



Light Lines

JOURNAL OF THE CREDIT RIVER ANGLERS ASSOCIATION
FALL 2008

VOLUME 19, NUMBER 3

Atlantic Salmon Return to the Credit River!!!

The first major return in over 160 years!

John Kendall

I am pleased to announce a small run of Atlantic salmon has come home to the Credit River this summer and fall. 49 confirmed grilse by late November. The first returning fish ran after a heavy rain in late July and small numbers have been trickling back following each rain since. While fishing for chinooks on July 29, 2008 I hooked 2 Atlantic salmon grilse, landing 1. I called a few volunteers to help at the fishway and we lifted two more Atlantic salmon that afternoon.

The next morning I had the CRAA crew pick up new oxygen tanks and prepare our transfer trailer. No fish were lifted on July 30 or 31, but on the evening of July 31 I landed 1 Atlantic grilse fly fishing swinging a salmon fly. This fly rod lingo may be foreign to many float fishers, but hooking salmon and trout on a swinging fly is one of the most exhilarating experiences on the river. That fish was landed and I placed him in the holding pen to transfer in the morning. The next morning volunteers from CRAA lifted two more Atlantics from the ladder. I and other CRAA members then transported the Atlantic salmon to the Forks of the Credit following MNR protocols where they were released into the prime headwaters.



John with a grilse taken on the swing

Over the next four weeks and another rain we ended up lifting 9 Atlantics from the fishway and another 10 by angling. Of those, 13 were transferred to the Forks of the Credit. We collected all data from fish including scale samples, tissue samples for genetics, length, weight, sex and marks. More recently we started PIT tagging the fish so they can be identified in future.



Transporting an early run Atlantic Salmon at Streetsville.

CRAA has been involved with the reintroduction of Atlantic salmon since the onset of the program back in 1989 with MNR. We had a small return of salmon in 1990, and since then returns have been rare to nonexistent. Since 1992 I can count on one hand the returns of Atlantic salmon until now! With the recent addition of OFAH and their sponsor, Banrock Winery from Australia the program got the needed shot in the arm to give it a chance. The OFAH/MNR program increased stocking numbers tenfold and increased stocking size to yearlings in addition to fry. Both were needed to put enough young fish in the system to create a small run. I estimate between 60 and 100 fish have returned to date. Sure a small run, but an exciting start!

The fact these summer run salmon survived all summer in the lower river is a testament to all the rehabilitation work CRAA has done on the lower and middle

river below the Forks. Average summer water temperatures have dropped roughly 1.5 to 2 C from our data loggers since 1998. Now this summer the river stayed even colder with all the rain. However had CRAA not planted 350,000 trees the lower river would have been too hot even this summer and those fish would have been cooked. Adult Atlantic salmon can tolerate temperatures up to 27-28C for short periods of time but back in 1998 the lower river hit 31C. All the watershed work done by CVC, MNR and many other groups has also helped by restoring groundwater through reforestation and other rehabilitation works. The river is far healthier today than it was 100 years ago and without dams returning Atlantic salmon once again have a chance.

CRAA is also working on the design alternatives for the Norval Dam fishway. With a fishway in Norval, Atlantic salmon will have free access to the headwaters once again. Steelhead and brown trout will also use the new fishway CRAA is building to reach their spawning grounds. In the end the Credit River should have a tremendous migratory fishery (finally after 20 years of work by me and so many CRAA members) and a great resident fishery that exists in the Forks and headwaters.



CRAA volunteer releasing the transported salmon into the forks of the Credit.

Atlantic Salmon Continued

By: John Kendall



Beauty Atlantic lifted from the Streetsville ladder

September has seen a few more fresh salmon returning with each rain. However only two Atlantics have been caught in the fishway since the first major chinook run came in. Most salmon have been caught by CRAA's team of volunteers fishing the sanctuary under scientific permit from MNR.

As a result of CRAA's work this summer there are numbers of adult Atlantic salmon in the Forks for the first time in roughly 160 years!!!! CRAA volunteers will continue to monitor the fishway daily throughout fall to lift and transport returning Atlantic salmon to the headwaters.

