



LIGHT LINES

WINTER 1994

Vol 5, No 1

Who are we?

We're the Credit River Anglers Association (CRAA), a well organized group of concerned anglers and conservationists that are uniting with a common purpose – To improve and increase the quality fishery that is present in the Credit River and in particular, the part of the Credit that flows through Erindale Park in the City of Mississauga, Ontario.

As our secondary goal we will help keep Erindale Park clean and clutter free. This is for the benefit of anyone, whether a Mississauga resident or visitor who would like to enjoy the peace and tranquility of a wildlife park with pleasant walking trails that is hidden within a bustling city of nearly half a million.

We're a non profit corporation (Ontario Charter) that continues to achieve and expand. We're offering our time, expertise, and volunteer services toward reaching specific objectives as set forth in the following:

What are we doing?

We're a glimmer of hope, a realized dream, a bunch of hard working people that care about our environment and improved angling opportunities throughout Ontario. We're raising funds, soliciting new members, and carving out long term goals as a group.

We work with other groups that are also concerned with the environment and the fishery.

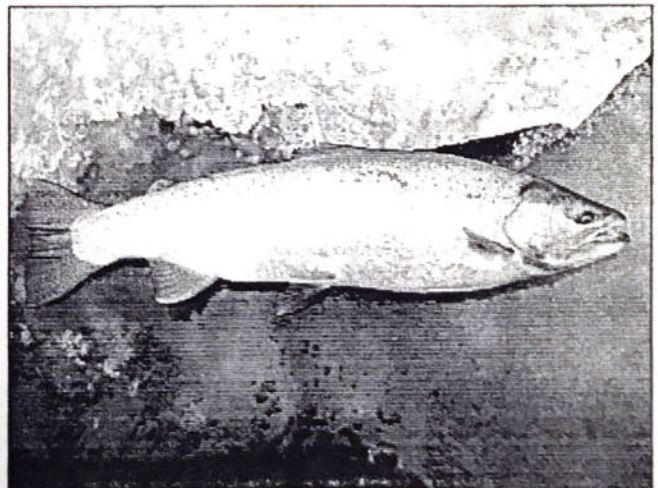
The Credit Valley Conservation Authority, and the many levels of government along with local residents work with us to achieve our objectives.

Why get involved or become a member?

If you care about fishing, the environment and the opportunity to catch a 30lb plus Salmon or a 15lb plus Steelhead after work, school, or play, the Credit River Anglers association (CRAA) has a place for you. Join us in our drive for a better fishery, more fish, bigger fish, and a healthier, cleaner environment.

Send in your Membership or Renewal Today!

The form is on the back along with the CRAA address.



CRAA HOTLINE 567-6656

Credit River Anglers Association

LIGHT LINES

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Contributions are welcome from members and non-members alike.

Send your articles, comments and suggestions to:

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Or call the CRAA 24-hr Hotline at 567-6656

Commercial advertising rates:

1/16 page - \$15, 1/8 page - \$30, 1/4 page - \$50
Maximum size 1/4 page.

Newsletter production: 300 copies per issue
Printed on recycled paper.

CRAA AGENDA

SPRING 1994

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR:

1. Holding weekly planning meetings
2. Corporate Filing
3. Erected signs in Erindale
4. Set up the phone line
5. Helped at the Secret Strategies Show to make some money for CRAA.
6. Had a booth at the fishing show and gained new members.
7. Prepared and mailed the Light Lines Newsletter.

MARCH

1. Continue Weekly meetings. (Tuesday, 6pm, at Erindale Campus. Call the Hotline for further details.)
2. Annual General Meeting - March 21, 1994.
 - elect new executive and board
 - amend constitution
 - discuss plans for the club
 - volunteer sign up
 - provide some short seminars
 - financial statement
3. Update Billboard in Erindale.
4. Plan for fish ladder work, fish transfers, and upwelling box collection.

APRIL

1. Second "Light Lines of 1994" mailed by April 15.
2. Run fish ladder all month. Also do fish transfer and upwelling box collection.
3. Fill the upwelling box and monitor.
4. Educational seminars.
 - Some free and some with a small entry fee,
5. River Clean-up.

