

# The Oneida Lake Bulletin

Spring 2007

## VHS – An Emerging Problem

by Dr. Paul R. Bowser

The viral hemorrhagic septicemia virus (VHS) is a dangerous pathogen that was discovered in fish from the Great Lakes Basin in 2005. This marked the first time the virus was found in a freshwater environment in North America. Fisheries managers and fish health professionals are extremely concerned in that this virus can infect a number of different fish species and can spread to other waters.

So far, the disease has killed muskellunge, freshwater drum, round gobies, smallmouth bass, walleyes and burbot (often called “lawyers” in Oneida Lake slang). In addition, the virus has infected black crappies, bluegills, largemouth bass, pumpkinseed sunfish, rock bass, white bass, white perch, yellow perch, northern pike and brown bullheads. Humans need not worry, however, because this disease only strikes fish.

As of February 2007 the virus has been confirmed in fish from the St. Lawrence River, Lake Ontario, the Niagara River, Lake Erie, as well as in one inland Finger Lake, Conesus. The NYSDEC is currently testing for the infection in other bodies of water throughout the state. Huge fish kills can occur where VHS strikes.

The name, viral hemorrhagic septicemia, implies that one of the disease’s symptoms is bleeding. Other important signs include damage to the kidneys, liver, and spleen. Since these symptoms are common to many other fish diseases, it is not possible to diagnose a fish as being infected with VHS unless that fish undergoes a sophisticated laboratory evaluation. The picture is further complicated by the fact that fish that carry the virus often show no signs of disease.

The only means to fight VHS is to prevent its spread. This hard fact has led to the development of regulations by the USDA-APHIS (the Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) and the NYSDEC that are designed to contain the spread of infected fish.

There is a chance that this dangerous virus can enter Oneida Lake. To prevent this, people must be willing to follow regulations and guidelines designed to limit the spread. All individuals who work around New York’s waters or enjoy the state’s aquatic resources for recreational purposes must actively participate in the control effort. While we do not know all the

ways by which the virus can expand its geographic range, some of the obvious methods are through the movement of infected fish, or as a contaminant on boats, nets, fishing gear, live-well water, or bilge water.

Human activity is crucial. Transporting fish creates grave concerns. Baitfish have been often moved between waters across New York. This is a potentially dangerous practice because some baitfish have VHS! Consequently, according to the new DEC regulations, all transported bait must be certified. Anglers with minnows must have receipts showing that these have been purchased from a shop that markets certified bait. According to the regulations, all baitfish sold in New York *must* be certified by a qualified inspector who has the authority to issue a fish health inspection report to bait wholesalers.

There’s one exception. Personally collected minnows can only be used in the body of water where they were captured. Although a shop may sell uncertified bait taken from water it borders, that bait may not be transported in a vehicle!

The recreational public should consider VHS to be an invasive species. Many of the actions taken to limit the spread of invasive species should be used to prevent the spread of VHS. Scrub and disinfect boat hulls. Never discharge live wells or bilges filled in one body of water into another. Thoroughly dry fishing gear between trips. Ask your bait shop owner if his/her minnows have been tested and certified to be disease free. Remember – transported minnows marketed to the public *must* be certified. And never use uncertified minnows in waters different from their origin. Keep your receipts for bait purchases; you must show these documents if asked by a conservation officer.

The VHS crisis necessitates that government personnel, scientists, bait dealers, and anglers work together to protect the aquatic resources we all enjoy.

More information about VHS can be found at this website: <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dfwmmr/fish/fhregs.html>

*About the author: Dr. Paul Bowser, Professor of Aquatic Animal Medicine, has been on the faculty of the College of Veterinary Medicine, Cornell University, since 1985. Dr. Bowser has a long-term interest in the Oneida Lake ecosystem that began when he was a research assistant at the Cornell Field Station in 1968.*

**There is a chance that this dangerous virus can enter Oneida Lake. To prevent this, people must be willing to follow regulations and guidelines designed to limit the spread.**

## News From the Hatchery

by Mark Babenzien, Manager and  
Carl Rathje, Assistant Manager

This winter, while the heavy snowfall buried Oswego County, Constantia's Fish Hatchery has been busy preparing for the annual spring walleye egg collection. In between snowplowing and shoveling hatchery roofs, workers have been repairing trap nets, boat motors, and other specialized equipment that will be used to capture up to 30,000 spawning walleyes. The hatchery will take over 320 million walleye eggs.