Mark Heaton from MNR has also been heavily involved and instrumental in assisting us in capturing the fish and transporting them. OFAH and CVC have also offered crews to assist. OFAH has been very supportive of our work and CRAA looks forward to growing our partnership with them to rebuild the Atlantic salmon in the Credit River.

I hope that many Ontario anglers will grow more familiar with the terms common among the east coast and rivers across North Atlantic. Here are a few to get you started: **Grilse**; a small 1 ocean or lake year fish, normally between 3 and 5 pounds. These fish do spawn so they are very important. **Salmon**; refers to a

multi ocean or lake fish, normally over 7 pounds that has spent two or more years in the lake prior to spawning. **Bomber**; a larger dry fly tied from deer hair that is a very popular Atlantic salmon fly (I rose one fish in August on the Credit to a bomber). There is nothing like rising a huge chrome fish to a dry fly and I have been lucky enough to hook many from the Gaspé in past years. **Kelt**; a spawned out or drop back Atlantic salmon, often caught in March-May returning to the ocean/lake. **Swinging**; no we are not swapping spouses, this is traditional fly roding at its best, with a tight line cast 45 degrees downstream and allowed to swing the fly across the pool. The fly rides just under the surface and takes are more like hooking a freight train.

The scientific permits were issued in early August to members of CRAA that have put the most volunteer time into helping the river (minimum 200 hours), most experience fishing for migratory fish and the most experience lifting, handling and transporting fish. While most readers will think how much fun it will be, you would be surprised. While fishing, we carry a mesh pen to hold any fish landed.

Once landed we have to move the fish to the fish ladder for processing. To do this we place about 20 l of water in a plastic bag, put the fish in the bag of water and run it up the river to the fish ladder. If caught too far away we transport them by car in the bag of water using a small oxygen tank. Once at the fishway we have to process the fish by taking tissue samples, etc. Then we place them into a larger bag of water with some salt, fill the bag with oxygen and place them in a cooler with ice and drive them directly to the Forks of the Credit for release.

Atlantic salmon spawn in late November, the same time of year as brown trout. Until then the fish will hold in deep pools



Another bullet taken from the Streetsville fish ladder!

and await the spawning urge. On the east coast salmon start running some rivers in early June, but most rivers in the Gaspé area and Labrador run in July. As you move south more fish run in August or September and October. The fish currently being stocked at LaHave River, Nova Scotia will run all the way from July to late October. At this time we are just guessing, but we expect the same to occur here. Once fall passes we will have a better handle on the overall run, numbers and timing. The past year has seen the addition of two more strains of Atlantic salmon, Sabago Lake, Maine and Lac St. Jean, Quebec. Hopefully this range of genetics will provide us with a chance to restore this noble heritage specie.

This is a very exciting event and was made possible by the large partnership MNR/OFAH have created and by the decades and millions of dollars CRAA has spent making a river for Atlantic salmon to come home to!

If you catch an Atlantic salmon this fall please be sure to report it to CRAA, MNR or OFAH and release it. That's the law!



This little guy fell to a blue charm pattern in the tail-out pool of the Streetsville dam.



Here's Pete with a male grilse.

Halton Hills Updates

Derek Konieczny

The CRAA tree planting crew completed two projects this past summer on Black Creek, a tributary of the Credit flowing through Halton Hills. Both projects saw sections of stream rehabilitated through the planting of approximately 160 native shrubs and trees. Species planted included Buttonbush, Red Osier Dogwood, White Cedar, Speckled Alder, and Silver Maple. Black Creek supports brook trout and is a critical coldwater stream for the Credit's migratory fish populations. Funding for the event was made possible through the Ministry of Natural Resources Community Fish and Wildlife Improvement Program. CRAA would like to offer a special thank you to property owners Ray Odorico and Nancy Carnwright who allowed access on their properties and the support of the work being done. The CRAA crew also planted 300 trees on two other Black Creek, brook trout properties in spring 2008. The CRAA crew teamed up with CVC staff and CVC summer students to plant another 400 potted trees in the summer of 2008 along the Stewarttown Dam pond to shade the creek. CVC and CRAA both donated trees to the planting and it was a tremendous success. CRAA staff and volunteers also conducted spawning surveys in May for steelhead in the lower part of the system from spring transfers. In 2009 CRAA will be looking at the opportunity to improve brook trout spawning sites in the whole Black and Silver Creek systems and will investigate the opportunity to add artificial groundwater upwelling for spawning to enhance natural reproduction in the system.



