



LIGHT LINES

FALL 1999

Volume 10, Number 3

CRAA UPDATE

By John Kendell

Another year is coming to an end and a new year full of great fishing is soon to come. After reflecting on this past years conservation work we can be proud of CRAA's accomplishments. Our largest budget, in excess of \$100,000 in value allowed CRAA to complete the second year of our rehabilitation plan and make positive connections to enter the third year.

The year began with the usual fish ladder operation and steelhead egg collection that has become routine. The hatchery had some problems, but we still managed to stock in excess of 170,000 steelhead and 5,000 Atlantic salmon into Black and Silver Creeks, and the main Credit River, thus ensuring another good year class for the future. In late April funding from Eco-Action 2000 was approved and CRAA was able to hire a crew of 5 students to work full time for four months planting trees, doing rehabilitation, contacting land owners and more. Volunteers and students planted close to 30,000 trees this year between Inglewood and Norval, connecting the riparian corridor and establishing tree growth along the rivers edge in an unprecedented manor. With the success of the boat launch program at Port Credit we were able to continue a crew of 2 through the Fall with 3 part time co-op students. Trees were planted, electro-shocking, research, rehabilitation were completed and proposals were written for year 2000 funding.

Volunteers are still needed though. Much of the work done has fallen on a few hands. New

volunteers have taken on projects such as our website, where Jerry Tusa has done an excellent job, and new member Bruce Dobbin has updated and followed up on the hotline. We still need volunteers to head projects such as a volunteer phone tree, a newsletter editor, and someone to take over the role of Vice President, as Mike Wiedemann has to step down for family reasons.

These are three important volunteer positions that **need to be filled!** We're not talking about full time work, just a few hours a month. **Many hands make light work for all!** If you are able to take on a little work let us know, call the hotline and leave a message with how you can help. Without an editor we were unable to send out a summer 99 newsletter and this newsletter is much later than I wanted it to be. We also missed out on volunteer help without having the volunteer callers coordinated well.

Finally, we need every member to bring new members into the club. Our membership has remained steady, between 90 and 130 over the past five years. It's time we added to our numbers. Everyone is encouraged to bring a friend out for our volunteer days as well. We always need help lifting fish, running the fish hatchery and planting trees on scheduled volunteer days.

Wishing everyone a Happy Holidays and a fish filled New Year!

Credit River Anglers Association LIGHT LINES

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

Send your articles, messages
or suggestions to:

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Website : www.craa.on.ca

Or call the CRAA 24 hr hotline at:
(905) 814-5794

Contributions by John Kendell, Vince D'Ellia
and Mike Brady.

CRAA Executive

President	John Kendell
Vice President	Mike Wiedemann
Treasurer	Jack Gibbons and Jim Kendell
Secretary	Carlo Mendoza
Membership	Jurgen Richter
Volunteer Cord'tor	Aaron Bodiam
Fish Rearing	Mike Tost

Commercial advertising rates:
1/16 page - \$20.00, 1/8 page - \$30.00
1/4 page - \$50.00, 1/2 page - \$80.00

Newsletter production: 300

STREAM WATCH UPDATE

CRAA's second year of stream watch continues to be very successful with many charges laid for fishing in the sanctuary and snagging. Several blitzes were run in Erindale and the lower river valley with CRAA volunteers playing a key role. Long time volunteers, Aaron Bodiam and Mike Brady testified in court against a poacher they caught in the Sanctuary three times between the Fall of 98 and April 1999. The poacher was warned by our Stream Watch crew twice last fall and given information of the seasons and the sanctuaries. This Spring when he was caught by Aaron and Mike he had a fresh steelhead on his stringer just below the dam. When approached he ran away from our crew, so they got to their vehicles and went to other access points where the poacher may have been parked. They spotted the guy getting into his car with the fish and were able to get the license plate and further description of the poacher. The local Conservation Officer was immediately contacted and a few days later our River Watch crew accompanied Mark to the persons house to identify him. Several charges were laid and fines approaching \$1,000.00 and a fishing license suspension were laid. After attending court this summer the poacher was found guilty thanks to Aaron and Mike's quick thinking.

See, you can make a difference. If you spot an offence take all the details down, time, date, location, description, license plate and illegal act and call it to Crime Stoppers. You can also call the CRAA hotline and we will pass the information to the CO. Responsible anglers and conservationists must protect our resources - Report a Poacher!