In 2006, the hatchery netted 23,291 adult walleyes and collected 321 million eggs. With a seventy percent hatch rate, over 173 million walleye fry were stocked in Oneida Lake in late April. Another thirty-six million were distributed to twelve other New York State waters. Also, over 461,000 pond fingerlings (two inch), and 78,000 advanced fall fingerlings (five inch) were produced for distribution throughout New York. A complete listing of waters stocked with walleyes is available from the NYSDEC website, any regional office, or the hatchery.

Last year, the VHS virus was found in warm water species of Lake Ontario. To date, no infected fish have been found in Oneida Lake. However, researchers will be collecting samples from all fish species in the lake, including fish raised at the hatchery, to check for VHS. The hatchery will change its production program as a precautionary measure against this disease.

In another move, there will be no wall-eye cooperater pond program this year until further VHS testing ends. In addition, no fish species or eggs such as lake sturgeon from the Great Lakes will be transferred to the hatchery for rearing. All these measures are part of the state's commitment to isolate the disease and prevent it from spreading. Please remember to do your part and not bring untested fish, including bait, to Oneida Lake.

## President's Message

As you read this, my second term as president will be ending. I can't believe how quickly time passed.

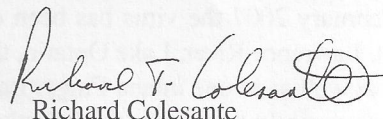
We have progressed in many areas. Excellent fishing blessed many anglers' outings last year. To a large extent, this was due to our effective cormorant hazing program. The Association's by-laws have been modified for the first time in over twenty years. We identified and presented the need for a public boat launch on the lake's east end to agencies and elected officials. We have also met with our representatives regarding the Sylvan Beach Pier's restoration. This important project now appears prominently on their "radar screens."

We have just scheduled the first meeting of the OLA fish committee, which will work on fisheries' issues related to cormorants, walleyes, and yellow perch. In addition, we're sponsoring a membership drive for May 2007 to further increase the number of people who, like you, are committed to protecting and enhancing Oneida Lake and its environs.

Recently, new membership cards arrived at your homes. Take five minutes...fill out the cards...mail them in. Use the extra cards to recruit new members. The Association remains strong, but our strength magnifies when our membership grows.

The OLA's annual meeting is scheduled for April 25 at the Cicero-North Syracuse High School on Route 31. Doors open at 6 PM and, as usual, there will be many prizes and drawings. Our agenda highlights the most current information on issues that impact the lake. Be there – be informed. And bring your friends to the meeting.

I eagerly anticipate sharing the evening of April 25 with you. Working together, we can experience another great and productive year.



Richard Colesante

President – Oneida Lake Association

The hatchery is a great place for a family outing. Our facility boasts an assortment of interesting exhibits, videos, fish and wildlife mounts, live fish displays, and a friendly, informative staff. Generally, the most exciting time is the first or second week of April, when we collect thousands of adult walleyes – including some ten pounders! The entire process lasts seven to ten days.

We are open from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily, from April 1 to September 30. Group tours can be arranged and all questions answered if you call (315) 623-7311.

### The Oneida Lake Association Inc.

Founded in 1945

The Bulletin is published by the Oneida Lake Association, Inc., so that its members may be informed regarding the activities of the Association. The 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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## Of Cormorants and VHS...

Two crucial issues reached your board of directors recently. The first involves a threat to Oneida Lake's successful cormorant control program. The other is viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS), the fish disease explained in this *Bulletin's* front-page article.

Remember when cormorants ravaged Oneida Lake's fish? Not too long ago, this newsletter reported annual fishery losses that exceeded 300,000 walleyes and 1,000,000 yellow perch. The Oneida Lake Association's membership and board of directors lobbied the New York State DEC and the federal Department of the Interior for effective cormorant controls. Limited checks were instituted in the latter 1990s, but the current three-season hazing system didn't start until 2004. Aided by our elected representatives, the association achieved a dramatic victory for Oneida Lake and all who enjoy its bounty. Syracuse area Congressman Jim Walsh was particularly instrumental in obtaining the necessary funding.

This control operation, administered by USDA-APHIS, has been so successful that cormorants, according to Cornell researchers, have had no significant effects on walleye and perch populations during the past three years. Indeed, Cornell biologist Lars Rudstam recently told a group of OLA directors that, in 2006, the lake's adult walleye population was estimated at around 448,000 and that number would have dropped to about 180,000 if there were no cormorant controls. These statistics speak mightily to our hazing program's value.