Norval Fishway and New Barrier

John Kendell

I for one am getting tired of writing this column in the CRAA newsletter. This process started a decade ago – and I had a full head of hair back then. The good news is progress continues to be made, however slow as it may seem. There are many layers to government regulations and parties involved so the process is a little arduous.

The Norval fishway is in the design stage and we are working out the engineering details at the request of MNR's engineering division with our consultant at TSH. The land owner is a very willing and supportive partner in the project. Upon completion of the ladder I can assure you that some of the key players will toast with some 21 year old scotch – a fitting toast as the ladder

is vital for returning Atlantic salmon! It will be a milestone in the Credit River Fisheries Management Plan (CRFMP) and in CRAA's list of accomplishments.

The barrier is also progressing through the EA process. The next public meeting to outline placement and type will occur later this fall. If all goes well myself and Louis will be able to work with the Minister, MNR staff and the partners and we can bring this project to fruition shortly. Again a celebration will be in order. Perhaps a bottle of good champagne for this event!



Credit River Anglers Association *Light Lines*

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

Send your articles of interest, messages or suggestions to:

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Aaron Shirley
Tony Bolger
Brian Morrison

Editor

Cameron Walker



News and Announcements

Highlights within CRAA!

Recent CRAA Volunteer Events:

- ♦ November, Tree Planting 16 mile creek, Oakville
- ♦ November—garbage clean up at Petro Canada Park
- ♦ Watch the CRAA message board for further updates and announcements

Highlights/Executive Team Update

- ♦ CTV at Fish Ladder (thanks to Jon Clayton at CVC) - Tom Brown - live at noon. We had 4 segments and about 6 minutes on the air at noon.
- ♦ CRAA is looking for people to join the Executive Team for the following positions:

—> Fund Raising Chair	—> Tree Nursery Manager (Glen Wlms)
—> Special Events Chair	—> Orangeville STP EA (urgent)
—> Public Relations Chair	—> ROPPA 15 Rep
- ♦ CRAA is also looking for Sponsors for the spring steelhead tournament, if you or your company are able to help with a donation or some prizes please contact:
Justin Elia via email: justin.elia@ca.cushwake.com

Membership Updates

Recent Membership Activities

CRAA has realized a significant membership increase due to the 2008 Sportsman Show where many new members were signed up and old memberships renewed.

If you are a new or renewing member please make sure CRAA has your email address since email communication saves trees and club funds for stamps.

For those of you that are due for renewal watch for renewal notices this fall/winter.

New Membership and Member Renewal Information

Are you concerned about the future health of the beautiful Credit River and Bronte Creek watersheds including all their tributaries? Do you enjoy fishing, hiking and other activities in the valleys? Do you want a cleaner river, better fishing and a cleaner environment for the future? Then you should join CRAA NOW. CRAA's address is on page 3.

Membership Fees: **1 year \$10.00** **3 years \$30.00** (Please enclose cheque payable to CRAA)