1-800-222-TIPS

STEELHEAD RUN UPDATE

The fruits of our labour are showing up in the Credit more and more, and the pay off is silver! Following the very poor year classes of 1993 and 1994, the Credit River has had a strong increase in wild steelhead numbers since 1995, the first year we transferred adult steelhead above the Norval Dam. Since 1995 we have watched steelhead numbers increase due to our work, first with young of the year counts in 1995, then good YOY and yearling counts in 1996, continuing to this year. Finally, in the Fall of 1997 we saw a huge increase in small, 2 pound silvers coming up the river. The Spring lift of 1998 confirmed the electro-shocking data, showing a strong 1995 year class that was over 90% wild from fish ladder counts. The Spring fish ladder operation in 1999 reaffirmed that the Credit River steelhead population was continuing to grow. Over half the fish lifted in the Spring of 1999 were 1995 and 1996 year classes, up to 5 lbs. The 1993 and 1994 year classes were almost non-existent, especially wild fish from those years.

The strong year classes as a direct result of CRAA's work continue to show. Fishing this fall (1999) has been more consistent in Erindale than it has for 8 years now. Even though most of the holding water is gone, people are still catching fish, not huge numbers, but a few fish every

outing. The 95, 96 and now 1997 year classes are running the river and in good numbers. In fact, out of the 25 steelhead I've landed from Erindale this Fall, 22 have been from the 95-97 year classes and the other 3 have been big, 13 lbs to 16 lbs, likely all 1992 year class fish. All steelhead I have landed in the park have been wild, not one with a fin clip. I even landed a fish we tagged on March 27, 1999 last week. The fish had its metal jaw tag, but it had lost the yellow dorsal tag. CRAA member Mike Brady has landed many bows this fall too, including two hatchery fish.

Electro-fishing data shows that both the 1998 and 1999 steelhead year classes will be strong, even though we have had drought conditions. Again, this is due exclusively to CRAA's hatchery program, stocking fish into Silver/Black Creeks and the main Credit River. The MNR also continues to stock the river with 20,000 to 40,000 fish which are sure to add to our fishing enjoyment. However, the full potential of the Credit River steelhead fishery will not be met until the barrier is reconstructed in Inglewood and steelhead are allowed to pass the Norval Dam freely, we hope by the Fall of 2000!!! Natural reproduction will dwarf the present numbers of fish, which means better fishing for everyone on the river and the lake!

COHO'S ARE BACK

The widely anticipated return of coho salmon to the Credit River was marked with a big early run of bright, powerful coho's averaging 8 to 12 pounds. Many anglers missed the run because the fish ran the river in the middle of September in low water. Many were expecting the coho's to come in late October and November as they did a few years ago. However, the new strains the MNR has used for stocking are September run fish, entering the river with silver sides and the usual aggressive behavior. By October 15th the

coho run was all but done to the surprise of some. At the fish ladder in Streetsville we had large numbers of coho's in the ladder following every rain until the end of October, when they dropped back to spawn. The MNR does not allow coho salmon past the Streetsville Dam. Unfortunately, even with CRAA's help the MNR was unable to collect eggs from below the Streetsville Dam, however alternative egg sources exceeded the MNR hatcheries needs. Hats off to the MNR for bringing back the coho's at the request of anglers!

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN

The meetings for the Credit River Fisheries Management Plan (CRFMP) steering committee finished early this year with sub groups being formed for implementation of the plan. CRAA is involved with the rehabilitation group that will work together to raise money and implement rehabilitation work throughout the watershed. Meanwhile the CVC and MNR are committed to complete the management plan by the end of this year.

The most serious issue which has not been dealt with yet is the new barrier and its final location. It is agreed that steelhead will be allowed past Norval, but to where, and when? Steelhead must have access to Inglewood to provide them with adequate nursery habitat and cold water. It has been agreed that steelhead would **not** be allowed into the East Credit, just above Inglewood and into the Forks. The East Credit suffers high water temperatures and generally low gradient sections so there is little potential habitat for steelhead. The Forks has brown trout and some brookies, as well as one of the top sites for Atlantic salmon reintroduction.

However, there is some pressure for the barrier to be further downstream, like Terra Cotta or Glen Williams. Unfortunately summer water temperatures are too high for good survival so this is absolutely unacceptable to CRAA. **CRAA will not accept a barrier below Inglewood!** CRAA will also not accept delays in the process. CRAA has been after the MNR to find a site, a suitable barrier and get the thing built. CRAA has even offered to help with volunteers and cash!

Once the barrier is built steelhead will have access to waters they once spawned in before the last management plan blocked their access in 1989. The wild steelhead run will grow substantially in the Credit River once the access is open which will allow CRAA to concentrate on more rehabilitation.

As the year comes to a close the final location still has not been set and the process to build the barrier is lagging. CRAA will continue to lobby the MNR to get the barrier built and let the steelhead reproduce on their own!

