

The Oneida Lake Bulletin

SPRING EDITION 1994

**Oneida Lake's
most precious resource**

**Spring-Summer 1994
Walleye/Perch Outlook**

**Zebra Mussels in New
York State waters**

**Annual OLA meeting on April 27th at
Henninger High School**

**Jigging your way to Oneida
Lake Walleyes**

President's Report

Oneida Lake Bulletin

SPRING 1994

Greetings fellow OLA members. By the time you receive this Bulletin, one of the most severe winters in recent memory will have passed (*we hope*). Even the most ardent winter sports enthusiasts may have found this winter's severe cold and deep snows a trying experience. Spring, the season of renewal and rebirth, will be marching towards summer. For those more comfortable with warm weather activities, the spring brings a sense of hope and anticipation. Dreams of memorable days spent fishing, boating, skiing, sailing, swimming, taking photographs, sunbathing, going on picnics, observing wildlife, and other activities like just plain relaxing are revived during the spring. We, as OLA members, should be very proud that Oneida Lake provides such a wealth of excellent recreational opportunities. We also remain dedicated to the preservation of the lake ecosystem, and *membership in the OLA is one way to stay informed and involved in protecting your interests.*

In the Fall 1993 Bulletin, I stressed the important role that a large, organized membership plays in preserving the lake and its environs. In this Spring Bulletin, an article by OLA member Charles Abate' underscores this fact.

Please take the time to read this article and encourage (better yet - recruit) friends and family to join the OLA in order to play a role in protecting your lake.

Although the spring brings a sense of hope and optimism, your OLA board of Directors remains active on issues of concern. *Last year's spring floods, the loss of wetland habitat, the loss of funding for research on warm water fisheries, the equitable enforcement of fish and game laws, and improvements to shoreline access sites* are issues

we remain concerned over and committed to. The articles presented in this Bulletin will bring you up-to-date on the OLA's position and efforts on these issues.

I hope that the discussion of these issues does not dampen your optimism or enthusiasm about enjoying the lake but, rather, firms your resolve to support your Association's efforts at protecting your interests. In addition, please use this Bulletin to recruit new members and enhance what is perhaps our most important resource - **our membership**. Have a happy and healthy season and, remember, it's your Oneida Lake - protect it!

Joseph J. Mastriano
OLA President

Election Of Officers

In accordance with By-Law Amendments passed at OLA's 1990 Annual Meeting: the Nominating Committee has nominated the following persons to serve as officers and directors.

OFFICERS

President.....Joseph J. Mastriano
Vice President.....Arnold Armani
Vice President.....Robert Chabot
Vice President.....William Schriever
Treasurer.....Edwin Olmstead
Secretary.....Robert Gang III
Asst. Secretary.....Carl Preske

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Term: April 1994 - April 1997

George Angeloro Robert Ripberger
Anthony Buffa James Scherzi
Robert Cote William Sweredowski

Nominations for officers and directors will be held open until (3) days prior to
(Continued on Page 5)

ONEIDA LAKE ASSOCIATION INC.
FOUNDED IN 1945

Published by the Oneida Lake Association, Inc., that its members may be informed regarding the activities of the Association. Oneida Lake Association, Inc., was organized in 1945 to restore and preserve the natural resources of Oneida Lake and its environs.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Term: April 1992 - April 1995

John Guilford Richard Percival
Dominick P. Maio Gerry Randall
Parker J. Stone Marshall O. Naumann

Term: April 1993 - April 1996

Richard Colesante Earl Pearson
Charles J. Engel, Jr. Kurt Snyder
Patrick A. Leone, Jr. Walter Stewart

Term: April 1991 - April 1994

George Angeloro Robert Ripberger
Anthony Buffa James Scherzi
Robert Cote William Sweredowski

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

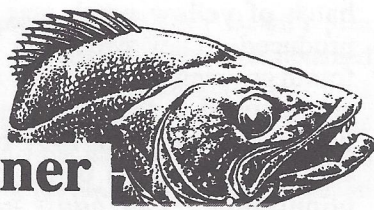
Angelo Angeloro Anton Kreuzer
Richard Brown Herbert McElroy
Ned Cookingham William Nass
Paul Cramer Roy Pulaski
Fred David Millard Rogers
Frank Gruenwald Anthony Sauer
James Heitzman Julian F. Stanczyk, Jr.

PLEASE DON'T FEED THE DUCKS!

