



P.O. BOX 604
BRANTFORD, ONTARIO
N3T 5P9

*Improving Access and Habitat
for Migratory Rainbow Trout.*

Newsletter September 2010 \$ 1.00
Prepared for members and Ontario Anglers
Supported in part by: wade tech- Brantford (866) 901 3272

Come Together...

The lyrics of the famed Beatles song come to mind as we ponder our activities of the past year and of the many challenges that lie before us. The club's membership numbers are way up, our fisheries work is starting to pay off big time, and our organization will soon have a full compliment of directors. There is a huge pile of work on our wish list and it's going to take teamwork, partnerships, and dedication to the fishery to get it done. If there has ever been a time to start working together; it's **right now**. If there were ever a time to start thinking, and acting as one; it's **right now**. If there's ever been a better time to get our nose to the grindstone; it's **right now**. Chairmen, directors, project managers and volunteers alike, need to find ways to compliment and enhance each other's talents, energy, and experience and we need to look to our partners for support and offer it in return. The sustainability of this organization hinges on our ability to come together as a unit, and work **together** towards common goals. There are no solo acts in our future, so when you go to the polls this month, consider the fishery and it's future first.



MNR to speak at Ontario Steelheaders Awards Ceremony

Jody Scheifley from the **Ministry of Natural Resources** in Owen Sound will be on-site at the Rod Jones Pavilion, **at Denny's Park on Oct. 16th at 6:00 pm** to deliver a presentation on Walkerton's Truax Dam Fishway. He will be discussing the apparent issues with the fishway and the proposed action plan for improvement. Don't miss what is sure to be a very informative, relevant, and information-packed discussion regarding this very important fishway. Jody will also be available to answer your questions and discuss how the Ontario Steelheaders can continue to enhance and protect this fishery. **You don't want to miss this one!!**

Rainbow trout

The **rainbow trout** (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) is a species of salmonid native to tributaries of the Pacific Ocean in Asia and North America. The steelhead is a sea run rainbow trout usually returning after 2 to 3 years at sea. The fish is sometimes called a rainbow salmon. Several other fish in the salmonid family are called trout; the difference is often said to be that salmon are anadromous, whereas trout are resident.

The species has been introduced for food or sport to at least 45 countries, and every continent except Antarctica.

Taxonomy



Oncorhynchus mykiss



The species was originally named by Johann Julius Walbaum in 1792 based on type specimens from Kamchatka. Richardson named a specimen of this species *Salmo gairdneri* in 1836, and in 1855, W. P. Gibbons found a population and named it *Salmo iridia*, later corrected to *Salmo irideus*, however these names faded once it was determined that Walbaum's type description was conspecific and therefore had precedence. More recently, DNA studies showed rainbow trout are genetically closer to Pacific salmon (*Oncorhynchus* species) than to brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) or Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*), so the genus was changed.

Unlike the species' former name's epithet *iridia* (Latin: *rainbow*), the specific epithet *mykiss* derives from the local Kamchatkan name 'mykizha'; all of Walbaum's species names were based on Kamchatkan local names.

The ocean going (anadromous) form (including those returning for spawning) are known as **steelhead**, (Canada and the United States) or **ocean trout** (Australia), although they are the same species.

Life cycle

Like salmon, steelhead are anadromous: they return to their original hatching ground to spawn. Similar to Atlantic salmon, but unlike their Pacific *Oncorhynchus* salmonid kin, steelhead are iteroparous (breed many times, each time separated by months) and make several spawning trips between fresh and salt water. The steelhead smolts (immature or young fish) remain in the river for about a year before heading to sea, whereas salmon typically return to the seas as smolts. Different steelhead populations migrate upriver at different times of the year. "Summer-run steelhead" migrate between May and October, before their reproductive organs are fully mature. They mature in freshwater before spawning in the spring. Most Columbia River steelhead are "summer-run". "Winter-run steelhead" mature fully in the ocean before migrating, between November and April, and spawn shortly after returning. The maximum recorded life-span for a rainbow trout is 11 years.

Feeding

Rainbow trout are predators with a varied diet, and will eat nearly anything they can grab. Their image as a selective eater is only a legend. Rainbows are not quite as piscivorous or aggressive as brown trout or lake trout (char). Young rainbows survive on insects, fish eggs, smaller fish (up to 1/3 of their length), along with crayfish and other crustaceans. As they grow, though, the proportion of fish increases in most all populations. Some lake dwelling lines may become planktonic feeders. While in flowing waters populated with salmon, trout eat varied fish eggs, including salmon, as well as the eggs of other rainbow trout, alevin, fry, smolt and even salmon carcasses.

Rainbow trout



Scientific classification

Kingdom:	<u>Animalia</u>
Phylum:	<u>Chordata</u>
Class:	<u>Actinopterygii</u>
Subclass:	<u>Neopterygii</u>
Infraclass:	<u>Teleostei</u>
Order:	<u>Salmoniformes</u>
Family:	<u>Salmonidae</u>
Genus:	<u>Oncorhynchus</u>
Species:	<u>O. mykiss</u>

Binomial name

Oncorhynchus mykiss
Walbaum, 1792

Important Election Change

In August of 2010, a "Summer Memo" was circulated which indicated that voters would have an opportunity to cast ballots in an advance poll prior to the election date (Oct 16th). The advance poll voting has been eliminated due to an unexpected and overwhelming number of nominations coming in after the 21st of September. (a cut-off date for newsletter submissions) We have decided to eliminate the advance poll and replace it with a "vote by mail" operation so that all member-voters are guaranteed to have a fair opportunity to consider ALL of the nominees and have a fair opportunity to cast their ballot. We realize that some of our members may not be able to attend the Election Ceremonies on the 16th of October at Denny's Park so we are implementing this system. We apologize for any confusion or inconvenience but due to our oversight and an unexpected number of nominees coming forth at this late stage, an advance poll would not have been fair to the voters, or the nominees. We value your right to cast an informed ballot and believe that you deserve a fair opportunity to do so. If necessary, following the election ceremonies on the 16th, each member who was not issued a ballot at the Rod Jones Pavilion will receive a ballot in the mail with clear instructions on how to submit their vote(s). If it is evident after the 16th that the "vote by mail" operation would not change the final results in any way, the election organizers will not need to conduct the vote by mail operation and the results will be announced immediately.

If you have any questions regarding the possible "vote by mail" operation, please e-mail us at webmaster@ontariosteelheaders.ca or call 226 655 0057.

Keep on Truckin'!!

"It's one of the most profound things I've ever experienced" ... anonymous

If you've ever had the experience of trucking a load of adult steelhead across miles of highway, then release them into the cold water streams of the Saugeen and watch them get accustomed to their new surroundings and each other, you would agree.

We **continue to transfer adults** via the *Steelhead Express* into the Saugeen's headwaters, because we believe that natural production is a very important component of enhancing and sustaining the fishery. More importantly, any and all gains from the program confirm our claims, that the watershed is full of useful spawning habitat but remains largely inaccessible to the fish due to man made barriers and boundaries. It is also a useful tool in keeping a pulse on the health of the watershed as we observe spawning success rates. Our Adult transfer efforts are being ramped up this fall as we begin a new **Winter Steelhead Transfer Program**...Beep-Beep!!