Changes in the leadership and makeup of Congress, however, threaten Oneida Lake's successful cormorant program. While funding may support the 2007 effort, the word from Washington is that this invaluable project might be on the upcoming budget's chopping block.

This looming challenge raises deep concerns. If hazing ends, significant walleye and yellow perch losses will undoubtedly reoccur. As past events have demonstrated, any major decline in Oneida Lake's angling quality will create severe economic problems.

OLA members should again be prepared to lobby for our lake's well being. We prevailed once. If necessary, we can repeat.

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The spread of VHS, a deadly fish virus, has triggered alarms throughout New York's environmental community. Massive fish kills attributable to the virus have already occurred in Lake Ontario. Imagining a similar scenario on Oneida Lake creates a nightmare that defies description. VHS may also have a devastating impact on fish hatchery operations and Oneida Lake depends on the Constantia facility for walleye stocking.

In this *Bulletin*, fish pathologist Paul Bowser writes how we can help stop the disease from spreading. The key lies in using "certified bait." At press time, emergency DEC regulations state that all minnows sold and transported in New York must be certified disease-free. Bait/tackle stores and anglers must have documentation proving that their minnows are safe. They must show this paper work, on demand, to conservation officers.

What can OLA members do to help? First, we must never move uncertified fish from one body of water to another. Second, we should ask bait shops' personnel if the minnows they sell are certified. If they refuse to answer or say that they "don't know," we should report the shop to a conservation officer. The onus is on the DEC to enforce its regulations.

And stakes this high call for vigilant enforcement.

## That Weedy Summer of 2006

by Dr. Ed Mills

Many of Oneida's lakeside residents had to cope with an unusually large amount of weed accumulation last summer.

Aquatic plants have both positives and negatives. On the plus side, vegetation is essential to Oneida Lake's biological health and helps create the lake's tremendous fishery.

The year 2006, however, showed that weeds bring problems. Why did this occur? The answer lies with plant growth's causes. The abundance of near-shore plants and matting algae (the dense clumps on the lake's surface) is influenced by water clarity, phosphorus and other nutrients, water level, composition of the lake bottom, and wave action.

As clarity increases, the light available for growth also increases and plants thrive at greater depths. Oneida Lake's zebra mussels consume algae; this increases water clarity tremendously, thus spreading aquatic plant growth to deeper waters.

Phosphorus is a key element for plant growth; Oneida Lake's soft, silty sediments contain large amounts of it. The rains of 2006 brought high water and additional phosphorus from the agricultural lands in the lake's watershed. Cornell records indicate that Oneida's average phosphorus levels from April through October were elevated from normal. High water and prevailing winds also piled a lot of plant debris along the shore.

A mild, open-water winter in 2006 allowed some plants to live through the season. When warm weather arrived, these weeds grew tremendously, exceeding their usual size and range.

In summary, the combined effects of water clarity, excessive rainfall, high nutrient runoff, fertile sediments, a mild winter, and high water contributed to one of Oneida's weediest years on record.

# Oneida Lake - 2007

by the Cornell Field Station Staff

Oneida Lake is one of New York State's premier natural resources and is linked closely to the economic health of Central New York. Although the lake's ecology has changed in recent decades, Oneida continues to offer diverse and high quality recreational opportunities.

Oneida Lake projects a vibrant health and supports a wealth of biological life, but the lake and its watershed are undergoing rapid changes and their future is uncharted.

## Excellent Walleye Fishing, but...

Fishing during 2006 was quite good. Walleye anglers caught .22 fish per hour, up slightly from last year. People took advantage of the good fishing by investing over 330,000 hours, the most fishing we've seen in a decade. They caught 79,000 walleyes and kept 54,000, the greatest harvest since 1997.

There's a down side to the walleye story, however, because the adult population will probably decline during the next five years. Recent hatches have experienced poor survival and will contribute few fish to the lake through 2009.



*Biologist Randy Jackson discusses largemouth bass with an attentive audience from Bridgeport Elementary School.*

Some year classes have produced only 20,000 fish (a good class raises over 100,000). This may seriously affect the fishing.

It's good to look at the historical perspective, however. Oneida Lake experienced long periods of low walleye survival in the mid-1970s and the early to mid-1990s. The population rebounded in each case, so we are hopeful that this recent decline will end.