SUMMER

1. Stream rehabilitation and clean up.
2. Monitor upwelling box.
3. Seminars.
4. Tree planting.
5. Boulder placements.

UPCOMING EVENTS

GENERAL MEETING - MARCH 21, at 7:15pm

The first General meeting of 1994 will be held at the Erindale Community Centre. CRAA's goals for 1994 will be discussed. Nominations will begin for the elections which will be held at the Annual General Meeting in April. A financial statement will be provided to all in attendance and a few short seminars will be provided.

FISH LADDER OPERATION - Spring

The fish ladder will be operated as soon as the weather permits (about April 1). Volunteers will be required for the operation for the entire month. THERE IS NOTHING LIKE LIFTING HUNDREDS OF STEELHEAD.

RIVER CLEAN-UP - April 9, at 2:00pm

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING APRIL 25

The meeting is tentatively planned for the evening of April 25. Watch the board in Erindale Park or call the hotline for confirmation. Elections will be held for the executive and board and there will be more volunteer sign ups.

CRAA HOTLINE 567-6656

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

by Jürgen Richter

The recent period of changes in the club's executive and board of directors had left the membership activities on the back burner until January 1994. Many of our members had not heard or inquired about their status since last spring. Our strength is our membership, and we need your support to remain strong. If you have not renewed, please reconsider. The executive can "run" the club, but it is you, the member, who makes it all work.

Our membership lists were computerized last year and updating is quick. We currently have about 224 members on our mailing list. Returned mailings were received from a few active members who had moved since the last mailing and have not sent us a change of address. If you are a member or know someone who is and has not received any mailings recently, please send your particulars to the CRAA address on page 2.

STREETSVILLE FISH LADDER SUCCESS, 1993

CRAA's best lift ever including our largest Steelhead ever lifted.

By John Kendell

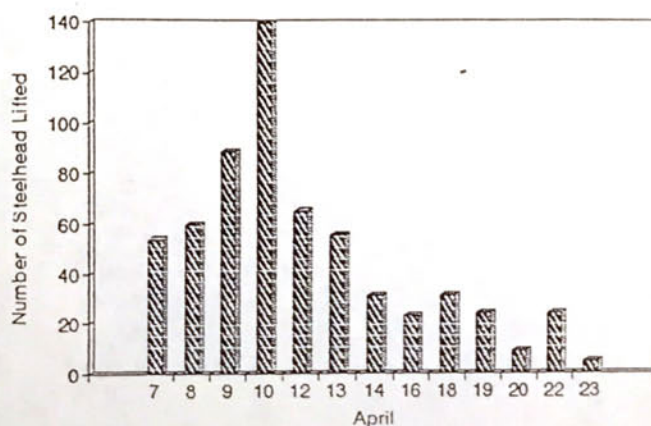
The spring of 1993 was the best Steelhead lift ever for the Credit River at the Streetsville Dam. Close to 30 volunteers combined to put in over 1000 hours of work over 16 days to lift over 600 Steelhead over the dam. This allowed the Steelhead to reach the upper sections of the Credit River where natural reproduction is very successful. The lift broke all the previous records set by CRAA. All of the 600+ Steelhead were measured, checked for fin clips and marks, weighed, and released. In addition to the Steelhead lifted in the spring, an estimated 2000 Steelhead breached the dam on their own over the season. These numbers are excellent considering the poor Steelhead run that occurred in the spring of 1993.

CRAA had to deal with the MNR again which meant faulty equipment and tardiness. In the past we had to depend on the MNR to supply CRAA with a generator and winch, but in March, 1993 CRAA purchased its own generator (thanks to member support) and the MNR supplied us with a new winch which allowed us to have a very successful spring.

CRAA began work on the fish ladder on April 5th. The entire fish ladder had to be cleaned out and set up. There was over a ton of silt, rocks, and boulders in the ladder that CRAA members dug out. The ladder was operational for the morning of April 7, and that day we lifted 54 Steelhead. Our best day was April 10, when we lifted 140 Steelhead, including an 18lb natural male, and six females over 14lbs. The daily lift information is included in the graph.