This plea comes from the New York D.E.C. and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The duck population on Oneida Lake is threatened by DUCK VIRUS ENTERITIS, the "Duck Plague". This disease doesn't threaten humans or other forms of wildlife, but it can spread quickly through concentrated duck populations, *wiping them out in a matter of days.*

Feeding ducks and ducklings break down their natural instinct to seek expanded territory and forage for themselves. Feeding forces them to congregate in tighter groups and stay in overpopulated areas longer than they should, creating greater exposure to disease. So while it may be fun to feed ducks bits of bread, cracker crumbs or corn, you may be threatening their lives. *Please don't do it!*

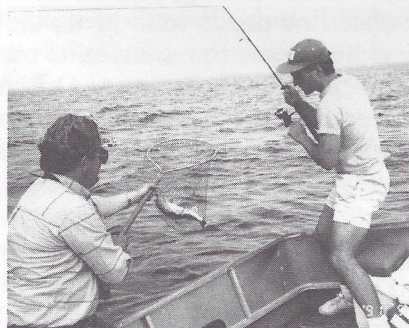
The OLA Fishing Corner



Jigging your way to Oneida Lake Walleyes

by: Captain Tony Buffa

Dyed-in-the-wool walleye anglers spend most of their effort jigging. *Why?* Walleyes are suckers for jigs. Although simplistic, that statement is fairly axiomatic. *If you want to consistently catch more, and bigger walleyes, on Oneida Lake, then make a commitment to perfect the craft of jigging.*



Nice scoop by J. Michael Kelly, (Outdoor Editor/Post Standard) while Jim Sollecito, (landscaper) hooks another walleye. This duo can frequently be found double-teaming the walleyes on Oneida Lake with Capt. Tony Buffa

Certainly, there are merits to using live bait in an anchored or drifting mode, for attracting ole marble eyes; but by comparison, the jig, far and away out-fishes those presentations. **Simply put, the jig is more efficient and more precise.** Live bait requires care in handling and lacks the ability to effectively fish weed enhanced structures. With a jig, you have some versatility.

Let's assume you locate walleyes in the 5 to 8 feet range, and the bottom is a collage of weeds, rocks, pepper grass, slime, and sand. Not atypical of what you could find on Oneida Lake. Headaches...and not fish are what you can expect, *if* you choose live bait over the jig in such an environment. Once you have decided to abandon bait and embrace the jig, how do you know

what size jig to use?

In this cluttered array of bottom features, the 1/8 oz. would give the best all-round performance. It is light enough to slip through the weeds, provided you just pull rather than jerk upon sensing weed pressure. Rocks are where the jig flaunts its talent. *The bumping, taping, hair puffing action mesmerizes a bottom foraging walleye as though it were another one of Pavlov's programmable dogs.* Once in the pepper grass zone, simply reel the jig in a standard retrieve mode while shimmying the rod. This simulates the swimming action of a minnow meandering through the weeds.

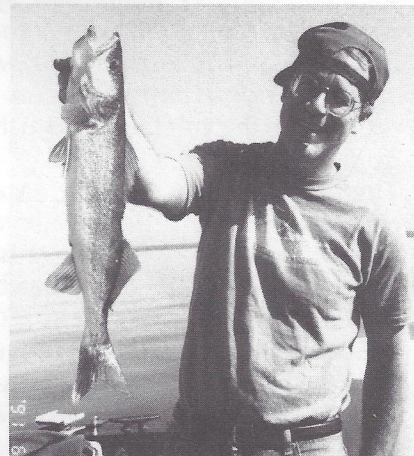
And hang on, when that jig hits the sand. The clouds created by the pounding jig again *trigger an aggressive response from a foraging walleye.* This life-like movement along the bottom is reminiscent of an eel or lizard whipping its body against the sand.

And how about the slime? Well, you all know what slime will do to live bait (nature's straight-jacket). One less worry when you're working a jig. Sure the slime will hamper the effectiveness of your jig, but at least it won't kill it. And you won't need to change bait.

Every craft has its tools, and it's the same with jig fishing. The wrong rod and reel will sabotage rather than enhance a jigging aficionado's effort. **A fast-action model rod is a must.** Basically, the top 1/3 of the rod must support its harmonics. Stay away from whippy tippys (*noodle rods*); these are poor choices for jigging. I do have a favorite! *Daiwa's Procaster series* in the walleye model *PR661-4RS-T*, made of metalized INS graphite has Power

Mesh construction with the fastest taper in the industry to insure better hooksets. The jig and rod will remain perfectly synchronized with each stroke or jerk of your arm. No leftover rod harmonics to alter the jig movement. And since the INS graphite is not woven but rather in a linear format, each message is transmitted through the blank with lightning-like speed.

