

FISH TALES

BLUEWATER ANGLERS NEWSLETTER

www.bluewateranglers.com

FALL 2008

SEPTEMBER GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, September 9, 2008
Point Edward Arena & Community Centre
210 Monk Street
Doors open at 7:00 PM
Meeting starts at 7:30 PM

AGENDA

Hatchery Update
Salmon Derby Update
Club Events
Fishing Report
Swap Table

Guest Speaker

TBD

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

The Board of Directors meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00PM at the Hatchery. Bluewater Anglers members are welcome to attend the meetings. Anyone interested in becoming a Director in 2009 is encouraged to attend a meeting to see firsthand how your club operates. Contact Randy Fulkerson (519-312-5628) if you would like to attend one of the meetings.

CANADA DAY PARADE

July 1, 2008

Did you see the Bluewater Anglers float in the Canada Day Parade? Special thanks to Amy Kuenzig, Alicia Reid, Veronica Fulkerson, and Dylan Fulkerson for decorating the Bluewater Anglers float.

CONGRATULATIONS - the float placed 3rd in its category.

Check the Bluewater Anglers website at
www.bluewateranglers.com
for up-to-date details on club news and events

FALL BIG FISH DERBY

Saturday, September 20, 2008
MAJOR SPONSOR--SARNIA RV CENTRE

This is the final club derby of the year. The derby is open to Bluewater Angler members and the public, and includes boat and shore fishermen. Come out and enjoy the friendly competition.

Cash prizes will be awarded for the top 5 heaviest fish. Only Salmon, Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout are eligible. Derby contestants are allowed to enter only their SINGLE heaviest fish. The breakdown of cash prizes, based on total entry fees, will be as follows:

- 1st place 35%
- 2nd place 20%
- 3rd place 15%
- 4th place 10%
- 5th place 5%
- 15% for the Fish Hatchery.

In addition, a minimum of 5 draw prizes will be made from entrants that are present at the presentation.

An entry fee of \$10.00 per person must be paid by 4:30PM Friday September 19th. Derby information and entry forms are available at Sarnia RV Centre, Bucks Baits, and the September 9th General Meeting. If fishing from a boat **ALL** people aboard must have an entry.

Bluewater Salmon Derby boundaries apply ... in the St. Clair River to the south end of Fawn Island, east to the harbour at Grand Bend and north to the trailer park north of Lexington, Michigan. Boundaries for all streams and rivers entering into the St. Clair River and Lake Huron are upstream to the first bridge or roadway, whichever comes first.

Participants must bring their catch to the weigh-in located at the Hatchery between 2:00PM and 3:00PM. **You MUST be in line by 3:00PM for your entry to be eligible!** Prizes will be presented immediately following the weigh-in.

Stefan Jackson

HATCHERY UPDATE

There have been a few ups and downs with our fish stock this summer. The Brown Trout have been their normal unpredictable self. We have lost more than half of our original starting batch of 50,000. At present we have about 23,000 Browns that are now doing quite well. The frustrating part of raising Browns is there is no explanation for why they experience these die offs. We sent samples to the fish health lab in Guelph and they could find no reasons for the mortality. We will release the Brown Trout in late October.

Our Ganaraskas Rainbow Trout are looking good at this time and we should have 20,000 ready for release next spring. The 200 Ganaraskas Rainbow Trout we put in the outside pond are growing quite well but they are not very crowd friendly. They tend to shy away and hide ... not very good for the feeder business. The Board of Directors decided to purchase 250 domestic Rainbows for the pond and to keep our Kids Training Day program going. We will try and remove most of the Ganaraskas Rainbow Trout from the pond this fall and release them to the river before we put the new domestics in the pond for the winter.

The maintenance work planned for this summer is well under way but the list seems to be growing rather than coming to an end. The hatchery is looking much better with the cleanup and painting almost completed. There is always more work to do to prepare for the arrival of the next batch of Salmon eggs in October. But we will be ready. Many thanks go to the Tuesday maintenance crew as they are a faithful bunch.

The operation of our hatchery depends on volunteers. Anyone interested in helping as a hatchery operator or with occasional maintenance projects or the fall egg collection let me know at 519-869-2371.

Jake

A COOPERATIVE EFFORT

During the past year the Hatchery has experienced periodic problems with our feed timer system. This system was installed about 25 years ago when the building was first built and it has been added to over the years. Over time it became difficult to obtain the parts needed to keep the system operational.

After several failures last winter it was decided that the feeder control system needed to be upgraded or replaced. The Directors decided that replacement was the best option for the long term.

We approached the Instrument Electrical group at Lambton College to see if they could help us out. The students at Lambton College, under the direction of their instructors, built a Programmable Logic Controller that is state-of-the-art and easy to operate. We can now control each individual tank and operate more than one feeder on each tank.

