



Light Lines

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CRAA Top 3 Contributors to 1 Million Trees Event!

By Kathryn Billingsley,

CRAA tallied in as a "Top Contributor" in Mississauga's One Million Trees event with 39,378 trees planted in Small Organization Contributors category. We came in Top 3 overall, after Credit Valley Conservation and City of Mississauga. This is a sacred achievement for CRAA, as tree planting is instrumental in our ambition to further reduce the temperature in the Credit River and create a more hospitable environment-especially conducive for spawning fish. Not only do trees create shade for the rivers and streams during summertime, the roots stabilize banks, and branches and broken trees reach out into the water creating natural resting areas and habitats for weary travelling or spawning fish. We look forward to planting many more trees in 2017!

To get involved in this amazing cause, we urge interested people to join our Spring Volunteer Tree Planting. This day typically occurs near the end-of April or beginning of May, however if this winter continues to be mild we may be able to organize this day a couple weeks earlier and take advantage of the growing season. Our work this year has attracted the interest of tree planting groups who are looking to team up with us to make a memorable tree-planting day. To get involved with us, stay tuned with our social media platforms or mailing list. Alternatively, you can create your own tree planting event if you visit <https://www.onemilliontrees.ca/> for tree planting ideas, other interest group events, and to input your own counted trees!

Steelhead Lift Planning

CRAA Executives continue to work closely with The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to plan the Fish Transfers. There was a time when fish could be transferred freely without the coordination and supervision of MNRF staff. In 2008-2011, CRAA was transferring 250-400 fish per night- more fish in one night than we transferred throughout 2016. We are continuing to encourage the MNRF to allow us to transfer more fish-preferably on our own time- to avoid scheduling conflicts between MNRF staff, fish runs, and CRAA volunteers. We are also working with MNRF to gain approval for some ladder renovations. Sign up for our mailing list to get information on lift dates and volunteer opportunities!



Stay Connected: follow CRAA on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube!



Credit River Anglers Association Light Lines

Editor: Kathryn Billingsley

Contributions are welcome from all members *and* non-members alike.

Send your articles of interest, messages or suggestions to:

Credit River Anglers Assoc.
128 Queen Street South
PO Box 42093
Mississauga, Ontario
L5M 1K8

E-mail : info@craa.on.ca
Website : www.craa.on.ca

Our Social Media Handles:

Instagram:

@Creditriveranglers

Twitter:

@CRanglers

Facebook:

Credit River Anglers Association

CRAA Volunteers in Action!

Executive meetings – This year we are relying on our members for a good turnout at public meetings. Public meeting information is sent out via our mailing list, so sign up now!

Spring Fishing Show – CRAA will be at the 2017 Spring Fishing and Boat Show between February 17-20 at The International Centre, 6900 Airport Road in Mississauga. To volunteer for the show, contact Winston Tham via Facebook message or e-mail at Winston.Tham@hotmail.com

Sportsmens' Show – CRAA volunteers will be operating a booth at the Toronto Sportsmens' Show on March 15-19. Contact Winston Tham if you'd like to volunteer your time for this show.

Spring fish lift – CRAA volunteers are working to assist the MNRF at the Norval fishway in March-April again this year.

Steelhead transfer – The transfer of adult steelhead is ongoing this spring. Look for more lifts and transfers once the weathers warms up again. To get involved in lift opportunities, sign up with our Mailing List or follow our Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram accounts.

Spring Volunteer Tree Planting. Stay tuned to CRAA's Facebook Page for updates when the next tree planting event will be held. This year we seem to have piqued interest in other groups who want to help!

CRAA hatchery – Our hatchery helpers have worked hard this winter. We have a few new young hatchery helpers who have done great jobs in taking care of our growing fish. We currently have 20,000 MNRF Brown Trout, some Coho, and Steelhead in the incubators and raceways as well this winter.

Major Projects- We will be having a hatchery renovation when the weather warms up a bit. We are hoping to get some major work done on the tanks and water-systems to optimize flow for our fish. A hatchery work day and at least one stream cleanup will be planned and announced via our social media platforms. This is a great opportunity to bring the young ones along and get them interested in conservation!

Mailing List- Due to the newly-enacted Canadian Anti-Spam Law (CASL) our mailing list now requires members to sign up. To sign up to our mailing list visit <http://eepurl.com/cwtq99>.

New Volunteers Welcome!

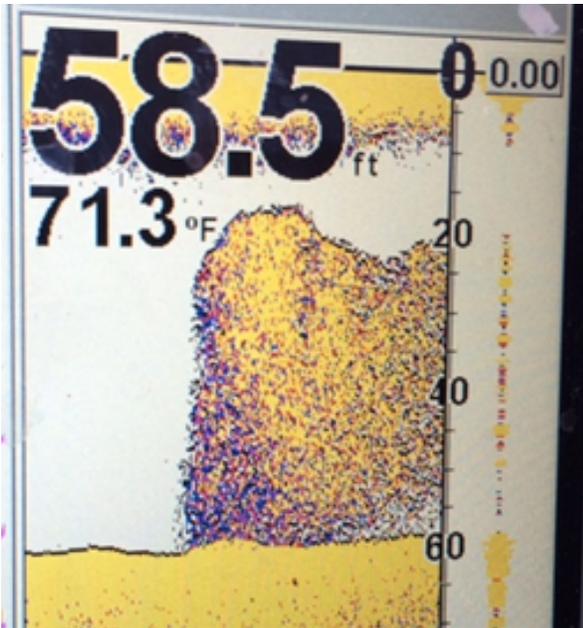
We are very fortunate to have gained a few new valuable team members recently; Mack, Trevor, and JJ started helping at the hatchery in 2016 and their impact is reflected in the condition of the fish and tanks at the hatchery. For Mack, conservation has always been a theme in his life. Now, he studies Heritage Carpentry. He reclaims wood and antique tools, and has an eye for finding and creating traditional wooden handicrafts. His favourite aspect of helping out with CRAA is taking care of the eggs and seeing the direct relationship between the effort invested in a batch of eggs and the quality of the fish produced. JJ is in school for Environmental Management at Seneca and has a fiery passion for the outdoors. He works towards creating a sustainable environment for humans and animals to get along in. Trevor loves working with the fish and giving back to the river that has always been a part of his home. He hopes to one day catch a healthy hatchery fish that was raised by Craa. How is that for serendipity?! A big warm welcome to CRAA's newest 'sac-fry' members! The success of this organization depends on younger generations taking the reins and holding the vision of a thriving healthy ecosystem alive.