CRAA lifted 12 Steelhead that weighed over 15lbs each, and 10 of them were natural fish. In total, 66% of the Steelhead lifted had no fin clips (which indicates they are natural), and 23% had Right Ventral (RV) fin clips. There were also 5 American fin clipped fish, and the remaining 10% had an Adipose (Ad) fin clip. These results are an improvement to past years which indicates the *Credit River has a strong and growing natural Steelhead population.*

Credit River Steelhead Lift
Streetsville, 1993



Daily Streetsville Dam Steelhead lift, April, 1993.

CRAA HOTLINE 567-6656

CATCH AND RELEASE STEELHEAD CORRECTLY

By John Kendell

THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF RELEASING A STEELHEAD IS DOING IT PROPERLY. These fish are on their spawning run and are using all their stored energy to fight the current and spawn. When we hook them they provide us with a thrill of a lifetime, but in the process the fish expend a great deal of energy.

When you land any fish after a long fight it is tired and out of breath. If you hold that fish out of the water it cannot breathe and this may cause severe stress. The fish may be able to swim away from you when you release it, but it could die a day or week later due to the stress. Also, if you touch the eyes or get mud on them the fish could go blind. If you injure the gills by putting your fingers in them, the fish could be starved of oxygen and die in a few days. A severe skin infection could result if you wipe the slime off. There are even more perils that could kill the fish.

THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT RELEASING FISH IS BAD, only that improper handling of them is.

I, along with some friends have caught the same Steelhead four times in one day in different pools. I have also caught a Steelhead 15 minutes after releasing it on a different bait. These fish had very specific marks such as a pair of lamprey scars which allowed for our positive identification. However, these cases are not uncommon. Most Steelheaders who fish a lot have probably caught a fish that they had released earlier that day, year, or decade. This proves that catch and release works.

RELEASING A STEELHEAD PROPERLY

After fighting the fish to a point where it is tired, tail it with a glove. Set your rod down carefully and cradle the fish by putting your hand under the belly. Keep the fish submerged in the water at all times, and if there is any current then keep the fish's head pointed into it. Use forceps to remove the small hook, hold the fish up for a few seconds for a photo (if desired), and then let it pull out of your hands while you are cradling it with its head pointed into the current.

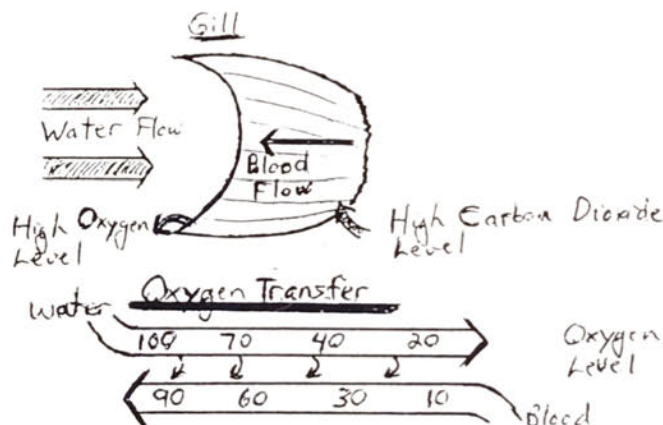
WHY ARE THESE PRECAUTIONS NECESSARY?

A fish's gills are structured so oxygen can only be taken from the water coming into its mouth. The

diagram below illustrates the way the gills take in oxygen and remove carbon dioxide.

This is why it is necessary to hold the fish into the current; if you hold them backwards, then the gas transfer in the gills cannot work and the fish cannot breathe. Also, after a fight with an angler the fish is exhausted and it needs a lot of oxygen. If you hold the fish out of the water for more than 15 seconds it can have a very negative effect on the fish. However, in very cold water this time is a few seconds longer. The very cold water causes a slowed metabolism in the fish.