J&S Tackle

5101 Hwy #21 South, Port Elgin, On.

(519) 832-2827

ARCHERY + FISHING TACKLE + HUNTING

www.fishingpros.ca

HELP WANTED:

The Ontario Steelheaders are interested in putting your talents to work! If you believe you have a special talent to contribute to the management of this organization, please don't delay!! There are many ways you can contribute as our directors require assistants to compliment their efforts. Please contact a director and we will do our best to put your skills to work to enhance this fishery.

Please join us on Saturday, Oct 16th

At the Rod Jones Pavilion, in Denny's Dam Conservation area (Steelheader's Park) at 4:00 pm for an important meeting, election and derby ceremonies, and guest speaker. We will recap recent accomplishments and discuss the future of the organization, and its role in the management of the Saugeen's steelhead fishery.

Interim Directors will be on-site to answer questions in an open comment forum, and a **special Guest Speaker from the MNR** will give us important fisheries related updates. Memberships can be purchased & renewed; **draw prizes, cash & trophy prizes, New and Exciting Merchandise**, and BBQ will be served.

MORE HELP WANTED:

STEELHEAD EXPRESS II **NEEDS AN OVERHAUL**

Our #2 fish transfer trailer is badly in need of repair. We need to rescue this tanker from its fate in the scrap yard and bring it back to a working unit. We're going to need it in the near future as we step-up our adult transfer efforts and offer more assistance with smolt releases. We need to get to work on it so it will be ready to go in the spring of 2011. It desperately needs a paint job, lights, tires, axles and so on. We may also want to outfit it with the same 4 inch valve system that we fitted tanker #1 with last winter. Since the new valve works so well for smolt releases, we would like to do the same on #2. Once the initial work is complete we can take it to the graphics shop for a new set of decals & reflectors to match Tanker #1. Funding for the repairs to the trailer will come from membership revenue and fundraising activities. If anyone is interested in helping out on this over the winter, please contact Al Frenette at 226 655 0057 or E-mail: al_frenette@rogers.com



The Steelhead Express is an important part of our operations at Ontario Steelheaders. It is used to transfer adult steelhead to prime spawning habitat and also used to release smolt from the hatcheries ... "time to fix 'er up!"

Saugeen River Rainbow Trout Enhancement Project

Spring-Summer 2010 achievements



39 volunteers, worked 13 days spanning 3 weeks, and over 1600 work hours between April 1st to the 17th, to capture 1743 adult steelhead at Denny's Dam, more than doubling our count of 786 in the spring of 2009!!

771 (almost half) of those fish captured were clipped hatchery fish. A clear indication that our work is paying off big time!

309 adults were transported via the *Steelhead Express* and released upstream to the prime spawning grounds of the Beatty Saugeen, and Otter Creek.

329,477 eggs we harvested and fertilized from 60 males and 86 females.

131,036 were directed LHFC Kincardine Hatchery, and 198,441 were transported to the Mildmay hatchery.

57,359 six to eight inch yearling rainbows were released into Otter Creek and the Saugeen River.

**Congratulations to all the volunteers who are involved in transforming this fishery. All of our achievements are made possible with your
“HELPING HANDS”**

Work will resume in April 2011

CENTERPIN ANGLING

1 Leaside Park Drive, Unit 2
Toronto, Ontario

416-759-6153

www.centerpinangling.co





Walker House Restaurant
146 High St.
Southampton, ON.

New Assistants for Denny's Dam Fishway Operations

On Saturday September 25th, volunteers with the Ontario Steelheaders attended a safety course which included modules in fall-arrest and fall-rescue. This is mandatory training for persons working around dams, in or over water, and whenever there is a potential for injury from a fall. Additionally, all volunteer workers are required to work in a safe manner within the guidelines of OHS and its regulations. Personal protective equipment including hardhats and hard toe-footwear (in some cases) are also mandatory on this worksite.



21 volunteers of all ages and experience levels attended this information-packed course offered by Dave Burritt, an Engineer with the MNR - Peterborough and Kathy Dodge, a biologist with MNR in Owen Sound. The experienced people took in a much needed refresher and mentored newcomers, while the "greenhorns" got a real eye-opening lesson in the hazards involved in our work and how to minimize the risks and perform rescue protocols. This training will permit a greater number of our volunteers to assist in the more hazardous jobs behind the fence such as basket entry, net handling at the edge of the open pit, crane operation and fixture placement and manipulation. Let's work together. SAFETY FIRST!

Hatchery update: As of August 13 2010

"The rainbow fry are doing very well. They have been moved into bigger tanks, a physical count being done during the transfer. We have 74,000 rainbow fry, weighing about 1.5 grams/each in the hatchery. This is too many for us to hold over the winter so we will either have to transfer some to the Port Elgin hatchery or do a fall release. This will be decided over the next couple of months".

LHFC Hatchery Management

G *Grindstone* **A** *ngling*

flyshop@grindstoneangling.com

**Ontario's Premier Fly Shop,
Outfitter & Guide Service**

905-689-0880

Denny's Park Project

In 1996 The Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority announced that Denny's Dam Park would be closed to the public due to financial constraints. The possibility existed that the park may even be sold.

The Ontario Steelheaders, consistent with its mandate to protect access to fisheries, approached the Authority with an offer to lease the Park to ensure continued access for all resource users. This resulted in a significant financial commitment to the Ontario Steelheaders. Costs include the lease, insurance, maintenance of the washroom facilities, garbage disposal, grass cutting, road maintenance, signage, picnic tables, and so-on. Surplus funds are put directly into park improvements such as the construction of the pavilion, landscaping equipment, well installation, tree planting etc. Additional surplus funds when available are directed to fisheries enhancement projects and expenses. Modest user fees are charged for parking and camping.

It's working!

In the spring of this year, park management presented our partners in the Lake Huron Fishing Club with a cheque in the amount of \$ 3000.00 to help offset the feed, electricity and supply costs associated with rearing this year's rainbow trout. The financial assistance is a very welcome and needed resource for the LHFC who do a bang-up job of raising so many steelhead.

This money came entirely from revenue generated by our activities in Denny's park. Our management team work diligently to collect the funds and to run the park as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible in order to make these important donations possible. Management staff at the park and all those who contribute with parking passes, and camp fees alike, are all to thank for raising this important money. Your timely payments make these and other improvements to our park and our fishery possible. Thank you.



More Spring & Summer park activities & achievements....

If you ever drive the hill in to the park and happen to come upon someone with the windows down, the music blaring, dust and gravel flying & dragging a large metal object behind their truck ...Don't worry!!!... Pete Pierce and Bob Pfaff fabricated a cleverly engineered tow-behind road grader so we can keep the road relatively free of pot-holes, and it works great! Other homemade gadgets were tried in the past, but this thing really gets the job done! Many thanks to Pete and Bob for putting it together and to those who have been flattening the road!!

Don Power took up a collection to raise money to pay for wood stain to coat the picnic tables that were built in 2009. They were painted up by a merry group of campers in the summer they look great they're ready for many years of service...Thanks Don, and everyone with a paintbrush!!

The Rod Jones Pavilion became a home away from home for about 20 canoeists this summer. The group making the long journey from Walkerton to Lake Huron spent the night with us before making the last leg of the trip. Nice to see people are making use of the facilities at the park & hope they had a great time...come again soon!