And then there's the question of jig color. On Oneida, I'm partial to a combination of yellows, greens, and reds since yellow perch are a significant part of a walleye's diet. In the absence of yellow perch, walleyes will seek other prey. Gizzard Shad have become a major player in the Oneida forage base, so black/white jigs also figure into the cache of leaded lures. Browns, purples and blacks seem to work well in the deeper zones.



Bruce Yenawine of Syracuse, enjoys his summer fishing trip on Oneida Lake with Captain Tony Buffa. This nice 22" walleye, took a Paone jig off the bottom at buoy 117.

When walleyes are your target, remember the jig! There is no better way to pick the rocks, work the weeds, slither through the grass and pound the sand for an Oneida Lake walleye.

If your planning an Oneida Lake outing and need the services of a professional guide, I would be delighted to serve your recreational needs. I can be reached at; 9037 Lucas Road, Bridgeport, New York 13030. Telephone or Fax (315) 633-2694.

Walleye/Perch Spring - Summer 1994 Outlook ... for Oneida Lake

by: Tom Chiotti
SENIOR AQUATIC BIOLOGIST
Cortland DEC Office

Walleye anglers can expect a good year when the season opens in May 1994. The reason is that the 1991 hatch of walleyes was large and will *add approximately 400,000 fish to the population in 1995*. These fish will be taken in the 1994 catch, but will generally be sub-legal. Anglers should not be disappointed though because these young fish will increase the level of competition for food with the other walleyes making the legal sized fish more vulnerable to angling. *The total population of age 4 fish (those that are legal sized) in 1994 is estimated to be about 525,000*. They will be competing with the younger age 3 fish from the 1991 hatch for food.

This competition will increase chances for an excellent walleye angling year. **What could get in the way?** If the 1994 shad hatch should be large, on the order of 750 million fry or more, then walleye fishing could take a serious downturn by July 15 - August 1. The fall and winter fishery would be negatively impacted also. I think that the chances for a large shad hatch are relatively slim though, on the order of one chance in three.

A more moderate sized shad hatch of 250-500 million fry won't affect angling like it might normally. *This is because the total number of walleyes that will be consuming shad is high, on the order of 925,000 fish*. Remember while age three fish will generally be sub-legal, they nevertheless will consume considerable numbers of young shad. **The summer and fall fishery for yellow perch has the potential to be the best it has been since 1984**. A strong 1991

hatch of yellow perch was also produced. They will be in their fourth growing season in 1994 and are recruited to the adult population at this age. The 1991 hatch will add 1.7 million perch to the population. *The adult perch population will swell to 2.7 million in 1994, the highest it has been since 1984.* ■

Oneida Lake's Most Precious Resource

by Chuck Abate'

Here's the quiz question for this issue: **What's the single most important concern of the Oneida Lake Association?** I'll give you a few hints. It's not Oneida Lake's water quality, nor is it completion of the walleye hatchery in Constantia. It's not law enforcement on the Lake, nor is it continued funding for improvements at the Lake's public launch sites. It's not even the invasion of zebra mussels and other species which could threaten the balance of the Lake's ecosystem. Well, then, what is the most important concern of the Oneida Lake Association? *Give up?* The answer is simple: *it's the membership of the O.L.A.* Without the loyalty and support of each and every one of YOU, the O.L.A. would not even exist, and therefore wouldn't be able to lobby for its various environmental and recreational causes on behalf of Oneida Lake.

The officers of the Oneida Lake Association would like to take this opportunity to thank every one of its members for the contributions you make to the Association. Of course, your yearly dues are greatly appreciated, and help to finance the Association's yearly mailings to its membership, as well as other costs associated with the Association's political lobbying and advocacy of your concerns about Oneida

Lake. But even more important to the O.L.A. is the contribution that all of you make by your ongoing dedication to the Association, and your shared passion about the continued welfare of Oneida Lake and its wealth of sporting and recreational opportunities.

The officers of the O.L.A. are sincerely grateful for your commitment to the Association, and hope to count you among its membership for many more years to come. **Please don't assume that your individual membership in the O.L.A. "doesn't matter"**. The Association needs every one of its members in order to remain strong, just as an anchor line needs each of its individual fibers to maintain its own integrity. Every new O.L.A. member is treasured by the Association, and so is every individual who renews membership year after year, because each member increases the Association's political clout, and assures that the collective concerns and desires of the O.L.A. membership will be heard and taken seriously. *Every single member helps better persuade various political, law enforcement, and other agencies that the O.L.A. represents a broad-based and growing constituency whose voices cannot be ignored.*

Every time the Association loses a former member, it loses far more than that person's dues—it also loses that person's political voice and passion for the concerns we all share about Oneida Lake. The O.L.A. would like to remind you of something you all know, even though it often goes unsaid: **YOU ARE OUR MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCE**. We are thankful for your loyal support of the Association, and we hope that your love of Oneida Lake's beauty and your concern for the Lake's welfare will motivate you to remain a member of the O.L.A. for many, many years to come. ■

New York Canal System Changes Hands

by: Charles J. Engel, Jr.