I hope all anglers learn to release Steelhead properly, so we can all get the maximum benefit from Catch and Release. CRAA will run some free seminars over the year to demonstrate **PROPER CATCH AND RELEASE METHODS. WATCH FOR THEM!**



ATLANTIC SALMON IN THE CREDIT RIVER

By John Kendell

The Credit River has been the main recipient of the MNR's attempt at reintroducing Atlantic Salmon into Lake Ontario. CRAA hopes that the reintroduction is successful and we intend to get more involved in the effort than ever before.

The Credit River supported runs of Atlantic Salmon in excess of one-hundred-thousand in the early 19th century. This run was 700% larger than the present Steelhead run. Those Atlantic Salmon often exceeded 20lbs and fish over 40lbs were recorded.

Poaching and intense commercial fishing took their toll on the fish, but it was the construction of over 70 dams on the Credit that caused the extinction of Atlantic Salmon from the river. This practice was common around the entire lake, and by 1890 Atlantic Salmon were extinct from Lake Ontario.

As most anglers know, the returns of the Atlantic Salmon have been small, but they do exist. There have been well over 100 confirmed hook-ups by anglers in the Credit River over the last four years. The photo below is one of the ones that I have been fortunate to catch and release.

The MNR has only been putting in small amounts of Atlantic Salmon into the Credit River, and these fish have had trouble surviving. The graph below shows the stocking levels since the beginning of the program in 1987. Fortunately New York State has begun to have some success and has increased their stocking to close to two-hundred-thousand a year. The Oswego and Salmon Rivers are seeing growing runs.

Hopefully CRAA and the MNR will be successful in future attempts at reintroducing the Atlantic Salmon into the Credit River.

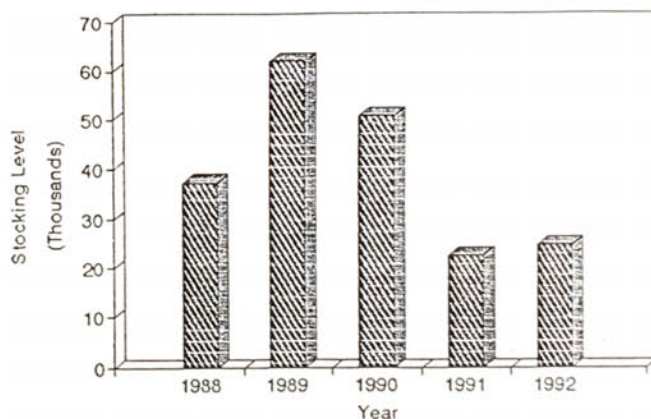
What Makes Atlantic Salmon So Popular

They provide the best fight you can imagine, better than a Steelhead or a Skamania. They run the river from May to October, they can exceed 50lbs (although they average 10lbs to 20lbs), they are very aggressive, they will take dry and waking flies, roe,

lures, and everything else. These fish can jump over 12 vertical feet and swim faster than Chinook Salmon.

If you have caught an Atlantic Salmon in the Credit River or Lake Ontario let us know over the hotline and send in copies of the pictures.

Credit River Atlantic Salmon Stocking
1988 to 1992



A 15lb Credit River Atlantic Salmon

CRAA AT THE FISHING SHOWS

CRAA at Secret Strategies

The Credit River Anglers Association has been very active at the major Angling Events so far this year. CRAA assisted Canadian Sportfishing again this year on February 7, 1994 at their Secret Strategies show in Mississauga. We had a booth that attracted a great deal of interest from the anglers in attendance and we gained a few new members. CRAA helps Canadian Sportfishing with the show and for it we get a portion of the entry fee. This money helps CRAA in our conservation efforts.

CRAA at the Spring Fishing Show

CRAA was again provided with a free booth for the Spring Fishing Show by its coordinators in their work to help conservation clubs. At the show CRAA attracted a large number of new members and it gave us a chance to update the older members. Being at the show put CRAA in the public eye which makes our job easier when we plan conservation projects. The raffle also netted CRAA some additional money for conservation. The winners will be drawn March 15, 1994.

SPRING FISHING FORECAST

The spring of 1994 should be good to all anglers that are chasing after the Steelhead. The fall of 1993 was slow due to the dry weather. Very few fish moved up the Credit so late March and April should be excellent. If the cold weather lasts then even May will be good as it was last year. There were some fresh run Steelhead (still in the skein) around Mother's Day (May 9) in the Credit River.