## A Bass Bonanza

Smallmouth bass fishing continued to excel in 2006, as anglers averaged .69 fish per hour. Our black bass fishery attracted national acclaim. Oneida was one of eleven lakes included in the 2006 B.A.S.S. Elite Tour, and is scheduled to be one of three stops in next year's B.A.S.S. Majors. Changes in Oneida Lake over the past fifteen years have created excellent conditions for smallmouths and largemouths.

## Yellow Perch at Status Quo

In last year's "State of the Lake" article, we were less optimistic about the future of Oneida Lake's yellow perch. The adult perch population is currently around 1 million, well below the long-term average. We expect that total to remain relatively constant. Despite the lower numbers of yellow perch, anglers targeting perch averaged an outstanding three fish per hour in 2006. We hope to see the perch population rebound to ensure quality fishing.

## White Perch Abound

White perch continue to be abundant and should remain so for a while. Since 1995, eight strong year classes have built a very large adult population. Vast schools of whites roam the lake. White perch are fun to catch and great to eat. Consider taking them home with you.

## Sturgeons Keep Growing

Lake sturgeons continue to thrive. Our surveys discovered many fish over fifty inches and a couple that pushed fifty pounds. With these growth rates, we would expect the oldest fish to attempt to spawn in the near future. Only time will tell if Oneida Lake's sturgeon population can be self-sustaining. Remember that the lake sturgeon is listed as a "threatened species," and must be immediately released. We encourage those who capture tagged sturgeon to call us with the tag number and location (315-633-9243).

## Gizzard Shad Survive Winter

For the first time in fifty years, our standard netting surveys found that young gizzard shad survived the winter in large numbers. Oneida Lake is on the northern edge of the shad's range and, while they are often very abundant as young fish in the fall, most typically die over winter. However, young shad grew extremely well during the summer of 2005, and the combination of their large size and the relatively mild temperatures last winter resulted in an unusually high survival.

We aren't sure what effects shad survival will have on the lake's ecosystem. While these yearlings were too big for walleyes to eat, they may provide a

substantial brood stock and produce a large hatch in 2007 that could affect late summer and fall walleye fishing.

### More Invasive Species

The ecology of Oneida Lake continues to change because of “unwanted invaders.”

European frog-bit is a free-floating nuisance aquatic plant that resembles a tiny water lily and has continued to spread since it was first seen in Oneida Lake at the mouth of Oneida Creek in 2004. Large frog-bit colonies appeared in several Oneida Lake marinas in 2006. A new macro-algae called “starry stonewort” now reproduces in Oneida Lake. This plant comes from Europe and probably arrived in ballast water of ocean-going ships that use the Great Lakes.

Other potential invasive threats to our lake include a large shrimp-like organism named *hemimysis anomala*. This shrimp, another European migrant, was recently identified in southeastern Lake Ontario near Oswego. Viral



No wonder European anglers envy us! Cornell intern Jill Tirabassi hefts one of the lake's huge carp. The fish was caught by a gill net.

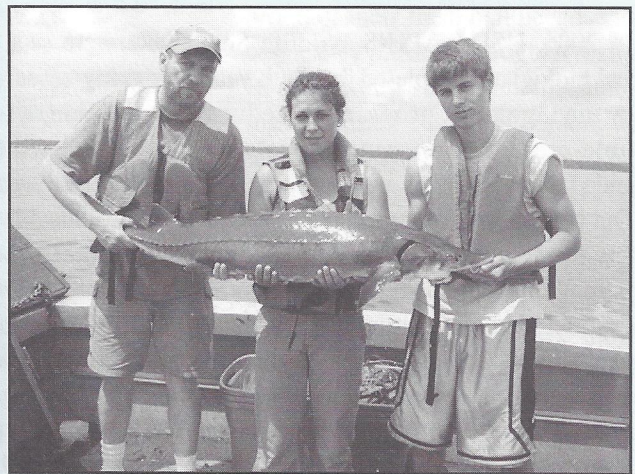
hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS), discussed by Dr. Paul Bowser in this *Bulletin's* lead article, is a new disease that could have devastating impacts on walleyes, yellow perch and bass. *Hemimysis* and VHS have joined round gobies, quagga mussels, and the fishhook flea on the list of possible Oneida Lake invaders.

