



# LIGHT LINES

WINTER 1995/1996

Vol 7, No 1

## BIG STEELHEAD REGULATION CHANGES

By John Kendell (from Chris Atkinson-SSNS)

Most of you that fish steelhead religiously in the Georgian Bay and Lake Huron tributaries have noticed an alarming drop in the number of steelhead returning to the rivers. There has been a lot of guessing and finger pointing at possible causes but nothing has been done until now! The real problem is as usual a combination of many different factors combining at the same time to cause a major drop in the numbers of steelhead from these prime waters.

**Finally the necessary changes have been made to preserve and protect what many refer to as the best steelheading in the province!**

I had the pleasure of being involved on the historic night when over thirty clubs met with the Owen Sound MNR to try and find a solution. It so happens that good fishing buddy Chris Atkinson and I are friends with the two biologists who are in charge of steelhead out of the Owen Sound MNR. They were in a position where their bosses said the decision the interested clubs make is what the MNR must follow (a first with the MNR). On the special night back in early October I listened

to the presidents of clubs such as the Sydenham Sportsmen, Nine Mile Steelheaders, Ontario Steelheaders and more try to come to an agreement. This was the fourth grueling meeting of the year and to this point no real progress had been established.

**FINALLY IT HAPPENED.** After three hours a new set of regulations was written and agreed upon by all who attended. Initiated by Chris Atkinson with my support.

**NEW REGULATIONS** (as of April 1, 1996 in Georgian Bay, Lake Huron, and all tributaries)

1. A two fish limit
2. A slot limit of 18" to 24" (45 cm to 60 cm). This means that all fish measuring between these two lengths must be released unharmed immediately at all times.

By setting this regulation the total number of steelhead harvested will be cut by 53%. More importantly, 55% of all maiden spawners will be protected.

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## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **FEBRUARY**

#### **5 CRAA SPRING 'LIGHT LINES'**

#### **16-18 SPRING FISHING SHOW**

CRAA will be providing volunteers for the "Junior Anglers" area for the fourth year in a row. CRAA will be operating the fish identification area and this year we will have seven different species in mounted form provided by Advanced Taxidermy. This will give kids of all ages a chance to learn more about the species of fish common in Ontario. Last year over 15 000 kids passed through the "Junior Angler" area. Make sure you take a day to be apart of this rewarding event.

CRAA will also operate our booth introducing CRAA to the public. Again CRAA will be holding a spring raffle which will begin at the show. Last year CRAA signed up eight new members from the show and raised over \$2 000.00.

### **16-18 SPRING FISHING SHOW CONT'D**

We need lots of volunteers so make sure you give us a call if you can help out. Volunteers receive free access to the show but they must be on the registered volunteer list with the show organizers. Last year we had 30 different people out to help!

### **MARCH**

#### **26 BEGIN FISH LADDER OPERATION**

This opening date is tentative and is entirely dependant on the weather. If we have another warm March like last spring CRAA will open the fish ladder earlier.

### **APRIL**

#### **4 CRAA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

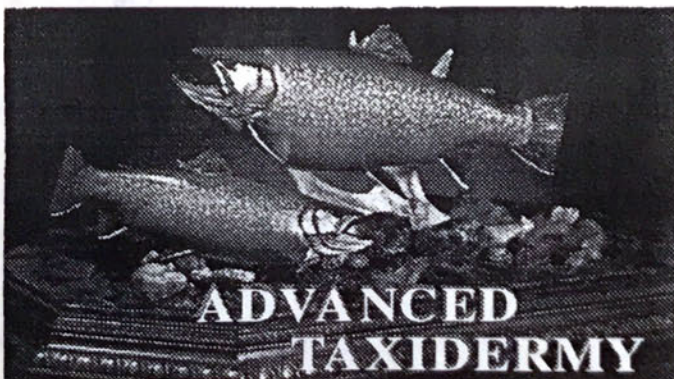
The CRAA General Meeting will be held tentatively at the CVCA Offices in Meadowvale. We will be holding elections, an awards ceremony, discussion of the 1996 projects, and guest speakers that will be discussing rod construction.

#### **1-20 FISH LADDER OPERATION**

#### **1-20 STEELHEAD TRANSFER**

### **APRIL-MAY**

#### **TBA TREE COLLECTIONS**



**NEW HOTLINE NUMBER (905) 608-0169**



## **NEW PROJECTS FOR 1996**

By John Kendall

There are some exciting new changes for the new year that will greatly enhance CRAA's rehabilitation efforts and further improve the fishery for the future. In continuing CRAA's many years of successful environmental projects CRAA will be adding new areas of environmental rehabilitation. In the last six years CRAA has completed many successful projects such as the fish ladder operation, boulder placements, and river rehabilitation. CRAA will continue with these very successful projects while expanding into other areas.