The Credit has been impossible to fish since December 28, when the frigid weather put a blanket of ice over the river for the first time in memory. On January 10, 1994 the Clay Banks had 18 inches of ice on it. The small melt we had in late January didn't even break the ice up. Currently there is as much as 1m of ice covering the river and the fish.

All the rivers in Southern Ontario should be very good this spring due to the dry fall. Expect the Ganaraska to turn on as soon as the ice moves out. The Saugeen and Sauble should also have a good run this spring.

CRAA CONSERVATION EFFORTS – WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

CLEAN-UPS.

CRAA has run close to a dozen successful clean-ups year-round in Erindale Park which have bagged hundreds of pounds of garbage.

RIVER ENHANCEMENT.

CRAA is responsible for the placement of those boulders that everyone uses to catch more fish. Those boulders are in place to clean out silt, provide micro habitats for small fish, and resting places for migrating fish. CRAA intends to continue and expand this project.

FISH LADDER OPERATION.

Once you read the article on the Fish Lift of 1993 the work that CRAA has done will be clear. CRAA has been running the Fish Ladder since 1990 and over the past four years CRAA has put close to 3 000 Adult Steelhead over the dam so they can reach the prime spawning grounds further upriver. This has had an extremely positive impact on the Credit River Steelhead population.

EDUCATION.

CRAA has had a very positive impact on the image of angling and has introduced thousands of anglers to the proper way of catching fish.

UPWELLING BOX.

CRAA has built an upwelling box and placed it in a spring creek that flows into the Credit River. The box can hold as many as 200,000 Steelhead eggs. It has also provided hundreds of school children with a first hand look at how fish hatch.

TREE PLANTING.

CRAA has planted close to a thousand trees in the Credit Valley to enhance water quality and aesthetics. We plan to plant thousands more in the near future.

URBAN FISHING DAYS.

CRAA members have provided gear and lessons to underprivileged and handicapped children every summer. This is a program that benefits the whole community.

STEELHEAD STOCKING OF THE CREDIT RIVER 1976 TO PRESENT

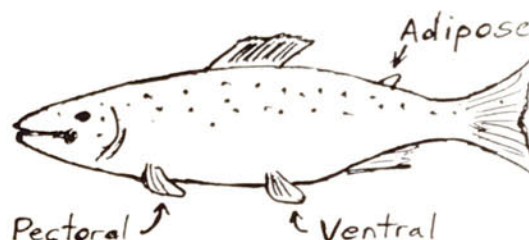
By John Kendell

The Credit River has received Steelhead stockings by the MNR since 1976. These stockings have varied from 187 000 in 1979 to 24 000 in 1990. In addition, these Steelhead have been given fin clips to display their hatchery origin, so the MNR can determine stocking success rates. These stockings have helped to increase the Credit's Steelhead population, and have improved angling opportunities.

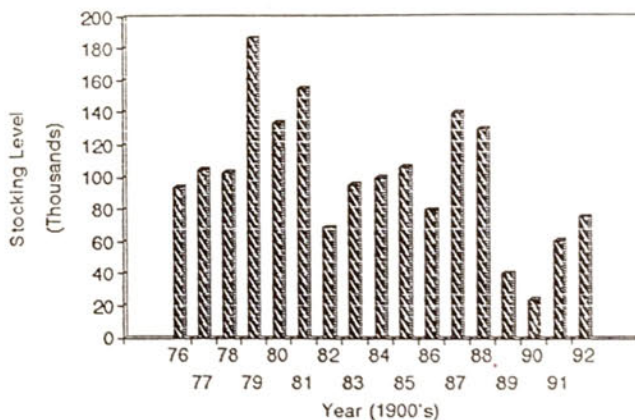
Ontario's Steelhead population has had to rely on natural reproduction for decades, with MNR stockings being small and scattered. The Credit River is one of the few exceptions, having received major Steelhead stockings for the past 18 years. Unfortunately, with decreasing MNR spending, stocking levels have fallen. Fortunately, the Credit River has survived due to its strong natural reproduction. However, with the major increase in angling pressure on the Credit, leading to the slaughter of hundreds of spawning females for eggs, and combined with the drop in stocking, the Credit's Steelhead population has been weakened.