Scouts invade Denny's Park!!

Brandy Pierce and the Youth of the 2nd Guelph Troop spent a weekend at Denny's park in April where they pitched tents in the pines along the parking lot. Judging by the photos, they had a ball...The group attended an egg collection lift at Denny's Dam fishway with our project leads, and were given a tour of the fish ladder and the facilities, some hands-on fish wrangling, and a comprehensive explanation of what the Ontario Steelheaders do at Denny's Dam and abroad, to enhance the fishery. As a token of their appreciation, the youth of the 2nd did an amazing clean-up of the riverbank and green spaces throughout the park. Thanks to the volunteers who played host and a huge thanks to the 2nd Guelph for their "Helping Hands" ...It sure is appreciated. Hope to see you all again soon!!!



It's your park!! Use it, enjoy it, respect it, and support it!



Memorial Wreathes from two Ambassadors

For many years now Ken Heath & Ron Dollar have taken up a collection at Denny's Park in the fall of the year to help pay for a pair of memorial wreathes to commemorate, and remember our beloved Veterans and those who gave everything for our freedom. Each year Ken and Ron take time to place the wreathes on behalf of the Ontario Steelheaders and Denny's Park community at both the Town of Southampton, and at the Saugeen First Nation's Remembrance Day ceremonies.

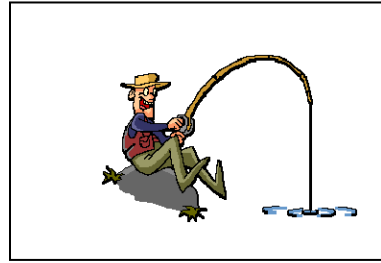
Both wreathes have always been very well received by the communities and by the families of our local heroes. On numerous occasions Ken and Ron have been invited to attend other community gatherings and functions on our behalf and extend well wishes to our neighbours. Please help support Ron, and Ken again this year with your donation. Carol, Ken and Ron are ready to accept your donation at the park now. Please ask the park staff where and how you can make your donation when you visit Denny's Park this fall.

Ken, Ron, and the Ontario Steelheaders thank you.

Fletcher Sports

Hwy 6N & Ledgerock Rd.
Owen Sound, On.
519-371-8587

Proud Sponsor of the Saugeen Enhancement Program



Has the Mildmay Hatchery made its last deposit?

Thanks only to Richard Weiler and his dedicated crew of volunteers who poured over the egg trays each day, for three months at the Mildmay hatchery this spring, they somehow managed an amazing 86.1% hatch rate, and turned out a remarkable 170,798 fry to the Saugeen and Sauble Rivers in late June. The 198,441 eggs that originated from Denny's Dam in the spring, where Richard carefully supervised the collection process, were lovingly hatched-out and nursed by this very dedicated group of volunteers. Way to go fellas!!

Sadly, this may have been the hatchery's last deposit of Rainbow Fry in the Saugeen. A lack of manpower and local interest which has threatened the hatchery operations for many years may have delivered a final blow. In a difficult decision, Richard, and his dedicated assistants may have to close the hatchery in light of an apparent lack of interest from the local community to keep it operating. The Ontario Steelheaders are in discussion with the MNR to explore ways of subsidizing the hatchery's long standing contribution to the fishery should it ultimately go off-line but are vitally interested in securing its future. In the meantime, the O.S. are appealing to the local community of Mildmay and surrounding area for potential volunteers willing to make long term commitments to keep the hatchery running. If you or someone you know are interested in saving this hatchery's contributions to the enhancement of our fishery; please contact the Ontario Steelheaders (see front page). If only a handful of volunteers local to the town of Mildmay would decide to commit to daily chores at the hatchery for a few months each spring, we may be able to save this hatchery from being mothballed. Please consider the impact of the closure of this volunteer hatchery...the fishery needs you.



From Madeline's Membership Desk

As many of you know, the Ontario Steelheaders is currently free of chapters, and no longer operates with the support staff from any chapter. The Ontario Steelheaders is an independent organization currently focused on enhancing the steelhead fishery in the Saugeen River, and maintaining access to the fishery and the river for everyone. Some of you may have read the newsletter, authored by Al Frenette that was circulated in April of 2010, and a handout, outlining the Ontario Steelheaders as a flagship organization and the "original" chapter. The historical efforts of our members, and in particular, a group of volunteers focused on the Saugeen River, spanning some 30 years, has shaped the Saugeen into the premiere steelhead fishery that it is today. Your membership support has, and always will continue to make this work possible.

In the spring of this year, approximately 40 dedicated members renewed their memberships, and in many cases they told us that previously, they were never sure which organization their membership dollars were supporting. I can assure you that your membership dollars are in all cases, 100% directed to the Ontario Steelheaders and their goals and objectives, which are currently targeted on the Saugeen River. The support that we have received since I took upon this role has been much to our delight, far beyond our expectations. Our membership roster is presently well over 125 members strong. We have tripled our membership in one year and it gets bigger every day! Keep up the great support...the fishery is the benefactor!

When I was first asked to take on the role as Interim Membership Chairperson, I was handed a few pieces of paper with some names scattered throughout, a box of envelopes, membership cards and a heartwarming “Good Luck”. The people who got me started were not much better equipped for their own jobs either, but together, we supported each other and got through it. Since then, I have made significant and steadfast gains in creating structure and organization in our member roster... scrap pieces of paper with names written on it just won't do! I have since created a secure electronic database of all our members, as well as, our supporters. The purpose of this database is to keep an ongoing and up-to-date roster of all members, so that we can be effective in providing you the improved communication that so many of you have asked for. Additionally, we can more effectively channel our volunteers' talents into the projects most needing their skills and contributions. There are an unlimited number of uses for such a database and we are just getting started.

I view my role as Interim Membership Chairperson as an interactive role, and understand that I have a responsibility to ensure that our members receive the information, handouts, memos, updates etc. that our directors prepare for us. Since many of our communications are done through e-mail, it would be **extremely** helpful to ensure that I have access to an email address, even if it is that of a spouse, child, relative or otherwise. You will receive your communications faster, earlier, in full colour, and complete with hyperlinks and other electronic enhancements. That being said, it is imperative for each of you to ensure that upon renewing your membership, we have the correct spelling of all members' names, along with your current mailing address etc. By providing complete and accurate contact information and E-mail addresses, this permits our organization to communicate with you quickly, especially with respect to time-sensitive information. Additionally, this helps our organization in keeping costs in check, and if we are to continue to be successful, and augment our fishery, it is imperative that we operate cost effectively.

We are an organization that is managed strictly by volunteers and periodically look to our members for new ideas or opinions that contribute to us achieving our goals and improving our level of service. One suggestion made to me recently was the consideration of a marginal increase in membership dues, or at the very least to implement an increase for new memberships and keep renewals at the existing rate. There are added costs associated with all new memberships such as the manufacturing of the crests, decals, etc. and by slightly increasing the new membership fee this may help to keep us operating more cost effectively. Postage, printing and stationary costs are significant these days and despite our best efforts we feel that those dollars would be better served working to improve the fishery. I ask for any and all of our input regarding these suggestions and others that you may have, as this is YOUR organization and your input is valued. Please send your comments to: membership@ontariosteelheaders.ca, or include them with your membership renewal.

