



# Light Lines

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## Best runs can get better

We are now enjoying what is perhaps the best fishing in the lower Credit River. Last years steelhead run poking at 20,000, several hundred browns, Atlantics and cohos, plus a huge chinook run pushing 15,000 puts our overall run as almost 40,000 fish...and it's growing.

Just when you think these numbers are huge, take a look at an eastern tributary like Bowmanville Creek. Bowmanville has a run of roughly 15,000 steelhead, plus 10-15,000 chinooks, plus a lot of coho and browns. The overall run is

99% wild for all species and here is the shocker. The Bowmanville watershed is only 1/10th the size of the Credit River. So this tells us the Credit is capable of a heck of a lot more fish and the early settlement records suggest a run of up to 300,000 Atlantic salmon becomes tangible. This is a simplistic comparison, yet it shows just how productive our rivers can be!



## CRAA Meeting

**February 11, 2013**

**6:30 PM to 9:30 PM**

### Presentations include:

**CRAA Project Update  
John Kendell**

**CVC—Shoreline Project  
Bob Morris**

**CRAA—Hatchery Update  
Joe Ward**

**Location:  
Crooked Cue  
75 Lakeshore Road East  
Port Credit  
(2nd floor)**

## CRAA Plans more watershed wide tree planting and Funding Updates

CRAA has been granted \$50,000 in funding by the Ministry of the Environment through the Great Lakes Guardian Program to plant up to a 30m riparian forest buffer strip along large unshaded sections of the Credit River main stem through Glen Williams, Mississauga, and along Silver Creek. The work will be completed in 2013 with maintenance continuing for up to a decade after the original planting. Reforesting these reaches will help restore the historic condition of cooler thermal regimes. Without cooler, more thermally stable water, salmon and trout do not survive. This is a huge reason why we plant.

Additionally the work will reduce erosion rates and eventually supply wood to the channel which is a vital component of fish habitat, and particularly for salmonids (salmon and trout).

We have applied for additional funding for huge planting work along the main stem Credit River and its tributaries over the next three years. The status of our application is pending, but if successful, the work will represent a major benefit to the river's ecology and productivity. It should be noted however that the work will not only benefit salmonids but the entire aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem.

CRAA has also been granted \$7,000 from the Great Ontario Salmon Derby and the Canadian National Sportsmen's Show to assist with operating our hatchery and other conservation projects!

MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT





## CRAA Hatchery Update

CRAA's hatchery volunteer team continues to do great work supporting sport fishing and restoration opportunities.

This winter CRAA has our largest batch of fish and eggs yet. We have roughly 40,000 steelhead parr (spring 2012 wild egg take), 15,000 brown trout fry from wild fish, 20,000 brown trout eggs from MNR, 15,000 coho fry, 15,000 brown trout smolts (2011 egg take) and 4,500 Atlantic salmon smolts (2011 egg take from MNR).

2012 saw our hatchery raise and stock some of our largest and best steelhead, brown trout and Atlantic salmon. We were unable to obtain coho eggs during the fall of 2011 so we missed stocking coho salmon last fall.

CRAA released a large batch of yearling steelhead in spring, along with several hundred Atlantic salmon smolts. During the fall we released our batch of 18 month old steelhead smolts and remaining brown trout yearlings. In total close to 30,000 steelhead smolts, 15,000 brown smolts and 500 Atlantic smolts were released last year. CRAA volunteers also added two new 450 gallon tanks and two raceways to improve our fish production.

MNR gives direction on the species, numbers, size and stocking location of each specie. All stocking is done below Norval Dam with fish at smolt age. The intent is smolting fish will leave the system quickly and head to the lake prior to summer when conditions below Norval are too hot for juvenile trout and salmon. It also separates hatchery smolts from the vast majority of wild fish located upstream from Norval where the river is colder.



Art Ditschun, one of CRAA's best volunteers!

Wild steelhead accounted for 86% of the run last year, with MNR and CRAA stocked fish accounting for 14% or roughly 3,000 fish. So for every fish stocked by MNR and CRAA the river is now producing 5 to 20 wild smolts (depending on year class survival). So the hatchery is important, but wild fish are the vast majority of the steelhead fishery.