The graph below displays the frequency of Steelhead stockings in the Credit River, as well as the fin clips each year class received. Since 1989 the Steelhead stockings have fallen dramatically in the Credit River, however they are beginning to slowly increase again. Also, the success CRAA has been having at the fish ladder, and the plans to operate our upwelling box will guarantee an improvement in the Credit's Steelhead population. Also, the years of 1992 and 1993 were exceptional for natural reproductive success. Studies have shown record

amounts of Steelhead fry and smolts in most Southern Ontario rivers. This is GREAT news for the near future. Expect to see more 2lb silvers than normal this year in all the rivers.



Credit River Steelhead Stocking
1976 to 1992



ANGLERS CLASSIFIED

Place your buy, trade or sell ad here for **FREE**. Ads can be placed by mail to our address listed on page 2, or through the CRAA Hotline.

CRAA HOTLINE 567-6656

The Fly Fishing Column

By Chris Goh and John Kendell

"Hey, look. Did you see that rise?"
 "What rise?" "That 50lb Atlantic over there!"

If CRAA is successful in its goals of improving the fishery in the Credit River than maybe this conversation will occur. However, currently we must live with thousands of Steelhead and perhaps a hundred Atlantics. But, don't forget those Browns and Chinooks too!

The Question is, how do we catch them?

Flies maybe the answer.

The Credit River is host to an excellent insect population, with species from Caddis to Stoneflies to Hellgrammites. These insect larvae are dinner for our young friends, and that's why we like them. Even most hatchery fish eat some if they were stocked in the river, therefore all the adult fish know what they are. Most of the adult fish survived on these insects for up to three years before going to the

lake, therefore they instinctively feed on them. That's why we catch them on flies when they get wise to roe.

Stoneflies and Caddis Flies are the most common insects in southern Ontario rivers. Therefore, they are a good choice under a float, or anywhere on any fishing line. Other flies are also popular: Woolly Buggers in black which imitate small leeches that are present in most rivers, and wigglers which imitate various Hexagenia hatches. Of course the favourite among Steelheaders is the yarn fly, or egg fly. This imitates an egg, or a group of eggs and sometimes it works better than the real thing. So, to be on the catching side of the river, make sure you've got a box full of flies in your pocket before you hit the river, or the fish will have the last laugh. Remember, barbless hooks don't harm the fish and they work as well as barbed hooks, so pinch those barbs down.

Future columns will carry productive Credit River Steelhead patterns that you can tie for your next angling adventure.

CREDIT RIVER STEELHEAD FACTS

1. OVER 70% OF THE CREDIT RIVER STEELHEAD RUN IS MADE UP OF NATURAL FISH.
2. KILLING FEMALES FOR ROE WILL DESTROY THE FISHERY.
3. UNETHICAL FISHING PRACTICES COULD LEAD TO A CLOSED FISHERY.
4. STEELHEAD THAT PASS THE STREETSVILLE DAM TO SPAWN IN THE UPPER CREDIT HAVE A VERY HIGH REPRODUCTION RATE.

5. CRAA HAS HAD A VERY POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE CREDIT RIVER STEELHEAD POPULATION, AND THE ENTIRE CREDIT RIVER FISHERY.
6. THE MNR HAS LOWERED THE NUMBER OF STEELHEAD THEY STOCK INTO THE CREDIT RIVER IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS.
7. THE FALL AND WINTER RUN OF STEELHEAD IS MADE UP OF OVER 85% NATURAL FISH.
8. MOST HATCHERY FISH RUN THE CREDIT RIVER IN THE SPRING.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

NAME _____

NEW ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ PROVINCE _____ POSTAL CODE _____

PHONE NUMBER (HOME) _____ (BUS.) _____

Send this into the address listed on page 2.

CRAA HOTLINE 567-6656