Lake Ontario Summer Salmon 2016- By CRAA Chairman John Kendell

One of the world's greatest Pacific salmon fisheries is at our doorstep, within Lake Ontario, not to mention the other Great Lakes too. GTA residents are shocked to see dated photos of 30 pound salmon with the CN tower in the background-but our fishery has changed and continues to do so. The water is much clearer, there are more wild fish, fewer stocked fish, few secrets on the lake, and technology has made anglers almost unstoppable when it comes to locating and catching fish. The summer of 2016 was nothing short of awesome on the water. Big coho, lots of hungry big chinooks, and great fishing close to shore out of many ports. It was a big improvement over what were tougher years recently. My season got off to a late start and my first outing was in the last half of June. Nonetheless Justin Elia and I were fortunate to have a perfectly calm morning and were greeted by some hungry kings, coho and a laker.

Fishing out of Port Credit and heading anywhere from 50-140 feet of water and finding bait was the key. Considering it was such a hot summer the lake remained fairly cool until August, allowing for salmon and bait to remain close to shore. Conditions permitted for a great near shore fishery. So after heading to areas we know produce fish and finding the preferred 50-55f temps down 30-60 feet, we dropped the cannonballs and watched the graph. Sightings like huge schools of baitfish (in pictures below) add another key piece to the puzzle-when dinner is schooled up, the big kings will be nearby ready to feed. The MNR and NYSDEC have cautioned anglers that recent year classes of baitfish have been poor, and this will impact our salmon fishery in the coming years. Contrary to their warnings, 2016 saw strong numbers of larger baitfish (5-8") that represent the older baitfish population that were 4-5 years of age. The fish took advantage with some of the largest salmon coming from the lake in 15-20 years.



Still, we have to be prepared for some years of poor fish numbers, and understand we have an evolving fishery that does change year to year. Speaking of change, a few of the older guys like me who have rigged for 30+ years will remember the good ol' days of Port Credit and Bronte. Back in the 1980's, the fishery was more consistent and we could find great action in the East end in July. Come August, however, the "place to be" was Port Credit. I still recall days when the lineup to launch at Port Credit would extend all the way to Highway 10 along Lakeshore Boulevard. That was in a time when the Credit had the majority of the north shore salmon run.



Lake Ontario Summer Salmon 2016- By Craa Chairman John Kendell (Continued)

...Today, the fishery is much different; Wild chinook have become very common; representing 40-70% of the salmon population. They come from rivers like the Salmon, Ganny, and Wilmot. Stocking in the Credit has been cut by more than half, and survival rates of stocked salmon are way down. The West end, which relied heavily on stocked salmon, now sees roughly 25% of the chinook runs we enjoyed 30 years ago. This changes the fishery dynamics. The best times for fishing the West end (north shore) is the middle of June to the middle of July in recent years. After that, we have to follow the fish Eastward. It's the opposite of what we did 30 years ago- but it can create some awesome early season action close to home, with chrome kings that are at their prime.



Last July, I enjoyed some of my best days on the lake in 30 years, with most days producing 20+ hook ups and a couple exceeding 40, with awesome numbers of mature kings. My boat had two personal bests, both set at the same time on the evening of July 20th. It starts as a typical day, dropping rods around 4pm and getting into a few fish by 6. As the sun draws closer to the horizon, the action picks up. By 7 it becomes tricky for the two of us to keep our rods down- but we know from the past month's experience, it is after sunset when all hell breaks loose. Around 8:30 we release our 8th mature King. I reset the four rods. As the rigger reaches 45 feet the dipsey rod beside me buries. Andrew grabs the rod and watches the 40 pound braid peel as the line counter quickly surpasses 600 feet. The zing of the clicker just adds to the adrenaline rush. As I maneuvered the boat for Andrew the second dipsey buried. I grabbed it and we were into our fourth double header of the night. The sun is slipping behind the escarpment and we still have two rods down.

I opt to cut our speed down because Andrew's fish is headed for New York and mine to Hamilton. Sure enough one of the rods in the rigger pops and quickly starts ripping line. My fish is at 450 feet so all I can do is watch and enjoy. The fourth rod also fires and we have two matures going out the back and two off the sides. We drop the two fish on the riggers, but we manage to boat the two dipsey fish. Mine turned out to be a Coho in the 20-22 pound range- the largest we have ever landed in the lake. Andrew's tipped the digital scale past 32 pounds. We release both to continue their journey. As dark settles in, we head for shore and reel in the other lines. A few storms in late July blew the fish offshore and fishing slowed for a few weeks, but for those willing to drive to other ports the action picked up in the middle of August out east and along the NY shoreline. As for me, I dragged the boat to Collingwood and enjoyed some great salmon action where I don't mind keeping a few for the BBQ and smoker. But that's another story.