### Water Chestnuts Under Control

Oneida Lake's citizen groups should be proud of their efforts to control invasive water chestnuts. Thanks to the Oneida Lake Association, Cornell Cooperative Extension's Adopt-A-Shoreline program, state and county agencies, and scores of volunteers, the areas that were formerly infested with water chestnuts have been brought under control. The battle is not over, however, and lake users should continue to be vigilant to eliminate this pesky plant. Remember - early detection and rapid removal are keys to controlling water chestnuts.

### Lake Temperature Trends

Oneida Lake's summer water temperatures have been gradually warming and the duration of stable ice cover decreasing. The average August water temperature from 1991 to 2006 was 1.1 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than that it was from 1975 to 1990. From 1995 to 2006, there were forty-eight days when our water temperature monitors read over 80 degrees! If these trends continue, further changes in the lake may occur, such as greater gizzard shad survival during winter.



Sturgeon specialist Randy Jackson and Cornell Field Station interns Sara McConnachie and Errol Scheid lift and impressive Oneida Lake specimen.

### In Summary

The state of Oneida Lake in 2007 reflects an ecosystem undergoing continual change. Anglers will enjoy thriving smallmouth and largemouth bass populations that have responded positively to environmental differences. Adult walleye numbers will run around 350,000 in 2007, but the population needs a strong year class to maintain itself. Oneida Lake's yellow perch are the most abundant fish in the lake with nearly one million adults, but an exploding white perch population may jeopardize this ranking. Climate turnabouts affect winter recreation and may alter biological life in Oneida Lake. And finally, unwanted invaders continue to alter the character of the Oneida Lake ecosystem and forecast uncertainty for the future.

Oneida Lake thrives amidst a new era of transformation but, in the future, the lake may require a different management strategy to sustain the good times that we have come to expect and enjoy.

# Update: Oneida Lake's Cormorant Management Program

by Mark S Carrara, Biologist – USDA-APHIS

In 2006, USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services' biologists completed the ninth year of a management program to reduce double-crested cormorant impacts on Oneida Lake's walleyes and yellow perch.

Our biologists dispersed cormorants for ninety-four days in 2005 and ninety-three days in 2006, using a variety of methods. These included an electronic scary man, human effigies, Mylar tape, pyrotechnics, and boat chasing. We also removed a few birds to prevent cormorants from getting used to non-lethal methods.

A total of 42,506 cormorants were harassed off Oneida Lake in 2005 and 49,464 birds in 2006. Now, don't get alarmed – there aren't that many cormorants around! When you think about those numbers, remember that single birds are often hazed numerous times. Other Oneida Lake statistics for 2006 included the discharge of 8,461 pyrotechnics and the removal of forty-eight cormorants. Birds taken on the

lake were sent to Cornell University for ongoing research about cormorant diets. In addition, a total of 70,756 cormorants were harassed from Onondaga Lake, using 6,318 pyrotechnics.

A noticeable decrease in the number of cormorant nests has been observed on Oneida Lake since the spring through fall hazing program began in 2004. During the first year of nest management, 131 cormorant nests were located on Long Island. Over the next two years the number of nests on Oneida Lake decreased to eighty-five in 2005 and to twenty-eight in 2006. That's significant progress. In accordance with task force recom-

mendations, twenty cormorant nests were left on the island, but their eggs were oiled to prevent hatching.

In addition, Wildlife Services removed seventeen cormorant nests containing fifty-four eggs from the Great Swamp Conservancy near Canastota, where a pioneering colony was discovered within a great blue heron rookery.

Nests were located in trees ranging in height from fifty to one hundred feet. Wildlife Services dislodged the nests with retractable poles. Our careful observations noted that the neighboring great blue herons remained relatively undisturbed.



## Attention Members!

Don't miss your chance to vote at the 2007 annual meeting.

Members in good standing who attend the meeting will have the opportunity to vote on the following slate of eight OLA members who are nominated for re-election to the OLA Board of Directors this year:

James D'Imperio  
Thomas Giufre  
Edwin Olmstead  
Thomas Pierce  
William Schriever  
Kurt Snyder  
Matthew Snyder  
Lance Vella

## "Keep It Clean" Signs Available

For over two decades, the OLA has posted "It's Your Oneida Lake – Keep It Clean" signs at choice locations around the lake. These large, attractive white and blue roadside placards promote a key conservation message. Local merchants, organizations, and individuals sponsor the signs.

The association has a couple signs available. If you are interested in sponsoring a sign and advancing the OLA cause, contact director Dick Percival at (315) 633-1170.