After passage of a constitutional amendment, in 1992 the New York Legislature enacted and Governor Cuomo approved the transfer of responsibilities for the operation and maintenance of New York's canal system, including the Erie Canal, from the Department of Transportation to the New York State Thruway Authority. The Erie Canal includes Oneida Lake. The legislation, named Thruway 2000, also established a 24-member Canal Recreationway Commission to prepare a statewide master plan for the revitalization of recreational uses of the canal system.

Consultants were engaged by the Recreationway Commission to perform the studies necessary for the master plan. This work is nearing completion and will be available this year.

Benjamin Manton is the Program Manager for the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board. The CNY Board was created by the Legislature to promote the developmental interests of Onondaga, Madison, Cayuga and Oswego counties. One-fifth of the entire canal system is located in these four counties. New York has six additional regional Boards.

Mr. Manton's organization is responsible for the submission of a regional plan for the four counties that will be submitted to the Canal Recreationway Commission for consideration in the preparation of the statewide master plan. The local plan is now mostly completed.

According to Mr. Manton, the CNY Board's regional plan will focus on goals of increasing user facilities and services; stimulating economic development in communities through which the canal system passes, and protecting and enhancing cultural, historic and environmental resources.

In preparing the CNY Board's plan Mr. Manton's organization obtained information concerning land uses along canal shores, which include the residential and commercial land uses along the shores of Oneida Lake; an inventory of canal-related facilities, including marinas, boat launches, restaurants and grocery stores; and an in-depth analysis of boater services available at marinas such as boat hoists, pump-outs, showers, fuel, repairs, etc., whether on-site or within one-quarter mile.

Sylvan Beach and Brewerton have been designated as "Canal Ports", which are places where the largest number of canal-related services are available. Oswego, Fulton, Phoenix and Three Rivers are also Canal Ports, an important designation in revitalization efforts.

The master plan aims at future canal-side development — but without making available the use of public funds. Canal Corporation funds will be used for marketing and promotion, increased public access, and improved location signage and markers. The Corporation will promote, but not actively engage in private investment. An important change was made by the Legislature for the purpose of encouraging private investment. Formerly, leases of canal land for private development were limited to terms of one year with provision for cancellation on 30 days notice. No one would readily invest any significant sum of money for such a short term, with the possibility of early termination. The amendment permits non-cancelable leases for up to forty years.

The primary use of Canal Corporation money — to be obtained from canal tolls, leasing revenues and income from power generation — will be the operation and maintenance of the canal system-which the Corporation intends to improve. It is also aware of the fact that some canal facilities have deteriorated and that capital improvements may be required.

The Canal Corporation will not be involved in flooding problems. Accord-

ing to Mr. Manton, other agencies, State and Federal, have jurisdiction over flood prevention and patrol. All of this appears to be in a formative stage. Benefits to Central New York will be sought and followed by your Association and reported to you.

"A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR MEMBERS"

The Board of Directors would like to extend its appreciation to everyone who took the time and expense to become a member of the O.L.A. It is through increasing numbers in our association that we are a strong organization and are able to effectively achieve our goals. A *special thanks* goes to those members who sent additional donations and notes of support, along with their dues. *Without you, the members*, the O.L.A. would not exist. The few moments that you take to fill out a card each year, or fill out an extra one for a friend or family member, ends up paying big dividends down the road. Your efforts translate into a cleaner and more user friendly lake environment for us all.

Thank you all once again, and keep up the good work.

Election Of Officers

(Continued from Page 2)

the Annual Meeting, that is until April 24, 1994. A petition, that is to be signed by at least fifty (50) OLA members in good standing, may state the name of a member or members the petitioners wish to nominate as officer or director. The petition must be served on any present OLA officer no later than three (3) days before the Annual Meeting. It will be mandatory that the names on any such petition be placed on the list with the persons nominated by the Committee, all in alphabetical order, for election at the Annual Meeting. OLA's Secretary will make the membership list available for inspection by an OLA active member on request.