NEW CRAA ADDRESS

CRAA has a new mailing address, as well as a new Hotline number and website address.

New address Credit River Anglers Association
128 Queen Street South
P.O. Box 42093
Mississauga, Ontario L5M 1K8

New hotline 905-814-5794

New Website www.craa.on.ca

VOLUNTEER PRIZES

All volunteers for the year 2000 will be entered into a draw to win special prizes for their efforts. For everyday you volunteer your name will be entered into a draw to win a Talon float rod, donated by D&M Rods. The more days you volunteer, the better the chances of winning. More prizes will be awarded as they are donated.

Everyone is welcome to volunteer as many times as they can!

CRAA ELECTRO-FISHING 1999

By Vince D'Elia

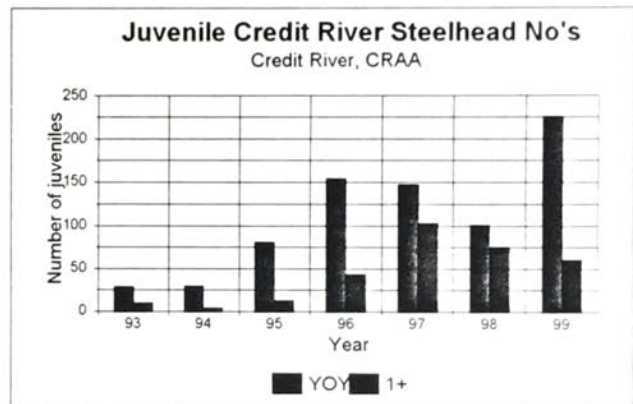
The summer of 1999 saw CRAA complete our first major electro-fishing studies on juvenile salmonids. The results reveal impressive success in some locations and the need for more conservation work and better access in other sites.

The site on Black Creek was just below the Stewarttown Dam, the property of one of our major rehabilitation works this summer. The site is also the top end of our Black Creek steelhead stocking area. The site had very high steelhead YOY (young of the year) numbers, as well as high brook trout numbers (over 20 fish in 40 m), as well as 3 Atlantic salmon yearlings with no clips (likely from CRAA's and OMNR's stocking upstream). Sites on Silver Creek also yielded juvenile steelhead in both YOY and yearling life stages. The excellent YOY steelhead numbers is a strong indication of our successful hatchery program.

Shocking results on the main Credit River below the Papermill Dam did not yield any trout of any specie, even though this is the top end of that stocking section. Water temperatures are a great concern in the main Credit River below Terra Cotta and the droughts we have experienced the

past two summers have aggravated the problem further. The graphs below show steelhead counts at selected sites on the Credit River over the past 6 to 9 years. The major increase in juvenile steelhead beginning in 1995 is the exclusive result of CRAA's work, with our initiative to restore self sustaining steelhead to the Credit River in partnership with the OMNR Aurora district.

A special thanks to Ontario Streams for providing an electro-shocker and a crew leader to assist in the data collection.



MAYOR McCallion CATCHES \$5,000 FOR CRAA

This past Summer our mayor caught the biggest salmon in the Mayor's challenge put on by the Toronto Star Salmon Hunt. Mayor McCallion put her skills to work and came up with more than a big salmon, she also brought home the prize, a cheque for \$5,000.00 to be used for fishery rehabilitation in her city, Mississauga. In July I was invited to Mississauga City Council to accept the cheque Hazel donated to CRAA to be put towards conservation work on the Credit River.

The money will be used to expand our hatchery work and assist in the massive stream rehabilitation plan CRAA has undertaken.

Congratulations on the big fish and thank-you for your generosity madame Mayor. Thanks also goes to the Toronto Star Salmon Hunt for their continued support and their efforts to improve the salmon and trout fishery in Lake Ontario through funding provided to CRAA and MEA!

MASSIVE STREAM REHABILITATION

A HUGE ACCOMPLISHMENT

By John Kendell

The Credit River Anglers Association has grown tremendously over the past few years, not with respect to our membership, but in what we have accomplished. Our membership has been steady over the past four years, but our projects and conservation work aimed at improving the fishery and the watershed as a whole have increased dramatically. From a measly conservation budget of a few thousand dollars in 1996 to the realm of six figures to rehabilitate the Credit River and return our beloved river into a pristine environment perfect for trout and salmon.

You'll read a very brief description of this years work to date written by the conservation crew leader Vince D'Elia, who has led the rehabilitation Crew of 6 since the end of April. Working alongside and learning a lot from Aaron, one of the most dedicated volunteers in our club together they and the remaining crew of Mike Brady, Jason Hutton, Jenifer Kultgen and Matt Richards have exceeded the highest goals set at the beginning of the year.