**Practice safe boating –  
obey the "rules of the road."**

**This season's walleye opener – May 5.**

## Necrology: Charlie Hamlin and Red Devan

The OLA mourns the passing of two long-time members, Charles "Charlie" Hamlin and Richard "Red" Devan. Both men were veritable "Oneida Lakers" in their service to sportspeople, their incredible knowledge of the lake, and the blessed lives they shared with others.

Charlie Hamlin first came to his parents' camp on Oneida Lake in the 1920s and, except for jobs at General Electric and Bossert Manufacturing in Utica, was seldom away from his beloved water. Charlie, his wife Virginia, his children, and his son-in-law operated Hamlin's Marina and Boat Livery on Messenger's Bay since the 1950s. In addition, he owned H&B Marine Sales in Lakeport during the 1970s.

Charlie not only rented, sold, and docked boats, he also offered an encyclopedia's worth of angling and boating advice to every customer. He loved to talk about Oneida Lake history and, indeed, he spoke with expertise because he lived the lake's past through all the great changes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Like Charlie, Red Devan fished Oneida for his entire life. He, his wife Margaret, and his children ran South Bay Bait and Tackle, a gem of a "mom and pop" shop, from the 1950s through the early 1980s. The store, located next to Marion Manor, was the unofficial headquarters for the lake's East Shore angling fraternity. Red and "Marg" worked fourteen hours days

during peak seasons, dispensing worms, crabs, bass bugs, minnows, and tackle to Oneida's angling faithful. They were proud of their fresh bait because, in most cases, they picked or caught it themselves. Red and Marg's accurate, invaluable fishing tips filled countless coolers with the lake's bounty. Their shop was a warm, cozy place where anglers found a comfortable second home.

Charlie and Red knew Oneida Lake like the proverbial "back of their hands." They weren't technology-oriented; they didn't have to be. Their lives carried on the traditions of the many storied Oneida Lake anglers who lived and understood that water's rhythms. We can all be thankful that they chose vocations through which they could share this wisdom.

## The OLA Fishing Corner

### Oneida Lake's Other Fish

by Capt. Tony Buffa

Oneida Lake and walleyes boast as long a lasting association as motherhood and apple pie. Among the fishing fraternity, Oneida is regarded as *the* top walleye spot in New York State. Both the research and fishing communities look at our lake's walleyes with a special respect.

But all is far from rosy. Several fish species can threaten Oneida's walleyes; these "other fish" should be kept in check. A big part of the control is in your hands. It's called a rod and reel.

Currently, white perch are the greatest menace to Oneida Lake's walleyes. White perch are members of the class known as the "temperate basses" that includes our lake's silver bass and the saltwater striped bass. Whites have become so numerous that they compete with young walleyes for food. In addition, the huge schools of whites that roam the lake probably consume millions of walleye and yellow perch fry.

Whites were so abundant in Oneida Lake in 1988 that researchers were concerned that these fish would become the lake's primary species. Fortunately, a natural die-off greatly reduced the whites' population.

Sometimes, however, Mother Nature is not so kind, and that's where you and I come in. The present white perch population is growing extremely large. If not kept in check, whites could threaten the survival of young walleyes and yellow perch. If you catch a white perch, don't release it. Whites must be culled and, besides, they're very tasty fish. There is also the possibility of enriching the vegetable garden or even growing the largest pumpkin this side of Onondaga County.

I'm certainly not advocating any senseless plunder of Oneida Lake's less desirable species. I encourage you to better understand the delicate balance required to maintain a productive walleye fishery.



*The Aiello family, from Fayetteville, proudly pose with their catch of Oneida Lake walleyes.*

Simply put, white perch threaten our walleyes. We can lessen this threat by keeping every white that we catch.

For some odd reason, white perch have been relegated to the "back of the bus" in comparison to more popular table fish. Consider this – anglers in Maine release yellow perch and keep whites! Those "down easters" prefer to eat white perch! New Yorkers, however, do the opposite. It doesn't make sense, does it?

Do yourself and Oneida Lake's walleyes a favor this season and take home a meal of white perch. Fry them like yellow perch or walleyes. By keeping every white we catch, we can help our lake and feed our families as well.

# Annual Meeting at Cicero-North Syracuse High School

April 25, 2007

By Tony Buffa

On Wednesday, April 25, the OLA will hold its 62nd annual meeting at the Cicero-North Syracuse High School auditorium. Come and join us for an evening of celebration and education about Oneida Lake and its environs. Doors will open at six. Arrive early and enjoy our numerous exhibits!