OLA ANNUAL MEETING AT HENNINGER HIGH SCHOOL ON APRIL 27, 1994

by Tony Buffa

On Wednesday, April 27, the O.L.A. will hold its 49th annual meeting at the Henninger High School auditorium. Note that this is our second year at this site. Doors will open at 6 p.m. Early attendance is encouraged so that you can enjoy our numerous exhibits.

This year's list of exhibitors will include Skipp Wells with Berkley products, Capt. Gerry Bresadola and Tony Noce with Lowrance depth finding equipment. Robbie Pirchier will have a display of Daiwa rods and reels along with an assortment of lures from Luhr-Jensen.

Joe Prince, of Prince Mastercraft will be on hand with his display of Super Ski planer boards and accessories. Dom Bello, founder of Islander Lures will have his product line on display. Paone's Bait & Tackle of Lakeport will be on hand and give a demonstration on jig tying. Captains Daryll and Connell Raate will be demonstrating and selling the "Fisherman's Knot-Tying Tool". They will also be selling logo patches related to hunting and fishing. Capt. Ray Brown will represent Storm Lures and answer your questions regarding his proven Oneida lake walleye trolling techniques. Capt. Ray will also sponsor a drawing for a charter on Oneida lake, the proceeds will be donated to OLA.

While at the meeting, you will be able to register for the annual

Cicero Lions Club Walleye Derby, which for the third time will include extra money prizes for those derby winners who are also members of the OLA. Association membership renewals and signups will begin at 6:15 PM. You need not be a member to attend, but only members will be eligible for the drawing of *five \$100 checks*.

This year's meeting will begin promptly at 7:00 P.M. and a short business meeting will ensue. Dr. Lars Rudstam, a senior research ichthyologist at the Shackleton Biological Field Station will update our membership on the condition of the walleye, and Yellow Perch fishery. Dr. Ed Mills, also from the Shackleton Point field station will provide an update on Zebra Mussel infestation in Oneida Lake. Assemblyman Michael Bragman will be in attendance and inform the membership on the progress and status of projects affecting Oneida Lake. We expect a visit from our newly appointed conservation Commissioner, Langdon Marsh, who assumes the new post with a long history of fish and wildlife experience.

The Association will award its coveted "Conservationist of the Year" plaque to an outstanding supporter of local conservation. The meeting will then close with the drawing for the cash and distribution of door prizes. This year's meeting should be both fun and informative; so bring your family and friends. ■

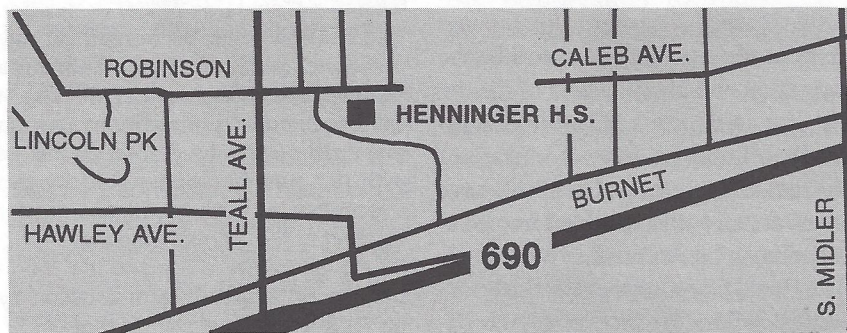
Zebra Mussels in Oneida Lake and other New York Waters: An Update

by: Edward L. Mills

Department of Natural Resources

The zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*) has received widespread attention in recent years because of its potential impact on food webs of freshwater lakes and its impact on industry via its fouling of water intake pipes along lake shores. In 1991, a second species of *Dreissena* was discovered in Lake Ontario and adjacent waterways and was given the working name of "quagga" after an extinct African relative of the zebra. Current evidence suggests the quagga became established in the Great Lakes (i.e. Lake Erie) as early as 1987 and both mussel species were likely transported to North American waters in the ballast water of transoceanic ships. Morphologically, the most distinguishing feature of the quagga is that it lacks the flattened ventral side characteristic to the zebra mussel. There also appears to be a physiological separation between the two mussels as the upper lethal temperatures of zebra mussels are significantly higher than for quagga mussels. To date, Cornell researchers have identified the quagga as *Dreissena bugensis* based on genetic analyses and believe that the North American population of quagga originated from the former Soviet Union in the Dneiper River from the Ukraine (formerly Russia).