### **NEW CRAA NURSERY**

CRAA will begin our own tree nursery in March, 1996 to act as a source of trees and shrubs to be used at our many rehabilitation projects. Jurgen Richter, our longest working executive member (five years) will assume the role of running the nursery which will be maintained at the Credit Valley Conservation offices. Jurgen has a very keen interest in this area and his knowledge will ensure a successful source of trees for CRAA. Jurgen has been involved with growing trees, flowering plants and rare fruit trees for the past few years and has made a business out of it.

By having our own nursery of a few thousand trees CRAA can complete large scale tree plantings with a high degree of success. We will not have to rely on buying trees from the MNR, the CVC, or private nurseries any more. The money saved from raising our own trees will be put towards other CRAA projects.

Beginning in April, 1996 CRAA volunteers will begin tree collections and potting from various sources in the Credit Valley watershed. The trees will be fertilized and cared for by the CRAA volunteers and the CVC forestry department and will be available for our use as we need them.

### **NEW TREE PLANTING GOALS**

With a large quantity of trees at our disposal CRAA will be greatly increasing our tree planting work along the upper Credit River. Most of the banks of the Credit River from Inglewood to Port Credit are void of trees. There are a few small forested sections, but 80% of the river is open to the damaging heating of the sun during the summer. To offset this problem CRAA will plant poplars and willows on as many properties as possible to begin stabilizing the river banks naturally while shading the river. This will further improve the salmonoid carrying capacity of the Credit River so there will be more fish in the future.

### **FISH LADDER OPERATION**

Now that the MNR has completed the work on the fish ladder we hope to see our success rate jump dramatically in April, 1996. CRAA will be lifting fish as usual, however with the completion of the work we are expecting a lot more fish to be entering the ladder. That means we will need more help down there every day of the week.



## FISH LADDER CONSTRUCTION

**It has finally been completed!** The work the OMNR has been hoping to do at the Streetsville Dam fish ladder for the past three years has finally been completed. The work took two weeks and was completed November 10, 1995.

### Why was the work done?

The Streetsville fish ladder has always been ineffective in attracting steelhead to use it. Due to its location away from the dam fish usually bypassed the ladder entrance and went to the dam. At the dam the steelhead would sit in the deep plunge pool and waste their precious energy jumping. Most of the fish that did miss the fish ladder entrance would expend all their energy jumping and be so exhausted by the time they found the fish ladder that they would not enter it.

The work was done in the hopes of forcing all the fish to sit below the fish ladder so they would not miss it. This will speed up the migration through the fish ladder and greatly increase the numbers of fish using the fishway. Furthermore, the steelhead will not waste their energy jumping at the dam so when they do pass the fish ladder they will have the energy to swim much further up the river.

### What was done?

For the past two years CRAA members have worked extremely hard to improve the outflow channel of the fish ladder. Our work did pay off. Over the last two years CRAA has broken every record set in the first fifteen years at the fish ladder with our hard working volunteers. We lifted over 1500 steelhead, including the highest number in one day, the largest steelhead lifted, and the highest success rate for time spent operating the ladder. Last year

was also the first year CRAA tagged steelhead and the first time adult steelhead were transported up the Credit River past the Norval Dam.

With all our hard work there was one factor that we could not change. The fish ladder always flowed into the second pool below the dam (see Figure 1.) Even with the fence we set up to direct fish into the ladder last year we could not defeat the fact that the fish wanted to sit below the dam in the plunge pool.

The OMNR's proposal was to fill in the plunge pool with rock so fish were forced to sit further downstream in the pool where the fish ladder enters (point "A" in Figure 1). This is exactly what was done. With the heavy machinery and over 25 dump-truck loads of large rock the plunge pool was filled to the surface of the water. A series of deep rapids was then constructed at the entrance of the fish ladder (point "B" in Figure 2). Pool "A" was also dredged to encourage steelhead to hold in all water conditions.

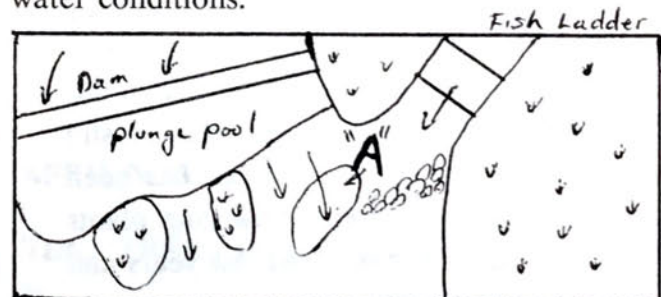


Figure 1.

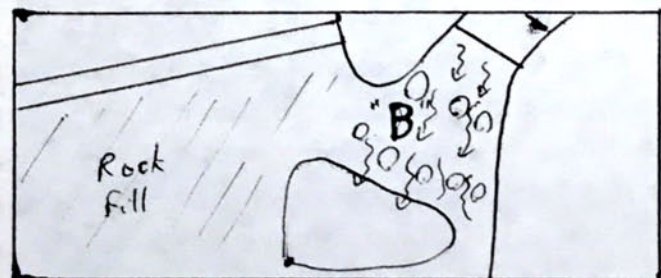


Figure 2.