Name : _____

Address : _____

City : _____ Postal Code _____

Tel (Res) : _____ Tel (Bus) : _____

E-mail Address : _____

Yes! I want to volunteer for: _____

2008 CRAA Rehabilitation Projects

John Kendell

Another summer has passed by and winter fast approaches. I am always amazed at how fast time flies when your busy having fun! This year CRAA had some significant funding through Canada Summer Jobs, CFWIP, Species at Risk and other sources. This allowed us to hire a spring planting crew, a summer rehabilitation crew and a fall planting crew. Spring saw CRAA plant roughly 5,000 trees along the Credit River and tributaries including the headwaters and small tributaries. The annual spring steelhead lift and the challenging but vital adult transfer was also a great success with the most wild steelhead being move to date. The summer crew planted over 1,000 larger potted trees in sites to fill in gaps and plant new properties. The summer crew also worked on building rocky ramps to improve fish access on many small tributaries including upper Silver Creek, Black Creek and several smaller tributaries from the Forks to Glen Williams. Work was sometimes difficult given the constant rain and high water, but I am not complaining about that! All the rain was great for the fish! Other work including the installation of a bottom draw on a major pond on Levis Creek to establish more cold water habitat. The fall crew is just getting started and will assist with the fishway, planting trees and more. The crew will plant over 9,000 trees along lower 16 Mile Creek on Oakville and Milton properties that John Kendell negotiated this past spring. CRAA will be planting over 20,000 trees along lower 16 Mile Creek over the next few years to improve habitat as we have done on the Credit River. Both municipalities have proven to have a keen interest to work with CRAA and support our ongoing conservation work in the Bronte and 16 Mile Creek systems! CRAA volunteers, led by the likes of Dave Leschied, Rick Symanski, Cam Walker, myself and 'limpy' Justin Elia have been busy transporting fish during the fall. CRAA has been transporting the Atlantic salmon to the Forks or the Credit, and moving tagged steelhead and brown trout to Silver Creek as we do in the spring time. How exciting we will finally begin the establishment of a strong, wild brown fishery in the lower and middle river with these transfers! CRAA has been working closely with MNR and of course all projects and transfers have undergone MNR screening and/or discussions at the CRFMP implementation committee.



Coaster Brook Trout from Lake Ontario!? OH YAH!!!

John Kendell

On September 27 CRAA and MNR biologist Mark Heaton lifted a brook trout over 3 pounds from the Streetsville fishway. One of only a couple ever seen in the lower river in recent decades, it was a gorgeous male coming into full colour. While speculation continues, the fact is this was a mature large brook trout over 18 inches making a migratory run up the Credit River.



He was likely born in the upper river somewhere and either left or flushed out of the river to the lake. He survived and did quite well and came up the river to spawn. Normally he would have been stuck at the dam in Streetsville, but thanks to CRAA's constant lifts for Atlantics, browns and steelhead this fall we caught him. And this lucky fish was given an all expense paid trip to the upper watershed to spawn with his long lost cousins. I can only imagine the 8" resident female brook trout will be taken with his masculine size and the resident males may have a little envy. But I am speculating on fish psychology here and could be wrong. Nonetheless a significant and exciting milestone for CRAA this fall. Never have I seen a tear of joy in our hardened fishway volunteers as I did when we lifted this fish. And a minority think we are just steelhead fisherman – how absurd. We love all the fish!

The Election Corner

Louis Milo

We'll believe it or not another election has come and gone, and with the tough economic outlook it should be an important one. While the inherent nature of a conservation group is to focus on remedial work aimed at improving both the fishery and the watershed they reside within, from time to time we need to hedge the bureaucracy of a ministry against the political machine that has an elected mandate. In today's world this has become an all too clear method of approach.

As a conservation group we carry no affiliation and will only chose to endorse a candidate that has demonstrated over time a consistent and measurable time frame of support for our group, the environment and the watershed as a whole.

We always urge you to approach each candidate study the platform policies of the various parties and make an informed decision as to which candidate and party best serves your conservation interests.

Since our last newsletter CRAA has had many discussions with our current Minister the Honorable Donna Cansfield, pertaining to the fishery both off and of course on-shore as well. We have had her visit the watershed on a few occasions and have helped her understand just how great an asset the urban fishery that exists in the Credit is.

I mentioned that her outlook was refreshing and our discussions showed promise in particular for the watershed but also for the tributaries that carry the various salmonids within it. Since that time we have seen a minister who is proactive, willing to work on solutions and is very keen on CRAA's mandate of watershed restoration, certainly this Minister is a bright light and we hope through her tenure that the support CRAA has obtained continues.

Along side with the federal and provincial aspect CRAA has also been engaged with the various municipalities on various CRAA initiatives, stay tuned to the next newsletter for some other great news and hope for better environmentally based thinking from this Conservative government.