Large inland lakes like Oneida, Cayuga, Seneca, and Champlain are all connected to rivers and canals and all have established zebra mussel populations. Undoubtedly, zebra mussel populations will eventually become established in other inland lakes but their spread to these waters will take longer than was initially thought. (Continued on Page 8)



Letters from Your OLA! (working for YOU)

March 8, 1994

Michael J. Bragman, Assemblyman
118th District
305 South Main Street
North Syracuse, New York 13212

Dear Assemblyman Bragman:

As you know, the Oneida Lake Association (OLA) represents approximately 4000 members dedicated to the restoration and preservation of the Oneida Lake ecosystem. The purpose of this letter is to express the OLA's concern with various activities aimed at controlling lake water levels in order to prevent occasional shoreline flooding. To date, there has been considerable attention focused on the control of lake water levels as a result of last year's springtime flooding and the record snowfall of this past winter. Although the OLA is sympathetic towards those who suffered as a result of the atypical weather conditions, the near hysteria that has resulted carries with it the view that the water should be manipulated solely to control flooding. We believe that this approach can result in serious environmental harm. Rather, the OLA endorses a balanced and cooperative approach which can be accomplished through the development of a plan which addresses all impacts which can result from the manipulation of water levels.

Oneida Lake is one of the great natural assets shared by all citizens of the state. In fact, our membership consists of individuals from communities around the lake, as well as individuals from around the state and some other states. Competing demands on utilization of the lake's resources are driven primarily by the values individuals or organizations place on their particular interest. As an organization founded on the principle of restoration and preservation of the natural resources of the lake and its environs, we strongly recommend that policies and procedures employed by regulating agencies be coordinated in order to best address individual areas of concern while ensuring that the environmental —"health" of the ecosystem is not harmed. Therefore, we recommend that the NYSDEC Division of Water, the NYSDEC Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, the NYS Thruway Authority, the US Army Corp. of Engineers, the state-appointed Oneida Lake Advisory Committee, and the OLA meet to discuss all issues related to control of

water levels. We would also recommend that, as a result of these meetings, a formal lake level management plan be developed and implemented.

The OLA believes that the development and implementation of a formal plan would prevent the type of short-term or narrow approach being promoted by certain individuals and organizations as appropriate methods to prevent flooding. Specifically, we are concerned that drastic alteration of the lake's water level could result in adverse effects such as:

- 1) winter fish kills;
- 2) destruction of the shallow water flora and fauna through the dewatering and freezing of sediments in the bays and shoals which make up a substantial portion of Oneida Lake;
- 3) destruction of wetlands and the attendant effects of plants and animals dependent upon wetlands for protection and propagation; and
- 4) the possible adverse effects on boating, fish spawning, and recreation should water levels fail to recover during the spring from any additional winter drawdown.

Knowing your commitment to Oneida Lake and your continued support of our Association's commitment, we are looking forward to working with you and the involved agencies in implementing a reasonable and rational management strategy. Should you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH J. MASTRIANO President
cc: John Meldrim, NYS Thruway Author.
John Campagnie, OLAC
Ralph Manna, NYSDEC Region 7
Tom Brown, NYSDEC Region 6
Ken Wich, NYSDEC
Mike Smith, US Army Corp.
Engineering-Buffalo

March 9, 1994

Mr. John Proud
Regional Wildlife Manager
P. O. Box 5170
Cortland, New York 13045-5170

Dear John:

About one year ago, our association wrote you regarding our concern over the loss of wetland habitat within the NYSDEC Three Mile Bay Wildlife Management area. A long-standing beaver dam (over 20 years old) had flooded between 100 and 200 acres of wetland habitat that served as a home for nu-

merous species of animals and plants.

This dam was breached (either naturally or by man) about five years ago, leaving the wetland predominantly dry. Your response to our initial letter indicated that you recognized the problem, however, this project was a low priority on a statewide basis. In response to our second letter, Ken Wich restated that this project was a low priority and he suggested that the Oneida Lake Association continue to work with NYSDEC regional staff regarding this issue.

We are disappointed that the NYSDEC has allowed this once productive and valuable wetland to go by unattended. We understand that beavers have attempted to re-flood the area but have been unsuccessful. It is possible that humans have continued to interfere with this process.

We believe there are long-term and short-term solutions to this problem. We understand that an expensive water control structure for the area might be low priority, considering the fiscal problems NYSDEC has recently encountered. However, we believe that with very little effort an earthen dam (incorporated into the existing breached beaver dam) could be constructed. The breach in the existing beaver dam is only about 4 to 6 feet wide. The rest of the channel is somewhat blocked by the old beaver dam. We believe that with a backhoe, suitable material to reconstruct the dam, and a few good men this wetland could be restored with very little expense and time. This inexpensive, short-term solution would provide relief and restore the flooded area while we wait out the years when funding a permanent control structure becomes a high priority. Of course, any improvements to this area needs to be monitored by NYSDEC law enforcement personnel to ensure efforts and expenditures are protected.