OLA membership renewals and recruitment will begin at 6:15. You don't have to be a member to attend our meeting, but we encourage you to join us to enhance our long tradition of being the largest lake association in New York and perhaps the entire country.

Our meeting will begin promptly at seven with a brief business session. This year's theme is "Maintenance, Vigilance, and Growth in 2007." DEC biologists, Shackleton Point field station researchers, and USDA Nuisance Control field technicians will report on the status of our fishery, discuss new data from the hatchery, and update cormorant and water chestnut control efforts. Cornell Professor Paul Bowser, a new face in the program, will talk about the deadly VHS virus.

This is a "must" meeting to attend. Bass Pro Shops will be on hand to help us with their exhibit and door prizes. Lake historian Jack Henke will sign copies of his latest book, *From "The Beach" to Brewerton*, at our history display.

The OLA needs your support. Come to the meeting and show how deeply you care. Our lake's well-being is constantly being challenged. Be a part of Oneida Lake's past, present, and future by marking your calendars and joining us on April 25.

At the meeting, the OLA will give its prestigious "Conservationist of the Year" award to an outstanding local environmentalist. The meeting will then close with distribution of door prizes and drawings for three Lowrance iFinder ProPlus GPS units. One winner will be chosen from the attendees; the other two will be drawn from our membership at large.

We encourage you to be at C-NS on April 25 for an evening of fun, facts, and OLA solidarity..

## Directions to C-NS High School

### Route 31, Cicero

#### From the Thruway

Take the Thruway to Route 81. Take Route 81 north to the Cicero exit. Turn right onto Route 31. The school is about 1/2 mile away on the right.

#### From the East

Simply get to Route 31. Follow it west. The high school will be on the left just before you enter Cicero village.

#### From the West

Get to Route 31, to Cicero village, continue east under Route 81's overpass, and the high school will be on the right, about 1/2 mile away.

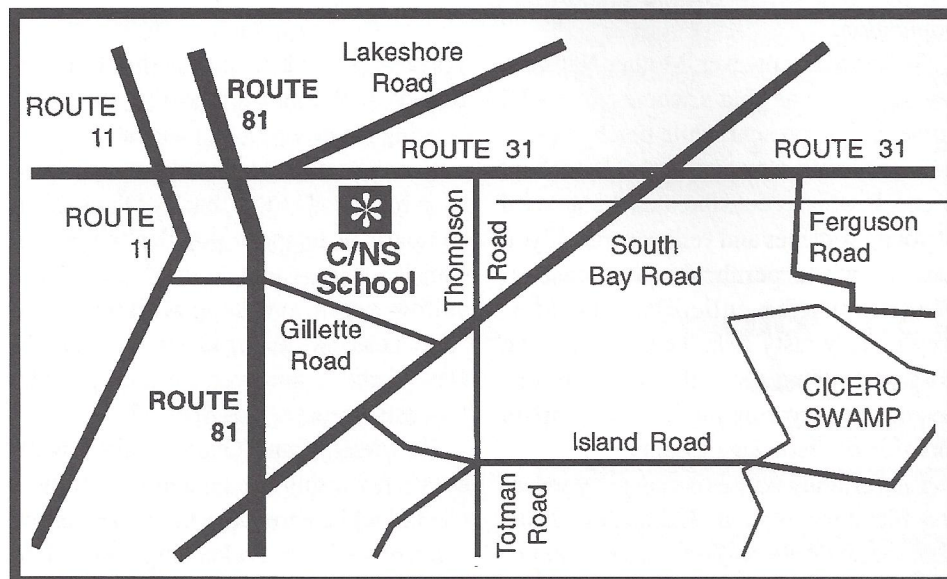
## Here Come the Pros!

Oneida Shores Onondaga County Park spokesperson Judy Talbot has announced next summer's competitive fishing schedule.

The Bass Fishing League will hold a major tournament for professional anglers on Saturday July 14. Sponsored by Walmart, the tourney should attract around 200 entrants. Weigh-ins begin at 3:00 PM. near the park's boat launch.

