

Fish stocking reductions for Lake Ontario

The Ministry of Natural Resources and New York Department of Environmental Conservation announced recently they will reduce their annual salmon and trout plantings into Lake Ontario for the next two years.

On the surface that piece of news appears to spell trouble for sports fishermen. Because the salmon and trout fishery, for the most part, is a put-and-take operation, fewer seedings means less fish will be in the swim for anglers to catch.

But probing deeper into the matter, that joint announcement just might be a move that could save the sport fishery for years to come.

Findings from several scientific agencies and universities working on Lake Ontario revealed the lake is not producing as many fish in the last few years as it did in the early 1980s. They also revealed the amount of food available for prey fish has dropped.

Those ominous signs prompted a move by both governments



Outdoors

Mike Hayakawa

to do something. In the end, the decision was to reduce fish stockings.

"The decision to reduce fish stocking is based on scientific findings, and has been made in order to sustain an attractive and diverse sport fishery on Lake Ontario in the future," said Natural Resources Minister Howard Hampton, in a recent news release.

"In addition, we will encourage an increase in the short-term harvest of salmon and trout as another way of reducing predator demand."

The Ministry points out the root of the problem lies in changes in the lake's ecosystem.

In recent years, they cite pol-

lution-control measures have reduced phosphorus levels in the lake. As a result, zooplankton levels have declined, as has the abundance of alewife and smelt - a link in the lake's food chain. These small prey fish depend on zooplankton, which thrives in nutrient-rich water. In turn, salmon and trout feed primarily on alewife and smelt.

A reduction in predator demand is required in order to sustain the entire fish community over the long-term.

Before making their decision, the Ministry fisheries managers met with various interest groups and held public meetings in St. Catharines, Mississauga, Scarborough, Port Hope and Kingston.

"Most of the people who went to our meetings agreed that stocking reductions were required in order to reduce predator demand," said Hampton.

"The feedback we received about the best way to implement stocking cuts was considered when we made our deci-

sions about the number of fish to stock in the next two years."

For this year the two agencies have set a target for predator demand which is 35-per cent lower than 1991 levels.

By 1994, additional stocking reductions in Ontario and New York waters are expected to bring about a total reduction of 47 per cent in predator demand from the 1991 level.

Ontario and New York plan to stock 5.1 million fish in Lake Ontario in 1993 and 4.5 million in 1994. This compares to a combined stocking figure of 8.1 million fish in 1991 and 7.3 million in 1992.

Of that total the Ministry will stock 1.6 million fish in 1993 and 1.5 million in 1994, compared to 2.3 million in 1992.

By 1994 the Ministry plans to reduce lake trout stocking by 54 per cent from 1992 levels, chinook salmon by 26 per cent and brown trout by 30 per cent. Rainbow trout and Atlantic salmon stocking tar-

gets are expected to remain constant.

Leftovers: The Ministry announced they have extended the grace period for anglers and hunters to obtain the new Outdoors Card and fishing and hunting licences until May 15. Most applications are now being processed in three to four weeks, the Ministry reported. Outdoors Card application forms are available from Ministry offices or licence issuers. Card applicants who have been waiting for their card for six weeks or more may call 1-800-387-7011 for information on the status of their application.

Stouffville Recreation Department offers variety of summer programs

Registrations for a number of summer programs being offered by the Whitchurch-Stouffville Recreation Department are now being accepted.

Summer

Aquatic/Camps/Tennis

Registration dates and times for the summer program line-ups as follows:

Monday, May 3
All Camps and Tennis
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Tuesday, May 4
Aquatics - After School and Session I
6:30 - 10:00 p.m.

Wednesday, May 5
Aquatics Sessions 2, 3, & 4
6:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Commencing Thursday, May 6,
registrations for all summer programmes will be received during regular business

RECREATION NEWS

hours.
Youth Golf It's Here!!!
Day(s): Wednesday
Time: 7-8 p.m.
Location: Sleepy Hollow Golf Club
Ages: 10-16 years
Fee: \$45
Dates: May 5, 12, 19 & 26
Register now at the Recreation Complex! 640-6527.

Adult and Youth Tennis
Our Spring tennis programme begins in early May. Register now and do not be disappointed.

Youth: Monday and

Wednesday (pm) \$40.
Adult: Tuesday and Thursday (pm) \$45

Fascinating Facts
One-fifth of all triathletes are women, according to the Triathlon Federation of U.S.A.

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P185/75R14	\$126.00	\$75.60	\$100.80
P195/75R14	\$131.00	\$78.60	\$104.80
P205/75R14	\$138.00	\$82.80	\$110.40
P205/70R14	\$141.00	\$84.60	\$112.80
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MARKHAM Sports

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LORI TAYLOR

Lori Taylor, a grade 12 student at Markham District H.S., scored 11 points to lead the Markham Reebok Gems girls' basketball team to the bronze medal in the Ontario Basketball Association AAA Juvenile playoffs with a 50-39 win over the Toronto Raiders at Kingston last weekend. Taylor also led the club in scoring in 2 of their 3 round robin games.

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