The following groups and individuals were instrumental in putting this project in service:
Lambton College – design, construction, installation and training,
Port Huron Sport fishing Club – donation to cover 50% of the material costs,
Comstock Construction – donation of materials,
Terry Latham – electrician and consultant,
The Tuesday operating and maintenance crew for all the field work.

When people are dedicated to making a good thing better, good things happen.

Jake

SALMON DERBY UPDATE

Here is a final summary of the very successful 2008 Salmon Derby held this spring. Fishing was the best it has been in several years with 1775 fish entered (61% more than 2007). Good numbers of healthy salmon were caught, particularly in the Kettle Point - Port Franks area. Derby entries (762 singles; 53 families) were up approximately 10% compared to 2007. Derby profit was \$16,340 up approximately 20% from 2007. All profits go towards the operation of the hatchery.

Now it is time to start planning for next spring's Salmon Derby. The 2009 Salmon Derby Committee will hold its first meeting in late September. Contact Colin Brown (cbrown@thebrick.com; 519-869-4099) if you are interested in joining the 2009 Salmon Derby Committee. The committee meets once or twice a month between late September and late April. More details will be available at the September 9th General Meeting.

Colin Brown

SPECIAL REPORT - LAKE HURON

The Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council (GLSFC) recently published the **GREAT LAKES BASIN REPORT Special Report - Lakes Huron & Superior** (June 2008; Vol. 19, No. 9). This special report is an extensive summary of the Lakes Huron & Superior annual Lake Committee meetings of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission of March 2008.

The following two sections related to the current health of prey fish and Chinook salmon in Lake Huron have been copied from the report. The full report is available at www.bluewateranglers.com.

Status/Trends of Lake Huron Deepwater Demersal Fish Community, 2007 (USGS)

Summary (copied from pages 8 - 9)

Prey fish populations in Lake Huron remain in a depressed state since the collapse of alewife populations in 2003. Collections made in 2007 showed an overall increase in total prey biomass, but was largely constituted by high numbers of small bloater and evidence of bloater recruitment. Alewife density remains near the all-time low for the time series observed in 2004. Abundance of juvenile rainbow smelt was at an all-time high for this survey in 2005, but recruitment of these small fish contributed little to lakewide biomass estimates in 2006 or 2007. While a reduction in the abundance of an exotic species is consistent with fish community objectives for Lake Huron, prey availability, ecosystem stability, and sustainability of the Chinook salmon sport fishery remain as concerns for fisheries managers and stakeholders.

Prey availability for piscivores will likely be low during 2008 because no species has replaced alewife in either numbers or biomass. While density of bloaters nearly doubled and rainbow smelt increased by about 15% between 2006 and 2007, overall prey biomass remained low compared to previous years (1992-2001) and showed only a slight increase in 2007.

Declines in benthic macroinvertebrate abundance and increases in non-indigenous dreissenid mussels may be linked to declines in prey fish populations in Lake Huron. Trophic studies have shown that macroinvertebrates such as *Diporeia* and chironomids are important forage for various life stages of many fishes. Growth and survival of fishes relying on macroinvertebrates as forage may be suppressed when invertebrate populations are low. Causes of recent observed declines

in benthic invertebrates remain speculative, but most researchers agree that invasive species such as dreissenid mussels and round gobies add to the instability of benthic food webs and likely contribute to downward trends through competitive and predatory interactions. Acoustic estimates and mid-water trawl surveys show fish in the pelagia are typically small and would likely contribute little to biomass estimates.

The continued depression of forage species biomass in the main basin of Lake Huron suggests that predators will continue to face potential prey shortages during 2008. Rainbow smelt and juvenile bloaters will be the only common pelagic prey and predation on these may limit their recruitment and reduce the possibility of future strong year-classes. Rainbow smelt and bloater are utilized as prey of salmonids, but there are likely to be low numbers of large-sized prey items needed to sustain growth of large salmonids, especially adult lake trout. Managers and anglers should expect slow growth of salmonids in 2008.

Lake Huron Binational Partnership 2008-2010 Action Plan: Fish of interest to the recreational and commercial fisheries

Chinook Salmon (copied from pages 13 – 14)

Chinook were first stocked into Michigan waters of Lake Huron in 1968 and in 1985 in Ontario waters. Stocking levels have varied, peaking in 1989 at over 5 million fingerlings but averaging 4.0 million from 1986 to 2004. Chinook salmon became the dominant predator in Lake Huron through the 1980s and 1990s. During this period, they fed mainly on non-native forage fish (alewives and smelt are their preferred diet items).