From Aaron organizing the clubs pick up truck lease and setting up several co-op students from local high schools to help the year got off to a great start in late February. After collecting over 7,000 willow stakes and 3,500 trees the crew began to plant. Following the set up of the nursery trees began to arrive from tree growers to complete the years plans. Approximately 8,500 bare root trees were delivered over the spring, some for the nursery and the remainder for immediate planting. Sites that I and Mike Tost had arranged over the winter were planted, as well as abandoned fields and treeless banks between Inglewood and Norval. Through the month of May the crew collected an additional 2,000 large cedar trees (5 to 15 feet tall) from hydro corridors

with permission from Ontario Hydro thanks to help from Rosemary Matusiak, Rick's (CRAA's videographer) wife. At the present time CRAA has close to 3,000 potted trees in our nursery on Sheridan Nursery property. That means we have planted over 25,000 trees to date and are still going strong. We estimate over 10,000 metres of unforested/partially forested stream bank has been planted this year alone.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT A TREE?

So, what's the big deal, what are these trees going to do for us? Well, as my good fishing buddy from the Nottawasaga Steelheaders said, "doing nothing will get you nothing, stocking a fish will get you a fish for a couple years and high quality stream rehabilitation will pay you dividends of fish forever". CRAA's work follows that idea with stocking to give us fish in the short term and habitat rehabilitation to give us self-sustaining wild fish in the long term. A complete riparian forest (stream side forest) acts in many ways to ensure the health of a river. Shading from sun is obvious, but just as important is the insulation value by stopping hot dry winds that blow across open fields and keeping the colder, moist air within the stream zone keeps the water cold. More leaf litter provides food for invertebrates which create food for juvenile and adult fish. Stabilized banks stop or minimize erosion, keeping water clearer and less prone to flooding. This also lowers the amount of silt, thus increasing the hatch rate of eggs in the gravel. The trees also add woody debris when they fall in creating additional habitat and cover for fish of all sizes and specie. A good riparian forest also keeps the river channel narrower and deeper and more stable. A narrower river channel is

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MASSIVE STREAM REHABILITATION CONTINUED

also easier to keep shaded by riparian forest cover. In a nut shell, a complete, dense riparian forest equals a healthier watershed, cleaner water, more trout, bigger trout, better fishing (although you may loose a few more floats and flies to branches- a small price to pay for more fish).

MORE THAN JUST PLANTING TREES

As if the reforestation work along the banks of the river were not enough, we continue to do more. Mike Tost and others operate the CRAA hatchery raising a quarter million steelhead and 10 to 25 thousand Atlantic salmon annually. These fish are planted in sections of the Credit with excellent habitat and cold water. Since the inception of the program in 1995 to save the Credit River wild steelhead we have seen a significant increase in returning steelhead from the 1995 and 1996 year classes. This fall the 1997 year class will show themselves as small silvers (1-3 lbs), I can't wait to release them once again. The last time we handled them they were only 3 cm long.

Major stream rehabilitation work is also completed each year with this years work having

a five fold increase over last year. Work in Stewarttown, Norval, Glen Williams, Georgetown and elsewhere has been or will be completed this year by our crew. Placing 40' tall cedars and 24" diameter logs to stabilize banks, protect planted trees and more holding water for fish will result. Past projects include cattle crossings, vortex weirs, bank stabilizers, boulder placements, cattle fencing, and more.

The fish ladder operation has been the backbone of our work, where it all started for most core volunteers and where we made our first major efforts at increasing steelhead reproduction. After years of pushing for a change to the ladder CRAA was allowed to change the entrance to the ladder in the Fall of 1997 at our expense. The change was an incredible success with over 99% of the steelhead run being passed over the Streetsville Dam in 1998 and 1999. The MNR, after the success in 1998 put a project together to enhance our channel with armour stone and large rock at a cost of \$30,000. The work was completed in July, 1999 and appears to be fantastic. See the article below for more details..

1999 FISH LADDER CONSTRUCTION

The OMNR was able to complete the new modifications to the Streetsville fishway this past July. The contractor hired placed several truck loads of boulders to line the new channel entrance CRAA built two years ago to act as a permanent entrance. The budget CRAA worked on was only enough to have a back hoe excavate the new channel in the proper location, which worked extremely well, but over time would have been effected by flooding. A few heavy rains this fall have put the walls to the test and they have held

up well.

We're only 3 months away from the start of the Spring fishway operation for steelhead! Again we will be tagging steelhead, collecting biological information and collecting eggs for our hatchery. Hope to see you there in the Spring.