I had the distinct pleasure meeting many of you during the Spring Derby in April, and am looking forward to seeing all of you again at the fall derby on Oct 16th. I would like to thank everyone for their ongoing support and I look forward to the challenges that lie ahead of us in the coming year. Please feel free to contact me with any concerns or questions regarding your membership or club communications, and I would be only too happy to assist.

Madeline Walker

Interim Membership Chair
Ontario Steelheaders
membership@ontariosteelheaders.ca

Fly-fishing • Archery • Spinning Gear • Float Fishing • Live Bait • Fly Tying



“Your Complete Fishing and Archery Store on-the-river”

Learn to tie Troutfitters' Steelhead flies
Max. 2 students per instructor • Includes materials and equipment
only \$39.99 per class

www.grandrivertroutfitters.com
519 787 4359

Treasurer's report

We are in great financial shape, with a bank balance over 4000.00 and a healthy cash-flow ratio. Membership, Derby, Supporter decal and draw prize revenue remain strong, and I have little doubt that with careful planning and budgeting, we can make very good use of the money we have. Expenses this year have included post office box fees, postage and stationary, website updates and hosting fees. Investments in Merchandise and supporter decals have both proven to be successful ventures. We have carefully examined our operating costs and are constantly looking for ways to operate efficiently.

I have done some preliminary estimates of what it will cost to repair the Steelhead Express – Tanker #2, and am confident that between corporate support, volunteer labour and some of our own money we can fix it up quite nicely.

It has been the year of investing in our membership. Each member received a decal and a new crest for their fishing vest to benchmark a fresh new start with the Ontario Steelheaders. We have also absorbed significant postage, stationary and printing costs for newsletter mailings and such. As acting secretary – treasurer, I have absolutely no reservations about making investments in the retention of our members; it's just the cost of keeping your partners. I also value communication, and any costs associated with communication are rightly justified. We are looking for ways to reduce these expenses but we will always continue to put communications high on our priority list. 2011 looks promises to put us in a very good position to allocate significant monies to conservation projects.

When I asked to take this job, I was handed a stack of accounting records, one signed cheque, and a couple of unpaid bills. We now have a new community bank account free of banking fees, new cheques and a debit card. We also have the ability to manage our account and money through on-line banking; ATM deposits and so on...all the modern bells and whistles. As soon as the election is concluded, I would like for the secretary to apply for 2-3 additional debit / chip cards to make things easier for our membership, merchandise and derby chairpersons. They would have the ability to make deposits from any branch, directly in to our account as well as make club related purchases electronically, without having to wait for a cheque or advance. Our members are spread all over the province and I'm positive we can make use of some of today's modern banking conveniences.

I also spent a considerable amount of time working with our website host to update our website. After not being updated in 6 years, we updated it in 2 weeks at a cost of 150.00. Now it's just a matter of keeping up to the updates. Our website has a lot of potential but it will require teamwork and a little money to really accelerate our web presence should that be something we want to look at.

I am humbled by your trust and promise to keep your best interests in mind when it comes to your money, your club, and your fishery. I have many more ideas for our organization but realize, I cannot do it alone. My hope is that the upcoming election will help forge a cohesive team at the organization's core so we can accomplish our goals together.

Al Frenette

Interim Secretary-Treasurer

Ontario Steelheaders



**1572 Victoria St. N
Kitchener, ON
1-888-MAX-FISH**

www.naturalsports.ca

New O.S. fundraising project skyrockets

A brand new initiative designed to put funds directly in to fisheries improvement is off to a great start! The Storefront Supporter Decal Program designed by Darryl Choronzey is a real hit with tackle retailers, restaurants and other businesses. In a few short weeks more than a dozen businesses have donated 200 dollars towards our Fisheries Enhancement Fund. In return the Ontario Steelheaders are supplying the stores and businesses with a storefront "Supporter" decal to display, as well as an advertisement spot in this newsletter. Late in September, more than 70 tackle retailers, sporting goods shops and guides were sent a letter and application form outlining the program. We anticipate plenty of funding from this program that is sure to attract lots of attention in the business community. The additional funding generated from this project will go a long way to improve our fishery. Each member of the Ontario Steelheaders will receive a copy of the Decal Supporter Letter so that they can do their part to present the program to someone they know. Please do your part and keep the program and our fishery moving forward.



The license plate sized Supporter Decal can be seen on storefront windows across SW Ontario. "If you know of a business who would like to make a contribution, please give them a copy of the program letter".
Please thank our partners for their support

+++++

Ontario Steelheaders 2010 Annual Fall Steelhead Derby

Please join us on *Saturday October 16th 2010* at Denny's Conservation Area (Steelheader's Park) for our annual Fall Steelhead Derby & River Appreciation Day.

Cash Prizes +++++ Draw Prizes +++++ Trophies +++++ Free Camping +++++

This social event begins with a full day of fishing in the derby and end with dinner and awards. Registration is available at Denny's Park. Look for the signs..!! Dinner will be served at the Rodney Jones Pavilion, where we will have draw prizes, raffles, club updates, elections, guest speaker, and finally the derby prizes and trophies will be awarded. Please join us for a great day of socializing with members and a cozy campfire afterwards. Overnight camping and day use at Denny's Park is free for appreciation day participants and their families.

Entry fee: \$10.00 adults	Weigh-in deadline: 5:00 PM
Entry fee: \$7.00 junior	Everyone Welcome!

See you October 16th!

Lake Huron Fishing Club Update

From One Club to Another...

Contrary to any rumours, the Lake Huron Fishing Club is alive and well! Answering an appeal to the membership, volunteers have stepped forward to take leadership positions on our Executive. The Lake Huron Fishing Club is stronger today than we have been for many years. Our Executive, mirroring our membership, now has a perfect mix of experience and fresh energy. Building on existing programs, our Club will be propelled into the future by new ideas, new projects and enthusiasm! I believe that this is similar to the transformation the Ontario Steelheaders are now undergoing. These are exciting times!

The Lake Huron Fishing Club and the Ontario Steelheaders have been working side by side for many, many years. We are both passionate about the sport of fishing and the health of our fisheries. Each of us believe in the principles of "caring enough to act", love to get our hands dirty and aren't afraid to "stir the pot" to protect our fish. Recently we have discovered that we can accomplish even more by working together than we can by working separately. I believe that our yearling rainbow trout stocking program for the Saugeen River is just one of the early examples of this partnership.

As the Lake Huron Fishing Club and the Ontario Steelheaders move into the future we must both be cognizant of opportunities to work together and to support each other. We are not in competition with each other, we compliment each other. Together, there is very little that we cannot accomplish.

Yours in conservation

*Al Wilkins
President
Lake Huron Fishing Club*

"The rainbow trout program is an excellent example of what cooperation between 2 fishing clubs can accomplish. The Ontario Steelheaders provide the eggs, help with fin clipping and assist with stocking. Ontario Steelheaders also provide some financial assistance to help pay feed and electrical costs. The Lake Huron Fishing Club provides hatchery space and day to day fish culture duties to grow the fish. Both clubs (and every other fisherman) enjoy the increased numbers of rainbow trout in the lake and river."