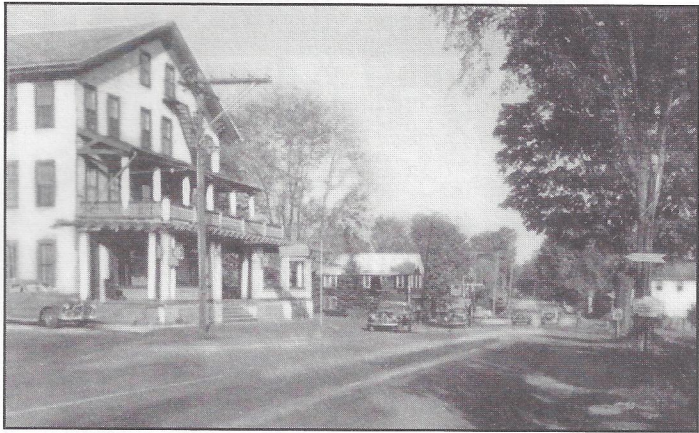
A major bass tournament called "The Memorial" includes Oneida Lake on the July 26 and 27 park agenda. This contest involves fifty top national anglers and their amateur partners. It's one of the annual "big three" tourneys. While Oneida Shores will serve as launch site for these anglers, weigh-ins will occur at the On Center in downtown Syracuse. Check your newspaper for times.

If you haven't been on the lake and watched professional anglers fish, try to get there this summer. Sometimes, shore points afford great views. These fishers' intensity and skills make strong impressions.





## Oneida Lake Photo History Quiz – the Lake Area’s Hotels



The large building on the left was Constantia's largest inn. What was its name?



This was Sylvan Beach's Hotel Nobles, around 1910. It was purchased in the Roaring 20s and renamed. What was its new title?



Brewerton's Main Street, around 1900. What was the name of the brick hotel on the left?

## OLA Director Ripberger Honored by Post-Standard

The *Syracuse Post-Standard* featured veteran OLA Director Robert "Bob" Ripberger in a front-page article last winter. It was a deserved recognition of one of Central New York's premier conservationists.

Bob Ripberger's impressive resume includes leadership positions with the Onondaga County Sportsperson's Federation, the Izaak Walton League, several bowhunters' groups, and the OLA. Over the years, the Onondaga County Legislature recognized his abilities and appointed him to committees that dealt with conservation issues. He has participated in and coordinated environmental lobbying efforts at the state legislature in Albany. He is well known and respected among legislators and within the DEC.

Bob has served as OLA president and secretary, and has shepherded many projects for the association. He has guided the "conservationist of the year" committee for the past twenty-five years. Among his conservation achievement cap's notable feathers are the construction of the new Constantia Hatchery, the upgrading of the South Shore boat launch, and the reopening of the Sylvan Beach fishing pier.

Bob Ripberger has always been a tireless advocate for association causes. We are all fortunate that his wise counsel continues to enrich the OLA.

The *Bulletin* joins the *Post-Standard* in congratulating Bob.

### Answers

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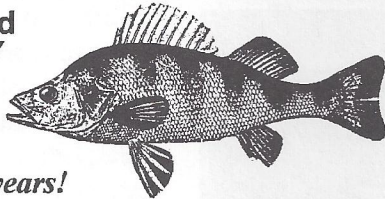
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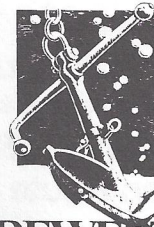
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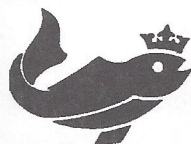
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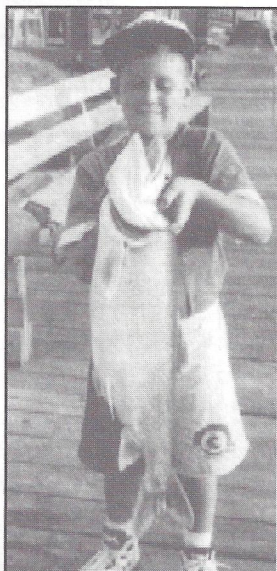
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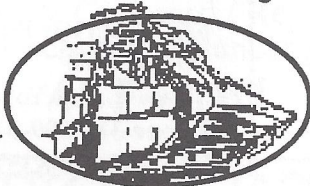
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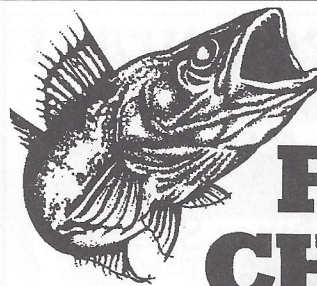
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