The Oneida Lake Association is ready to assist in any way we can to get this project off the ground. We would be glad to volunteer manpower to effect a short-term solution to the problem and we are willing to support efforts to secure funding for a long-term solution.

Yours truly,

JOSEPH J. MASTRIANO, President
cc: Assembly Michael J. Bragman
Ken Wich, NYSDEC
Rick Coppoza, CNY Wildfowlers,
President
Bob Gang, OLA, Secretary

Oneida Fish Cultural Station Update

by: *Richard T. Colesante*
Senior Aquatic Biologist

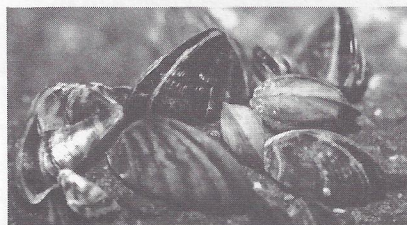
The Oneida Fish Cultural Station completed its first year of wall-eye production. Approximately 160 million fry and 185,000 fingerlings (4-5" in length) were stocked in New York State waters. This first year of production, although very successful, was carried out amid construction crews and engineers. The hatchery is now complete and the only people you'll see there are hatchery employees. Everyone is looking forward to a "normal" wall-eye run in the new building. Because of the severe winter, ice-out isn't expected until mid-April. However, this could change; the local newspapers will be kept up to date on the ice conditions and the walleye spawning run. The hatchery will be open to the public from 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. every day from 4/1 - 9/30. Guided tours will be available during the walleye run and can be arranged during the remainder of the production season. The hatchery has a very nice visitor center and the public will be able to mingle in the rearing room during egg take as was the case in the old hatchery. So watch the newspapers and plan a visit with your children to the new fish cultural station. ■

Zebra Mussels

(Continued from Page 6)

In Lakes Ontario and Erie, the proportion of quagga mussel increases with depth and declines with increasing water temperature suggesting that this mussel may be a cold deepwater form. In addition, quagga mussels are sparse or absent along inland waterways and lakes of New York State that are infested with zebra mussels. Why these inland water bodies are unsuitable for the persistence of quagga populations is unknown, but heavy infestations of

zebra mussels competing for space and/or food could explain why quaggas appear to be excluded. In Lakes Erie and Ontario, the current spatial distribution of quaggas in relation to that of zebra mussels could also be a response to factors other than water temperature. For example, the quagga mussel could merely be occupying the areas in Lakes Erie and Ontario which were not colonized earlier by zebra mussels. Quagga mussels, initially outnumbered by zebra mussels which became firmly established in nearshore waters, may simply be occupying deeper waters (90 feet in Lake Erie and over 400 feet in Lake Ontario) because of the availability of unused space. The lack of space may also be forcing both species to deeper waters. This argument is supported by the fact that zebra and quagga mussels co-exist at depths to nearly 360 feet. On the other hand, quagga mussels may be poorly adapted morphologically to occupy nearshore depths which are subject to turbulence and wave action. Quaggas are flattened laterally, compared to the ventrally flattened zebra mussel; this may allow the latter to become more firmly attached to hard bottom substrate materials and less prone to detachment.



More intriguing is the apparent ability of both quagga and zebra mussels to survive at depths in Lake Ontario (>150 feet) where temperatures rarely exceed 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Recent laboratory findings do indeed indicate that the quagga is less tolerant of high water temperatures compared to the zebra mussel and support the field findings that adult quagga mussels can survive in the deep cold waters of lakes. Consequently, colonization of

the deep waters of lakes by the quagga mussel represents a new threat to the integrity of deep water lakes of New York State and elevates the potential ecological significance of introduced mussels to North American freshwaters. However, the quagga mussel will not be a threat to Oneida Lake as summer water temperatures are too high for this mussel to survive.