FEED THE FISH!!!

Chances are you've been approached by one of our members or someone from the Lake Huron fishing Club with draw tickets for prizes, 50/50's, an ATV and so on. The proceeds from these draws go directly to fund the hatchery operations and is used primarily to purchase fish feed, pay for electricity and other expenses. Many thanks to the folks who have been working hard to sell the tickets and raise funds, this work, and your money, is a critical component to the enhancement of this fishery, and a vital lifeline to the fish's appetite !!

Please support these and other very important fundraising activities now and in the future!



1606 16th Street East
Owen Sound, ON N4K 5N3

(519) 370-2003

Take out & Delivery

My Life as a "Tackle Junkie"

By Ron Plaskett

As I write this, I imagine that I can see you, in your fishing jackets with crests or patches sewn on them or you wearing your shirts with logos on them advertising the Ontario Steelheaders. You are anglers – every one of you and I believe that we all suffer from the same affliction - being a "Tackle Junkie". Or at least most of us do.

I am writing this (by my wife's "advice") to let you and the world know (that my wife thinks) that I am a "Tackle Junkie". Yes, that's right, a "Tackle Junkie" of the worst kind. I buy things - fishing things...all kinds of things to do with fishing. I might already have one or two of the same lure and I will buy more. I can't help myself. It is in my blood. Being a superhero of "Tackle Junkies" is my alter ego. It is my fate in life.

I cannot pass a tackle shop without going in without hesitation. That is, if my wife is not with me. If she is, I hesitate and then go in (with her eyes following me) on some pretext. Hey, one has to ask directions somewhere – even if it is to find out where the bead head wooly buggers are located in the store.

I look around me, taking in the many colors, the shapes, sizes, wishing and wanting to have at least one of everything in the store. I walk up and down the aisles, perusing the wares so carefully lined up on the shelves, hung so invitingly on the wall displays Lures and Jigs and Scents, OH MY!

I am on a first name basis with all the clerks and even the owners of the local tackle shops – just ask Chad, Steve, JoAnne, Byron and John, to name a few. I frequent tackle shops farther afield when on a trip. I will go as low as to use the excuse of 'nature calls' in order to stop at a new tackle store and let 'nature' out.

The manager of a large outdoors- related store in Vaughn, Ontario gets me coffee and doughnuts every time I show up on his doorstep. Actually, this is a dream of mine based on the idea that they owe me recognition for all the money I have spent and will leave with them in the future. I tell myself they are keeping my money safe.

My local fishing tackle haven is a store to behold. Even when I am out sent out to do an errand and only the errand, my steering wheel always seems to pull in the direction of that particular holy grail of fishing stores. There must be something broken in the car but I am not going to get it fixed.

I also rationalize that I am helping build the economy – locally and country-wide – by buying more lures. I, single handedly, hold the economic status of our wonderful country in the palm of my wallet, bank account and credit cards. I.O.U.'s are not accepted in most stores unless you give them your first born.

A "Tackle Junkie" like me realizes that tackle shops are not just a place for drooling and dropping cash. No sir. They are places of culture and intellect and discussion. Where else can you gather with different types people of various stations in life and age who have the same outlook on life? Everyone is equal when it comes to fishing. Everyone has the same chance to go fishless on any given day. (It is not the tackle's fault!)

How else are you going to discuss fishy things except at a tackle shop? What are the salmon are biting on is a good topic and causes a lot of interaction between those involved in the conversation. Sometimes, you have to know when you should stop talking but that is a skill I do not have. Just ask the lady near and dear to me.

Where they are biting can be a cause of misinformation as most of us tend to be quite secretive about our favorite spots. Everyone has been guilty of this at one time or another – haven't we?

As a reporter protects his sources, a "Fishing Junkie" protects the sources of his lures. At times, I won't even tell my best fishing buddy but I will cave in sometimes when he threatens to tell someone near and dear to me that I bought another lure or two or ...

If the question of where you can find those hot lures is answered and you trust the source (Really, really trust - as in letting the source use your new 16 foot float reel before you do, type of trust), I go for it. As a 'Tackle Junkie', I always make sure I have a full tank of gas in case a road trip is needed.

For example, recently a fishing buddy told me about a special lure that he praised as a wonder lure and sure thing for all salmon and trout. "Gotta have it!" my mind shouted. So I started looking for this marvelous fishing lure. Tackle store after tackle store said they had never heard of it. I was beginning to think that maybe my buddy was having some fun at my expense.

Finally, I found a whole display of that particular lure and purchased three because I might lose one and then I'd only have two.

Gaining information on new and upcoming lures or other fishing items is a time honored tradition for "Tackle Junkies" and helps them in their quests. Loaded with the new information from magazine, fishing shows on television and word of mouth, I will search out that (needed) fishing tackle and put it in my shopping basket without blinking at the cost.

So goes the life of a self-proclaimed "Tackle Junkie".

Tackle shops are also a wonderful forum for debate. Topics like how to tell whether spinning, bait casting, fly fishing, trolling, using spey equipment, using centre pin units or flat lining is the best method to use, are hot. Hey, you need specific equipment for each style of salmon or trout you are using, don't you? More fishing tackle is needed then. A bonus for a "Tackle Junkie"!

In a tackle store, you can talk about what works best in different fishing situations or for different species? You can discuss whether plastics or hard bodies or hair jigs or natural baits (worms, minnows, roe or leaches) are better. What are the best colors to use for a particular species of fish?

This information is just what I want to know so I can make another purchase whether I need it or not. A "tackle junkie" does not care! He/she always forgets what they have at home and will buy more – just in case.

Everyone has his own ideas and is free to express his beliefs at a tackle store. Freedom of expression at its best! You can believe what you want as long as you just nod and smile knowingly as if in agreement. You can use the knowledge garnered from the debates to your benefit when walking slowly the aisles of the tackle shop and asking yourself if this lure better than that lure, or is this line is better than that line. In the end, if you are like me, I can't decide so I buy both as a true "Tackle Junkie" should.

I, as a "Tackle Junkie", often buy a lure and test it out in my backyard pool. If I like its action and the depth to which it runs, I will go back to the store and buy that lure in all the colors in which it is available – even if I have to order some. You must realize too, as fellow "Tackle Junkies", that one must be careful to not make your first catch with a new lure the swimming pool liner. Enough said.

When I am in a fishing tackle store, I just can't help myself. I need to buy something - anything. Just one item will make me happy until I see and enter the next tackle shop. Someone near and dear to me says I have enough to open my own tackle shop in the basement. Hah! What does she know? There is no such thing as having too many rods, reels, hooks, lures, jigs, plastics, spoons, floats, fishing line, filleting knives, live bait in the refrigerator, boats, scents, fishing magazines, etc. I completely and firmly stand behind this belief until someone near and dear to me catches me buying something else in the way of a fishing related item. "Yes, dear, I don't need it. But I want it, I want it, I want it..." "No! Put it back!" I guess she is right. There is the life as a 'Tackle Junkie'... again.

As you know, the best way for a "Tackle Junkie" to get around this is go to the tackle store, case out the joint, make note of what you want, a map of where it is in the store and then get your best fishing buddy to go there and buy your desired item(s). Just like you, I make sure to give my buddy a little more than the fishing item(s) costs and tell them to keep the change. No, this is not a bribe. Just a little thank you for services rendered – so to speak.

