain, and the loss of nursery habitat due to shoreline development on many waterways were very real factors.

They affected not only fresh water fish productivity but the management of the resources as well.

Relying on past studies, background information, and public input, each MNR District in Ontario is now preparing a detailed Fisheries Management Plan.

The identification of the long-term fisheries' goals and the short term actions needed to achieve the desired results will be used as a fisheries directive until the year 2000.

In addition the MNR has an ongoing program of assessment of fish populations and spent \$5.1-million on new fish culture facilities in 1986-7.

An additional \$450,000 for Community Fishery Involvement Projects was also allotted by the ministry during the same period.

It's quite possible these projects and others, including putting additional law enforcement officers in the field, would have come about at some point in time, even without the resident fishing licence.

However I believe that by laying our 10 bucks on the line, we are staking our rightful claim not only as participants but also stewards of this magnificent past-time called fishing. Our annual vested interest is a constant monitor to a sport that can only get better.



'He was this big'

Don Greenslades poses with the 12 pound, 9 ounce walleye he caught in Rideau Lake. Recently introduced fishing licences help improve sport fishing in Ontario, although many feel they're just another form of government tax. The benefit is that the licence fees go directly to the fisheries branch to pay for fishing improvements. In other years the Ministry of Natural Resources had to rely solely on a portion of provincial funds, which was often inadequate.

—Art Briggs-Jude

Village Box Meats

SPRING SAVINGS

STUFFED
RAINBOW TROUT
(with shrimp, mushrooms & almonds)

2⁹⁹ EACH

Heat & Serve
PIZZA FINGER STIX

4⁹⁹ PKG. OF 12

SEAFOOD FINGERS 5⁹⁹

OVEN HEAT OR MICRO
STUFFED POTATOES

- Cheddar
- Sour cream
- Gourmet (cheddar, sour cream & bacon bits)

6⁹⁹ BOX OF 10

Genuine
NEW ZEALAND SPRING LAMB CHOPS

10⁹⁹ (APPROX. 3 LBS.) (16 Thick-Cut Chops)

Bacon Wrapped
FILET MIGNON

23⁹⁹ (8x 6 oz.)

BONELESS PORK
LOIN CHOPS

19⁹⁹ (18x 113g)

WINTER MIX
VEGETABLES
(Broccoli & Cauliflower)

4⁷⁹ (4 LBS.)

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SAT. 9-5
SUN. 10-5

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