In Oneida Lake, zebra mussel populations continue to expand and we are now beginning to see some of the ecological effects of this infestation. For example, the waters of Oneida Lake were very clear in 1993 due in part to the fact that zebra mussels were removing algae from the water column. In the spring of 1993, we estimated over 500 billion mussels in the lake and this number increased 20 to 30 percent in the summer. Water clarity in Oneida Lake in July and early August was the highest recorded by the Cornell Biological Field Station in 30 years. Because zebra mussels remove algae from the lake they could rob food from zooplankton (animal plankton). There are indications from 1993 that this impact is beginning as zooplankton populations were lower in 1993 compared to pre-zebra mussel years. What this all means to the prized Oneida Lake walleye fishery is currently being evaluated and we will continue to look for signals of change in the next couple of years. One thing we do know is that the lake bottom which is hard or sandy is covered with a crust of mussels. In the sandy areas where there are native clams, there are reefs of mussels attached to the clams on the lake bottom (see photo of Oneida Lake bottom in 1993). These native clams will be impacted significantly. There are indications from mussel collections in the fall of 1993 that 50 % of the native clam population in Oneida Lake is already gone. This loss reflects a loss of animal diversity in Oneida Lake and, in North America, a loss of native clams which is the most diverse in the world. ■

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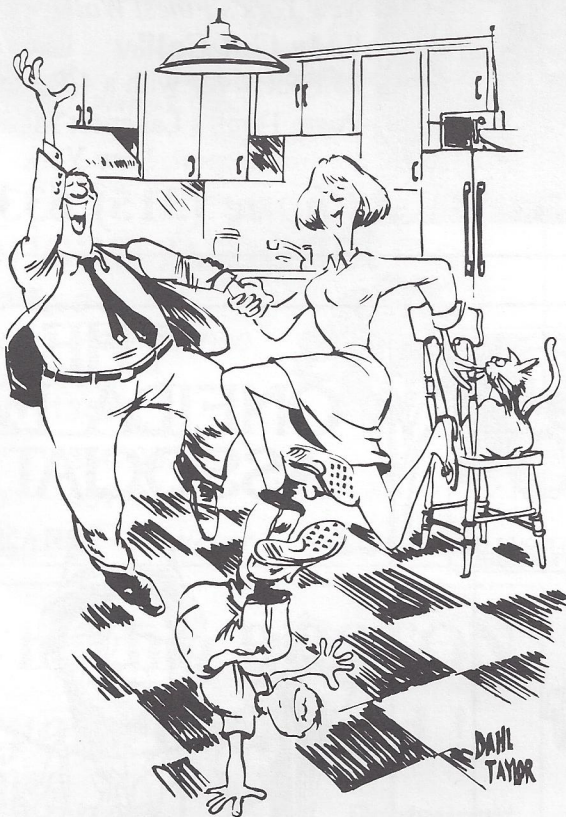
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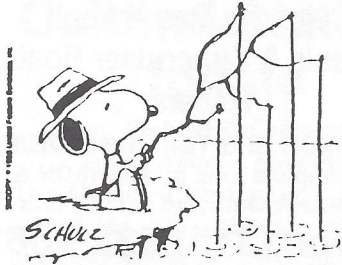
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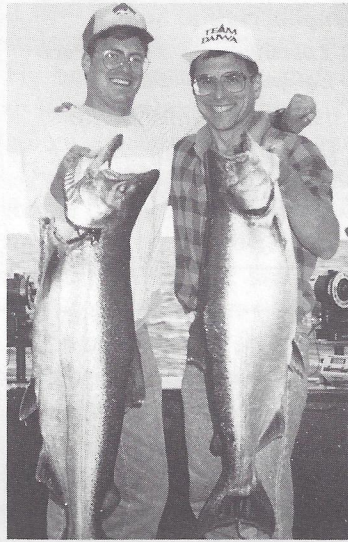
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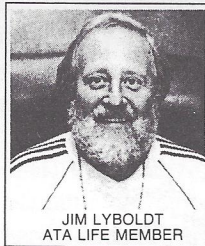
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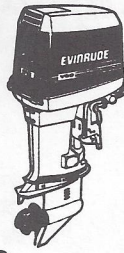


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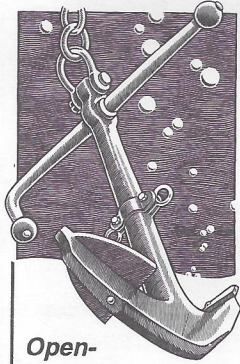
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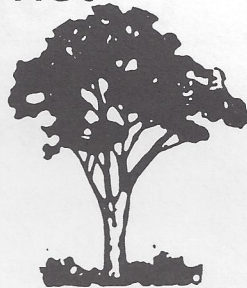
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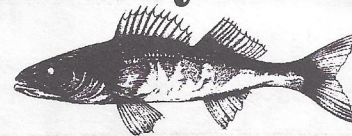
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