I try to be discrete when obtaining the merchandise and taking it into the house in order to prevent a confrontation that most likely will not come out in my favor. A clandestine meeting with my friend in a park at night to get the merchandise is my favorite ploy. Try using the old "walking the dog for its evening constitutional" trick - as it usually works for me. When using this method, just make sure you do not talk to anyone in the park about a lure lest it is misconstrued and you end up in jail with your chosen fishing items confiscated for evidence.



Standing Arrow Smoke Shop
Highway 21 N. & French Bay Rd.
Southampton, Ontario

Steelhead Rant

Lots of things are changing on the Saugeen fishing front as far as the Ontario Steelheaders are concerned. If you follow the fishery carefully, you can see some of those changes are now evident. In a few short years thanks to the work of the Saugeen Steelheader members, in partnership with the Lake Huron Fishing Club, the steelhead population on the river has exploded. Guess what? The steelhead fishery is even going to get a lot larger and more exciting in the seasons to come.

At present, some are estimating the annual run to be anywhere from 15,000 to 20,000 fish passing through the fishway at Denny's Dam annually. Remember, that's returning fish that come back to the river from late August around thru until early May. That's a hell of a lot of days and at the same time a hell of a lot of fish. Remember the fishway is on 'swim-thru' all year. I'm one of those that believe that those numbers will be on the high side of these estimates. I'm also an individual that believes that as the work continues the end result will be a real eye opener to anyone that carries a rod and enjoys the feel of a trout on the opposing end of your line.

Back in the spring one of our first lifts contained close to 500 adult fish. Again, remember, that same fishway was wide open and being used by the spawn-ready fish for weeks and even months before we arrived.

Anyway, watch out. If you think this fishery is great now, just give it a year or two.

Also lots of changes have taken place over the past couple of months. All of those changes are meant to get the adult rainbow to proper spawning grounds in the upstream reaches above the town of Walkerton. Here are a few personal thoughts, improvements and where we go from here.

For starters, there are major changes coming to the Walkerton fish way. To be honest, I don't think this passageway ever allowed proper fish movement from the day it was installed. It clogs almost overnight, stopping all fish at the top end or eliminating proper water flow for safe passage of the fish. I spent a few days swimming and removing debris and checking water flows before and after....and it just doesn't work. Thanks to the local Ministry of Natural Resources, Kevin Hawthorne (past district manager) Shawn Carey (new area supervisor), Kathy Dodge (district biologist) and Jody Scheifley (acting biologist) improvements are changing and happening rapidly. I've had a number of meetings with the MNR and honestly believe that the future looks bright for the river and the fish.

-A new debris boom is being installed on the upstream side of the dam.

-A new water regulator is being installed on the upstream side of the dam.

-Modification is being designed on the bottom end of the dam to allow fish easier access.

-I've met with the Conservation Authority and a new swim through or swim around should be in place in the very near future on the old hydro dam above Walkerton. Right now, fish only get over the structure occasionally. In the future they should have access around the dam throughout the year. Again, thanks especially go to the new area MNR supervisor Shawn Carey.

- The Ministry has also given the club the go-ahead to move adult steelhead in the fall from Denny's Dam upstream for release above Walkerton at two designated locations. If you know your fish, the difference between the fish that come into the Saugeen in autumn and the fish in the spring is genetics. The American states have been playing with a strain of steelhead for decades that are referred to as Chambers Creek steelhead or 'winter' steelhead. With our assistance, these autumn runners are getting a little help to better spawning waters. The permit says we can trailer 400 adults to the coldwater stretches of the Saugeen, but I would imagine if task is accomplished we should be able to apply for even more numbers.

-The MNR has agreed that more volunteers are required for the Denny's Dam fishway program. Some members of the Ontario Steelheaders went through an MNR conducted instructional course at Denny's Dam late last month.

-We have also offered to increase the funding to the Lake Huron Fishing Club if they decide to hold over surplus steelhead into the spring at their Port Elgin hatchery to pay for additional feeding costs.

There are one or more additional items that are presently shaping up and should be exciting for the Ontario Steelheaders, but at present I don't want to bring them up until they are approved by the local office of the Ministry of Natural Resources. It is enlightening to see more co-operative involvement between the Steelheaders and the local MNR office.

Ontario Steelheaders Saugeen Enhancement Supporter Decal Fundraiser

A few months back I went to Rod Jones and then Al Frenette to suggest we start up a fund raising project. It was pretty simple. Window display decals that are 'sold' to tackle shops, restaurants, tackle manufacturers and any other business that benefits from our efforts on the Saugeen. The purchase cost of the decal is two (\$200) hundred dollars. All funds received from the purchaser go directly into the fishery and nowhere else. Remember, we have the cost of fish food, fish transfer and upkeep, etc. I request that the purchase price of the decals is kept firmly at \$200 to support this program.

I've taken the decals into many stores and they have been readily accepted in all establishments to date. **Hope you members have some good contacts as well. We can always use the funding!**

All of the Advertisers in this Newsletter have participated in the program. Please show your support for our partners, and thank them for their support!

Fundraising supported by members of the Ontario Steelheaders would be greatly appreciated. Remember, it costs money to raise fish and carry out the other endeavours to improve the Saugeen steelhead enhancement program.

Please get a couple of decals in store windows if you can.

Getting Old--

Hey, I look in the mirror and notice every morning I'm aging a little. So are a lot of members of the Steelheaders, but that's true with just about each and every club I meet in Canada these days. To be honest, fishing is in big trouble from coast to coast these days. Kids and young anglers just aren't getting into the fishery like they did in years gone by. Do yourself and the fishery a favour. The next time you see a young fellow or girl with a fishing rod down at the park, please go out of your way to introduce yourself and possibly get them involved with the Ontario Steelheaders. It's amazing how many younger visitors to the park feel intimidated by the older folk.

We need young blood not only in the Steelheaders, but in the fishery as a whole.

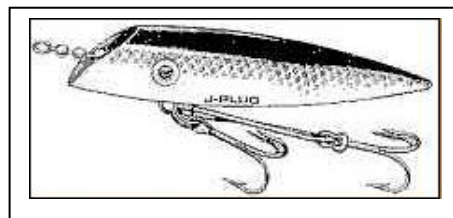
"The Ontario Steelheaders along with their counterparts are changing the Saugeen. Those changes will probably create the best fishery this side of the Rockies. Those changes will require dedication. Get your friends to join the Ontario Steelheaders."

Chronz...

Watson's Tackle House

**125B 14th Street West
Owen Sound, On.**

(519) 371-0090



Get involved!

It's time to call upon "young blood to step up..." The fishery needs you!

Rod Jones

Protect our fisheries!!!

Ontario Steelheaders 2010 Annual Spring Steelhead Derby & River Appreciation Day Recap

Many thanks to the participants and volunteers who made this another success!

Results:

1st Prize	Doug Swan	5 lb 1 oz
2nd Prize	Brian Zetteler	4 lb 14 oz
3rd Prize	Larry McKonkey	3 lb 9 oz
Live Release	Jeff Byrne	(Again!)