With the collapse of alewives in 2003-04, Chinook salmon rapidly declined to a fraction of their former numbers. Both growth rate and survival of Chinook salmon have proved to be proportional to alewife abundance. Lake trout remain abundant in the lake due to stocking, but they exert less predation pressure on the prey base than did Chinook salmon prior to their fall.

Balancing predator numbers with available prey has always been a difficult task in the Great Lakes. In the 1980s, Lake Michigan Chinook salmon consumption rates exceeded their prey availability and resulted in reduced growth rates and an outbreak of bacterial kidney disease (BKD) in the stressed fish. This resulted in a decline in predator abundance for a number of years.

(continued on next page)

(SPECIAL REPORT - LAKE HURON continued)

Ongoing low abundance of alewives since 2003 has resulted in the lowest catch and harvest rates on record for Chinook salmon in the main basin. Growth, condition and catch rates of Chinook salmon in Georgian Bay and the North Channel from 2000 to 2007 declined, but apparently not to the same levels observed in the main basin. This indicates that prey fish status differs among the basins of Lake Huron. Hydroacoustic surveys conducted by the USGS in 2004-07 revealed that Georgian Bay and the North Channel had the highest densities of prey fish biomass in Lake Huron. Smelt appear to be much more abundant in these two basins, which has likely been sustaining Chinook salmon and limiting declines in growth rates.

Historically, little was known of the levels of natural reproduction of Chinook salmon in Lake Huron. In the 1980s, some wild fish were observed, mainly in Georgian Bay and the North Channel. Studies of young-of-the-year fish in the early 1990s indicated that less than 30% of the Chinook salmon were wild in Michigan waters.

Because of the uncertainty of the estimated levels of natural reproduction and the potential significant influence of reproduction on predator demand for food, a joint international study was designed and initiated in the early 2000s. From 2000 to 2003, all Chinook salmon stocked into Lake Huron were marked. Lake Michigan also contributed to the study since movement of Chinook salmon between Lakes Huron and Michigan has been documented. Assessment consisted of sampling fish from around the lake during June to August, prior to when the fish would be homing back to their natal streams. This time period was chosen to assure estimates of wild fish were not biased by sampling elevated concentrations of hatchery fish homing to areas where they were originally stocked.

Results collected in 2003 to 2005 were surprising. In Michigan waters, 82% of the Chinook salmon were unmarked and presumed wild. The number was even higher in Ontario waters. Chinooks made up roughly 98% of Georgian Bay's harvest and 86% of the North Channel's. The results were consistent between the four years of the study. It is presumed that the majority of the natural reproduction in Lake Huron is from Ontario waters since most of the cold-water streams in the State of Michigan have been dammed and are inaccessible for spawning. As a result of this study and declining prey supplies, stocking of Chinooks in Michigan waters of Lake Huron was again reduced in 2006, by about 50%.

In the 1990s, the spawning runs of Chinook salmon in all areas of the lake consisted mainly of fish aged 3 to 5. Today the runs are dominated by age 2 and 3 fish. A shorter life span was once a disadvantage in that fish would be spawning at smaller sizes with fewer eggs, resulting in less likelihood of their contributing to future generations. Today it is evidently an advantage to spawn early while still able to contribute some energy to reproduction; large, older Chinooks are no longer favored due to the relatively low biomass and small size of prey fish since the foodweb change.

With no strong year classes of alewives in the foreseeable future, Chinook salmon are unlikely to regain their former position as the Main Basin's dominant predator.

CHRISTMAS DINNER & DANCE

Saturday, November 22, 2008

Mark the date on your calendar! The 2nd Annual Bluewater Anglers Christmas Dinner & Dance is scheduled for Saturday, November 22nd at the Point Edward Arena & Community Centre. This is an excellent opportunity to socialize with your fellow members and to wrap up another fishing season. Further details will be available at the September 9th General Membership Meeting and on the Bluewater Anglers website. Contact Colin Brown (869-4099; cbrown@thebrick.com) for more information or tickets.



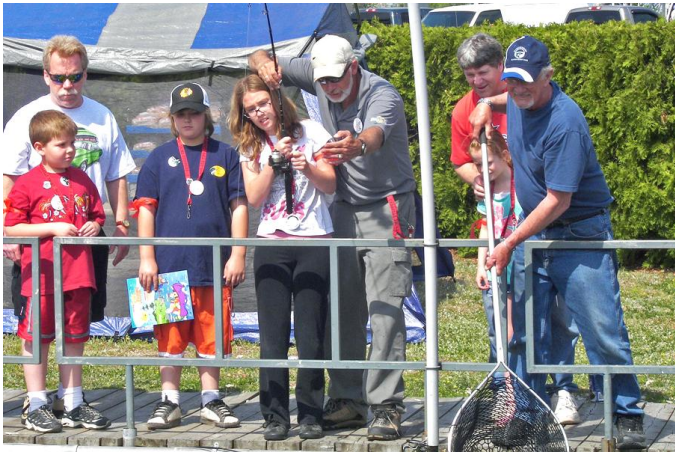
KIDS TRAINING DAY

Saturday, May 31, 2008

Approximately 150 kids took part in the Kids Training Day event held at the hatchery. Even a brief thunder and lightning storm did not stop the event from being a huge success and lots of fun for the kids and parents.