CRAA is also working hard to build and develop a migratory brown trout fishery. Brown trout have been found to develop both a migratory and resident population from the same fish based on genetic work by MNR. Our stock-

ing program therefore is building both a resident population below Norval and a migrating lake run population. Our primary egg source are wild returning brown trout from the Credit River collected at Streetsville and Norval fishways. The great news is MNR is passing resident browns and migratory browns over the fishways so they now have open access to spawn in the best water upstream. Lake run female brown trout can carry 2 to 5 times more eggs than a resident fish and offer a substantial boost to build the resident brown population. Keep in mind the browns can be both migratory or resident so they are one in the same. A classic example is migratory browns collected from the Gannaraska were used to stock and develop the resident Grand River brown trout fishery.



10,000 coho eggs in a heath tray (Fall 2012)



### Credit River Anglers Association

#### Light Lines

Editor: Cameron Walker

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

Send you articles of interest, messages or suggestions to:

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#### Bronte/16 Mile Team Leaders

Aaron Shirley

**Volunteers needed!**



## Atlantic salmon 2012 Returns

Returns to the Credit River of adult Atlantic salmon were down somewhat in 2012. The MNR had a crew on throughout the summer and fall to operate the ladders at both Norval and Streetsville and they came close to last year's total lift. However the hot, dry summer, below normal precipitation and unknown factors seem to have reduced adult returns this year. Again many fish seemed to evade the fishways as we had confirmed reports of fish up to the mid teens in weight, but nothing that large was lifted in the ladders. Fish were also seen spawning below Streetsville and in reaches below Norval. Reports from anglers to CRAA were down from 2011, and more in line with 2010 reports.

CRAA still strongly believes the program is a good one, but needs some improvements. In particular, CRAA would like to see more stocking of yearling Atlantic salmon and more importantly, that returning adults are held and spawned in the hatchery to create yearling offspring. By taking eggs from returning adults the program has (in our opinion) a better chance to succeed by using offspring from fish that survived to adulthood in Lake Ontario. New York started a program like this in 2010 and made initial attempts to collect adults in summer/fall 2012. The USGS has set up a hatchery just for this purpose. They expect 2013 to be the start of their first adult return to feed their hatchery program. The goal is to create a Lake Ontario strain of Atlantic salmon that will have better returns. Anglers often forget that chinook and coho salmon have had 45 years of Great Lakes adaption and rainbow and brown trout have had over a century to adapt. The present stocking by MNR is from Le Have River, Nova Scotia strain (5<sup>th</sup> generation hatchery bread) and two recent sources of land locked fish.

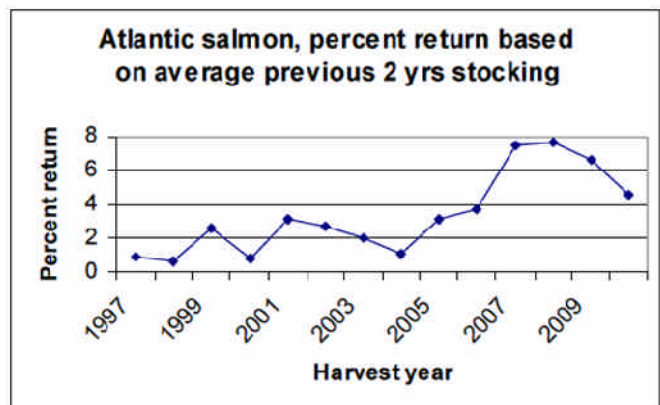
Evidence from the Sault Ste Marie Atlantic salmon fishery supports CRAA's position. Lake Superior State University (LSSU) has been stocking the St. Mary's River since the

1980's with Atlantic salmon. Starting in 2003 LSSU collected all their eggs from returning adults. The graph (from Johnson, 2012)



shows a dramatic increase in adult returns as a percentage of fish stocked within 2-4 years after 2003. I can attest to the excellent fishing that has developed from this program with Atlantic salmon up to 20 pounds showing in the fishery. Figure from (Johnson, 2012, Fisheries Brief 3, MDNR).