A few smaller fish is all it took to win the prizes this year. Nice going guys! 43 entries (slightly more than half of our membership), 4 of which are were juniors applied their skills this year on post-run waters in a race to the finish. We were very lucky with the weather and it turned out to be a great day. Jeff Byrne is a long time repeat winner of the Catch & Release Award, and Doug Swan and Larry McKonkey are also a repeat winners...Way to go guys!! From all of us at the Ontario Steelheaders we would like to wish Darlene Munro better luck next time!!

Harold Curtis and his crew put on a great dinner complete with a fish boil. The meeting and ceremonies featured all kinds of club information & history as well as a slideshow. Our first meeting went very well and the membership renewal and draw ticket support was tremendous!! It's great seeing everyone get together after all the fisheries work is done in the spring to just kick back a little and just enjoy the park, the river, the fishery, and each other's company. Thanks again to everyone for making it a great day!



Merchandise report

The spring of 2010 marked the long awaited comeback of the Ontario Steelheaders merchandising efforts in a big way. Carlo Baldassarra, volunteer Interim Merchandise Chair brought back the "Green Jacket" which by now you may have seen our members wearing as well as some vintage T-shirts, decals and coffee cups. We took orders for over 40 jackets since April and we'll be adding some very **exciting new merchandise at the fall derby** that is guaranteed to be a **big hit!** He has been instrumental in creating some new and exciting artwork and apparel that we're sure you'll like.

Here's what he had to say:

"Steelhead season is well underway, you can't wait to hit the streams, but realize you don't have a thing to wear. Well, if you want to know what the best-dressed Steelheaders are wearing this fall, come see me..."Carlo B" at the fall derby on Oct 16th at Denny's park. I'll hook you up with the latest Steelheader fashions. Quantities are limited...so bring cash and don't be the one that got away! See you on the 16th!!"

Carlo will also be taking orders for Green Jackets at the derby, so if you missed him in the spring...see him on Oct. 16th at the derby and election ceremonies. **Bring your cash or cheques to the derby and get yours while it's hot...It won't last long!!** Carlo is also very motivated to continue bringing you exciting new merchandise and is already working on his next project. *Merchandise is sold at a very minimal profit margin and proceeds are used to fund conservation projects.*

Grey Bruce Outdoors Partnership

In the spring of this year, we contacted the good folks at Grey Bruce outdoors to explore a partnership in the pursuit of a platform where members can go and chat, share their stories, reports etc. Grey Bruce Outdoors is a very well known Outdoors website playing host to several on-line forums and has a sizeable member list. Although this project is yet in its infancy, we believe there is plenty of potential. The folks at Grey Bruce Outdoors set up a bulletin board for us to post club announcements and our newsletters and there is an exclusive chat forum set up just waiting for us to take advantage of. The partnership is great way of letting people know we're still here and working just as hard as always. In the coming months we hope to dedicate some of our people to work with GBO and enhance what has already been started...Watch for us on GBO! Check us out at: www.ontariosteelheaders.ca



Interview with MNR

I've been around the Saugeen since my early twenties (that's a long time...) and in that time, I've had hundreds of discussions on the past, present, and future state of the fishery. I've debated the effectiveness of our enhancement efforts for hours, and I've heard so much conjecture and speculation about the issues surrounding the dams and fish ladders, that I wasn't sure what to believe. And so, I set out to find out for myself.

My objective was only to confirm or disprove the things I'd heard on the river, in on-line chat forums and so on. I just wanted to know the truth, and the facts. I spent a good deal of time thinking about who I should ask when it occurred to me to ask someone who has nothing to gain, nothing to hide, who is right smack-dab in the middle of it all, and who could answer my questions based on fact and science. I contacted Kathy Dodge with the MNR in Owen Sound and asked for an interview and she agreed to speak with me!

I had several questions for her that day and here's what she had to say:

Q: What have recent fish tagging studies on the Walkerton Fishway discovered and what changes or improvements need to take place if any?

A: Telemetry studies demonstrated that the Walkerton fishway is not passing fish very well at all, and there have been some recommendations made to improve its efficiency. Debris collecting in the inlet was noted as the most significant problem because it negatively affects proper flow rates. There are recommendations to install a newly engineered flow control device at the inlet of the fishway so that flow rates can be adjusted when necessary, as well as a trash boom to divert the surface debris from entering and clogging the intake. The possibility does exist that the Truax dam could be completely removed in the future. The Municipality of Brockton owns this dam, and should they decide to remove the dam, it would still take several years to decommission it altogether. In the meantime, MNR is committed to improving the efficiency of the Walkerton fishway and monitoring it with follow-up studies. "There doesn't seem to be a whole lot of red tape in our way since we're only making improvements. On the other hand, there currently is no money available for us to move forward. The project is a high priority, but there's just no money at the moment." If the money were available, this fishway could see some changes relatively quickly.

Q: Do you think the Old Hydro Dam above the Truax Dam needs work as well? If so, what can MNR, do to help?

A: Under perfect flow conditions, this dam is known by anglers to pass limited numbers of fish. With that said, those ideal conditions are rare and the dam does represent a significant obstruction to jumping species. There have been a few suggestions made as how to improve its ability to pass fish. These include the installation of a jump pool, notching the dam face to lower the obstacle, or to construct a bypass channel so fish can "swim around" the dam. We should not dismiss any of the suggestions, and must consider that the dam could be removed altogether; again, something that would take a considerable amount of time. The options will have to be carefully evaluated and possible E-A's done before work can be completed but we can make improvements here. This dam is owned by the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority, but the MNR does realize the dam is an obstacle, and that improvements would benefit migratory fish. "The MNR is fully committed to doing everything they can to facilitate the process of improving passage beyond this dam". Like Truax; if fish are to pass freely and reliably, improvements need to be made.

Q: Have any studies been conducted on the Maple Hill Fishway? If so, what are the findings and are any improvements recommended?

A: A report from studies conducted at Maple Hill is still in the final stages. Experts are examining the data and are expected to make additional recommendations and comments. Results from telemetry and underwater camera studies may suggest that although this fishway can pass fish, it may still be a candidate for improvements. Again, the study is not complete or official and is still under review, but there are preliminary indications that minor modifications at this facility might improve fish passage and protection. The hydroelectric installation at Maple Hill is privately owned which does present some unique challenges, but the lack of money is probably Maple Hill's major hurdle." We can make recommendations for improvement... but they all cost money". Stay tuned.

Q: What is the MNR's position on the future of the Ontario Steelheaders partnership rainbow stocking program with the LHFC? Can we stock rainbows like this indefinitely?

A: There are no immediate concerns by the MNR regarding this program or threats of it being adjusted by the MNR in the immediate future. However, there is a lake wide stocking review currently underway, and changes could come as a result of that work. We have already seen changes made to the Chinook egg allocations this fall. The lake has changed and we must adjust our stocking and fisheries activities to reflect these. But for now, it is "Status Quo".

Q: How important is monitoring? What should we be doing to monitor the fishery now and in the future? Do you agree with fin clipping? Do you think a fish counter at Denny's dam would be beneficial?