All the prizes were supplied by Bob Izumi's *Kids, Cops & Canadian Tire Fishing Days* program. A \$500.00 dollar donation from the OPP and the Police Association was given to the hatchery to help offset any extra expenses. The Point Edward Optimists supplied all the hotdogs, buns and pop. TIM HORTONS on Exmouth Street (west of Water Street) supplied the donuts for all to enjoy.

Frank Turnbull, event coordinator, and his group of volunteers did a wonderful job again this year.



FAMILY FUN FISHING DERBY

JULY 5, 2008

SPONSORED BY SARNIA RV CENTRE

The Family Fun Fishing Derby was a new club event for 2008. It was intended to be a family focussed outing. Based on the great turnout, it was a great success. Eighteen families participated; including 34 kids and 28 adults.

The weather and fish were very cooperative. Five hundred and seventy five (575) gobies were caught. The Doan Family was the overall winner with 97 gobies. Brandon Janess caught the biggest fish ... a 34 cm bass.

Hotdogs and pop were enjoyed by everyone back at the hatchery. Every family received a prize thanks to the

generous support of our sponsors: Sarnia RV, C and C Construction, Wal-Mart and Bluewater Sports Stitch. Thanks to Bucks Bait for providing the worms.



Stefan Jackson

WALLEYE DERBY

Saturday, August 9, 2008

There were 62 entrants in the 2nd annual Walleye Derby sponsored by the Village of Point Edward and Sarnia RV.

The Walleye Derby winners were

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 st place | Eric Rayson (2.44 kg) |
| 2 nd place | Jeff Glass (2.41 kg) |
| 3 RD place | Al Dezort (1.64 kg) |
| 4 th place | Brian Somes (1.53 kg) |
| 5 th place | Roland Smith (1.43 kg) |
| 6 th place | David Mallick (1.32kg) |
| 7 th place | Brad Kuglin (1.26kg) |
| 8 th place | Chris Abram (1.14kg) |
| 9 th place | Lou Dallaire (1.13kg) |
| 10 th place | Steve Callahan (1.13kg) |

The member entering the biggest fish was Eric Rayson.



COMING - ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

The Bluewater Anglers' **FISH TALES** newsletter will be available by e-mail starting with the 2009 WINTER newsletter coming out in late December.

The benefits of the electronic version of the newsletter include:

- better print quality including color pictures and links,
- quicker distribution,
- more environmentally friendly (... save paper),
- reduced club costs for printing, envelopes & postage.

If you would like to receive your **FISH TALES** newsletter by e-mail rather than regular Canada Post (... snail mail) send a request to bluewateranglers@hotmail.com. Please include your name and current e-mail address.

WANTED - FISH MOUNTS

The Bluewater Anglers are looking for fish mounts to display in the newly decorated public area in the hatchery, and to use for tours and education sessions. Chinook Salmon, Rainbow Trout or Brown Trout mounts would be preferred but other fish mounts will be considered. Contact Jake Van Rooyen (519-869-2371) if you have a fish mount that you would like to donate or loan to the Bluewater Anglers.



BLUEWATER ANGLERS AND OFAH MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

Complete the form below to become a Bluewater Anglers member or to renew your membership. More information about membership benefits can be found at www.bluewateranglers.com/membership.html.

Also, did you know that you can join the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) at a discount rate through the Bluewater Anglers? Complete the bottom portion of the form below.

Contact Terry Latham (519-542-8845 or thlatham@sympatico.ca) for more information on either membership.

BLUEWATER ANGLERS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

MEMBERSHIP:

NEW RENEWAL JUNIOR \$10.00 SINGLE \$20.00 FAMILY \$30.00

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

City _____

Province/Postal Code _____

Country _____

Email Address _____

Memberships – while you have the cheque book out, let's make one out for \$30.75 for single and \$41.75 for family, payable to THE FEDERATION OF ANGLERS AND HUNTERS. To make the task a little easier, the following form will be in all newsletters, this is great way to save and get involved in an organization that is fighting for the rights of Anglers and Hunters like you and I.

Please complete this form and mail it with your separate cheque or money order to:
BLUEWATER ANGLERS, c/o Membership Chairman, P.O. Box 174, Sarnia, Ontario N7T 7H9

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ ADULT _____ FAMILY _____