Atlantic salmon can add new opportunities to lake, pier and river anglers in addition to the fantastic sport fishery we have for chinook, steelhead, coho, brown and brook. However getting the fish to succeed will take continued support from MNR, anglers and NGO's.



## CRAA on YouTube and the Net:

CRAA has our own YouTube channel with 8 videos posted so far and more in the works. Our most recent program highlights the whole fish lift and transfer program. Take a look by searching "CRAA or Credit River Anglers" on YouTube. We also have a lot of exciting and updated information between our website and our chat boards. Keep yourself updated by checking us out often and contributing to the chat board. [www.craa.on.ca](http://www.craa.on.ca)

## Attention Land owners on the River

Do you own land on the Credit River or a tributary. If so and you have open stream that needs trees planted...call CRAA. CRAA will be happy to assess your property and stream and develop a planting plan. All tree planting is done free of charge with volunteers or crews through various funding programs. Do your part to help restore the Credit River. Call or e-mail us so we can meet and work with you to make the Credit River the best it can be! 905-814-5794 or [president@craa.on.ca](mailto:president@craa.on.ca)

## CRAA members getting involved!

Are you a CRAA member and looking to get more involved? If so, you can jump in anytime. CRAA is all volunteer run and we need people like you to get involved. The more members that help manage projects the more CRAA can accomplish. Simply drop us a line or attend a quarterly executive meeting or other volunteer events and introduce yourself. CRAA now has 35 volunteers helping with the executive work...but we need many more! Also stay tuned to the CRAA homepage, Facebook and our chat boards to find out more about what is happening.

## Eye on the Credit! Protection through prevention.

### 16 Mile Creek Concrete Channel

Recently John Kendell met with Halton Region CA staff to look at some initial thoughts on rehabilitating the concrete channel in Milton on 16 Mile Creek. The river was channelized in the early 1970's with concrete and all vegetation was removed. The concrete channel acts as a barrier to some fish species and causes enough warming we suspect little or no trout reproduction occurs downstream of Milton. Our long term goal is to seek the removal of the concrete, but that is a very costly (millions) project. Thus we are looking for more cost effective, innovative ideas to add substrate to the channel for habitat and ease fish migration as well as creating shade to keep the water cooler. HRCA has done an excellent job at managing flows from Lake Kelso that has enabled a wild trout and salmon fishery to occur. However with some major work CRAA believes the system could be dramatically improved! Keep in mind back in the 1850's Upper Canada managers set aside 16 Mile Creek as one of the best remaining Atlantic salmon streams. Proof it has amazing potential!

### Trans Canada Gas Trunk Pipeline

If you have driven through the Credit Valley between highway 407 and Norval you have likely seen huge construction crews and a massive green pipe spread through farm fields. Trans Canada has been constructing a second gas pipeline to service the growing GTA sprawl since August, 2012. The 42" steel pipe passes under the Credit River south of Norval, as well as many tributaries. CRAA has been involved as a community partner to review the project since 2010 sending volunteer representatives to meetings and ensuring anglers and the river are protected. One result was the pipeline is being drilled under each stream crossing rather than the use of an open trench pit. This ensures the streams are not disturbed and prevents sediment releases. CRAA has been monitoring the work and by January 1<sup>st</sup> the pipe is tied and buried from Steeles Avenue all the way to north Brampton. We must also highlight the excellent job Trans Canada and their contractors are doing to protect habitat and prevent erosion. We have not witnessed any sediment problems and found sites are kept clean and roads are cleaned daily to prevent any runoff. If every construction project ran like this well our rivers would be in far better shape.

### Other Major Projects CRAA is monitoring for you:

- QEW Bridge widening
- City of Mississauga Bank Stabilization—Credit Valley Golf Course
- City of Mississauga Bank Stabilization—South of Dundas Street
- Region of Peel Sanitary Sewer and Water Line work—Huttonville
- Mississauga Road Widening—Huttonville
- Norval Clay Quarry Propossal
- Municipal Wells proposed for the Forks of the Credit and headwaters
- CVC's brook trout decline research for the Upper Credit

## **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: \_\_\_\_\_