A: Monitoring, marking, and data collection are an absolutely essential component to properly managing a fishery. It needs to be an inherent component of our enhancement efforts and is "the science behind the decision making". We should be collecting as much data as possible without putting the fish in harms way...there's a delicate balance between getting the information you need without causing undue harm. Without data we have no rationale to make decisions, so in the pursuit of information we must do our best to be as non-invasive as possible. Although clipping is controversial, it is very effective in marking and differentiating one fish stock from another. Adipose fin clipping may be the least harmful clipping technique and should be considered whenever possible. Installing a counter at Denny's would definitely help us to determine the size of the runs. "If we had the money, I would install one at Denny's in a heartbeat". We do a good job of monitoring and collecting data, but we could always do more. Monitoring this fishery will be particularly important whenever changes in our strategy, enhancement operations, or fishway improvements are made.

Q: Looking forward, what goals or strategies do you think The Ontario Steelheaders should engage themselves with? How do you think the O.S. will be able to contribute to making this a self sustaining fishery?

A: Ideally, we shouldn't have to stock and artificially sustain our fishery. If everything were in proper order, the fishery could sustain itself. The dams represent the most significant and immediate issue for salmonids, but on a positive note, some of these problems could be fixed with the influx of money. As long as the fishways at Walkerton and Maple Hill are performing poorly, and until the SVCA "Hydro Dam" starts passing fish reliably, there will always be a perceived need to transfer adults beyond those barriers and to stock. The Ontario Steelheaders and their partners should have their sights aimed at those dams and do whatever it can to see to it, that something gets done. Stakeholder groups like the O.S. are a vital component in the decision making process to improve our dams and fishways and should always participate in those processes. Once the dams are either removed, fishways improved or installed and passage becomes reliable, we could theoretically stop transferring adults, and monitor the effectiveness of those fishway improvements.

Additionally, and equally as important, the O.S should be thinking of ways to improve habitat. There should be some effort aimed at enhancing spawning, nursery and juvenile habitat. Surveys, mapping and inventories of these habitats would provide the O.S. and MNR with the necessary data to formulate a habitat enhancement strategy. Fortunately, the Saugeen is relatively pristine compared to other major watersheds in Southern Ontario but there is very little recent and relevant data on the streams and various habitats in question. A proper assessment and inventory of the habitat and its ability to provide for all life-stages would be an invaluable asset to us in the future. There may also be opportunities to form partnerships with other local conservation groups, schools, community groups and landowners in the pursuit of the information and habitat enhancement.

Our conversation began that afternoon with asking why the steelheaders' Adult Transfer permit numbers have been reduced to what is roughly one third of what they used to transfer in the 90's. Several valid explanations were offered up including time and resource limits on the part of the MNR and other human factors, as well as critical water temperatures and the need to co-ordinate the program with the egg collection programs. She also told me that in large part, the permit numbers are based on actual historical adult transfer numbers. When I asked if the numbers might increase in the future, she indicated that there are many factors to consider in the decision making process, but that the issue is open for discussion.

By the end of our talk, only one thing seemed obvious. If science tells us there are issues with the dams, and the fish ladders can't pass fish properly, then there's a need to "artificially sustain" this fishery if we're to continue to enjoy it. The need to continue transferring adults over those barriers to promote successful reproduction and a stocking program seems evidently necessary. Moving these fish by hand and rearing the young in the safety of a hatchery helps guard this fishery from collapse and maintains consistency in natural reproduction year over year. Until the barriers get fixed, it seems like our only choice in the matter. We also need to consider the changes that are taking place in the fishery. It seems only logical that with the increase in steelhead returning to the Saugeen as a result of the partnership stocking program between the O.S. and LHFC, then there's going to be a lot more fish left at the base of those dams trying in vain to reach spawning habitat. Have you seen what's happening below Walkerton during the spring runs? Until something gets done to fix existing fishways and build new ones where there are none, I think we need to reconsider the permit numbers... don't you? Imagine how many more adults would reach those same headwaters if there were no barriers or obstacles! Why are we only looking at historical numbers when the fishery is on the increase? We can't give them all a ride but I think we could do more to try to compensate for the shortfalls of our fish ladders. The key to long term success in "naturally sustaining" this fishery, lies in improving access by getting these ladders working well, add new ones where needed, and then get to work on enhancements in habitat.

I went home that day with a more in-depth understanding of the issues and problems with our fishery (actually, there's nothing wrong with the fish...it's the dams!) and feeling comfortable with my position on stocking and transfer programs. Things aren't perfect out there, but there's much hope. Most of all I was grateful that she took the time from her busy schedule to speak with me. I hope you get as much out of this article as I did with our little chat.

Thanks Kathy!



3643 Hwy 21, Underwood, On. (519) 368-4867 +++ 7 Days a Week

Membership

The Ontario Steelheaders wishes to communicate more effectively with persons having concerns similar to our own with regard to our fisheries resources. Membership in the Ontario Steelheaders provides a vehicle to support the rehabilitation, stocking programs, egg collection, adult fish transfer, smolt release, and to have input to the decision making processes which effects positive change.

Individuals alone are hard pressed to do much to correct the deficiencies which contribute the decline in our fisheries unless they form groups which, through affiliation with other organizations can not only have their concerns heard, but in many cases obtain the necessary support to bring about the changes required.

For more information about membership and how you can help the Ontario Steelheaders:

Please visit our website at: www.ontariosteelheaders.ca

Or, write a letter to:

**ONTARIO STEELHEADERS
P.O. BOX 604
BRANTFORD, ONTARIO
N3T 5P9**

+++++

DAREK'S CONSTRUCTION

**Masonry Specialist
(519) 972 5534 (519) 981 5012**





*P.O. BOX 604
BRANTFORD, ONTARIO
N3T 5P9*

Improving Access and Habitat
for Migratory Rainbow Trout.

www.ontariosteelheaders.ca

Membership Form

New Membership _____ Renewal Membership _____ (Check one)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Province _____ Postal Code _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Please Circle the Type of Membership Required Below:

Regular 1 Year = \$25.00 Regular 3 Year = \$60.00 Family 1 Year = \$30.00

Junior 1 Year (16 years or under) = 10.00 Senior 1 Year (age 65 and over) = \$20.00

List all Names for Family Membership	New	Renew
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

NOTE: For Family Membership, all correspondence will be addressed to the person first named above.

I am interested in the following:

Stream Rehabilitation _____ Egg Collection/Adult Transfer _____ Smolt Release _____ Hatchery Work _____

Committee / Director Work _____ Other _____

I have enclosed a cheque/money order for \$ _____ with this membership application, payable to:

The Ontario Steelheaders
Box 604, Brantford, On.
N3T 5P9

Please allow 3 weeks from time of receipt of this application, for mailing of Membership Cards, crests and decals.

COMMENTS:

AUTHORS WANTED

Since the re-birth of the Ontario Steelheaders newsletter, we have been relentlessly in search of writers, columnists, photographers and editors. If you would like to cover a story, submit an article or get involved with the editing, commentary or publishing of this newsletter, please contact us at the address on the front cover, or e-mail us at webmaster@ontariosteelheaders.ca. The future success of this newsletter depends on the input from people like you. Please consider contributing to it.

Supporter Decal Program



...SEE DETAILS INSIDE!



Please forward questions, comments & concerns regarding this newsletter to: "Newsletter Editor" at the address on front cover.