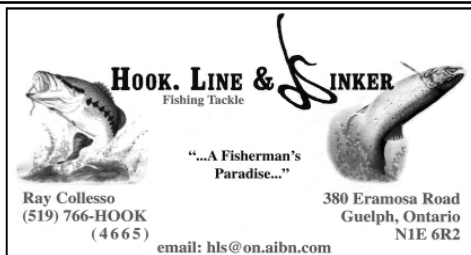
From the Editor's Desk

Cameron Walker

Releasing this second newsletter for CRAA has been surprisingly more difficult than the first for me as I have strived to pack as much useful information into one edition as possible. As a recent addition to the CRAA executive team, I have noticed a few things that deserve our attention. Many people have a skewed opinion pertaining to CRAA and are unaware of our true motives. We are trying our best to improve all habitat for all species of fish on the credit. Over the last month and a half the CRAA work crew has been doing a tremendous job operating the Streetsville fishway and planting trees on 16 mile creek daily and they deserves our appreciation. Both Nick and Bojan have done a great job transferring fish, planting trees and doing whatever is needed. Thanks gentlemen! I would also like to note the unbelievable cooperation that the club has received from the **MEA and Ringwood hatchery**, they have been a great help as we try to get every last Atlantic salmon over the barriers and into prime spawning locations.

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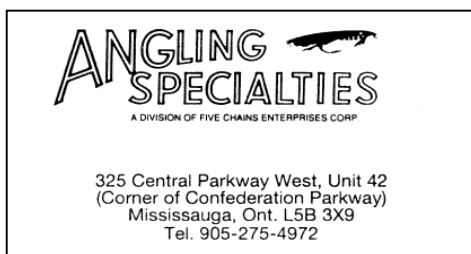


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Controlling Aquatic Invasive Species

Brian Morrison

As anglers and conservationists, many of us are aware of the continual infiltration of invasive species into the Great Lakes. With the news of one more recently being discovered (Spring 2007) – the bloody red mysid (*Hemimysis anomala*) – and potentially devastating pathogens such as Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) currently in our waters, many people are frustrated against the apparent lack of concern by our politicians over regulating ballast water discharges from foreign ships and controlling other pathways into the Great Lakes. One avenue to combat this is to lobby local politicians and government agencies to change the existing legislation to make it illegal to maintain these pathways. Another option, as anglers and users of our resources is to look to ourselves to see how we can limit the spread of exotic organisms. River anglers can do at least one of the following measures to reduce aquatic “hitchhikers” that may be attached to wading boots, waders or equipment:

- ◆ Remove all sediment and vegetation
- ◆ Disinfect equipment with 20% bleach for 10 minutes, 5% bleach for 1 hour
- ◆ Rinse all equipment with fresh water, and allow to dry thoroughly
- ◆ DO NOT transfer any water, vegetation or animals between sites

Representatives from wading gear manufacturers (e.g. Simms, Patagonia) state that bleach solutions will not damage waders/boots, as long as you thoroughly rinse with clean water afterwards. Bleach solutions will not affect Gore Tex fabrics, as Gore Tex is chemically inert.

Other invasive animals, such as *Didymosphenia geminata* (Didymo or ‘rock snot’ algae) have colonized rivers on both coasts of Canada, and threaten to invade rivers in the Great Lakes drainage. The spread of Didymo has been linked to anglers using felt soled boots, as Didymo can remain alive for months in damp felt soles. To reduce this threat, anglers can use boots without felt soles, including products like Simms AquaStealth or Vibram® Streamtread™ soles.

Anglers should also consider these precautions even when fishing within the same river system on different days. For example, an angler fishing the lower Credit River one day may be exposed to different invasive species than the same angler fishing the Forks of the Credit the next.

Anglers should also remember to **never**:

- ◆ Release live bait into a body of water
- ◆ Dump water bait was stored in
- ◆ Release aquatic animals from one body of water into another.
- ◆ Release worms into the environment either. Earthworms are not native to the Great Lakes region, and threaten to change our forest ecology.

As anglers, if we do our best to limit distributing invasive aquatic organisms, it will only help to ensure quality fishing into the future. For more information on invasive aquatic organisms in Ontario or report sightings, visit www.invadingspecies.com or call 1-800-563-7711.

Didymo fact sheet: <http://www.asf.ca/docs/issues/didymo-backgrounder.pdf>

Invasive Earthworms: <http://www.nrri.umn.edu/worms/>

**Report All Atlantic Salmon Catches
To CRAA, MNR or OFAH**

Email: info@craa.on.ca