

The Oneida Lake Bulletin

SUMMER 1999

Oneida Lake's "Cormorant PROBLEM" - The Birds Destroy Thousands of Walleyes Yearly!

The numbers are revealing - and disturbing. Every year throughout the 1990's, tens of thousands of walleyes were eaten by double crested cormorants. In addition, cormorant feeding destroyed hundreds of thousands of yellow perch. Data recently received by the *Bulletin* staff clearly documents these statements.

Here is some of the data -

The 1991 walleye year class lost, over several years, an estimated 100,000 walleyes to cormorant predation. Most of these fish were consumed when they were 1, 2, and 3 years old. Walleyes that reach age 4 are, generally speaking, too big for cormorants to eat.

The 1990 year class, according to Cornell estimates, lost nearly 100,00 fish.

In 1995, cormorants ate about 50,000 walleyes.



Angling glory from Oneida Lake's past - Cleveland fishermen pose with a walleye bonanza, 1909.

Credit: (from-*Oneida Lake - Place Names and History*, North Country Books, Utica, 1989)

(Continued on page 5)

President's Report

Oneida Lake Bulletin

Summer 1999

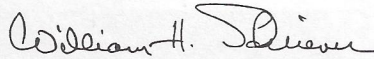
While reading Jack Henke's book, *Tales of Oneida Lake*, I came across two amusing cartoons. One depicted a fisherman, accompanied by his son. In the caption, the angler muses, "Son, when I was a small boy, we used to catch a big mess of good panfish in Oneida Lake in less than an hour, but now, about all a fellow can catch is a cold." The lad responds, "Is it because of the netting, Daddy?" The second cartoon shows two men discussing an upcoming OLA annual meeting. The first asks the other if he is planning to attend. The second responds, "Yea Bo! I'll be there at 8 P.M. sharp. *We gotta stick together and get some real action before the lake is ruined completely.*" Steve Schilder, a *Post Standard* artist, published these cartoons in 1945.

Some things never change...among the OLA's primary concerns in 1945 were water quality, over fishing (the walleye "limit" then was 30 per day), bait fish netting, illegal netting of game fish, lake water levels, and controlling the population of undesirable species in the lake's environment. And another important, constant item is the need for Oneida Lake's friends to "stick together." In numbers we have strength.

Some things do change...many of 1945's problems have been solved.

Some remain with us, while other significant issues have arisen. We must address the latter troubles in the near future. Our diminished walleye population and the festering cormorant problem are two prominent concerns that are highlighted in this issue of the *Bulletin*.

I will do my best, during my tenure as President of the OLA, to continue, as is stated in a cardinal Association principle, "To work for the improvement of conditions affecting or pertaining to Oneida Lake, including conditions influencing fishing, hunting, or boating." I am committed to a healthy, thriving Oneida Lake and look forward to working with you toward the attainment of that goal. ■



William H. Schriever
OLA President

**It's YOUR
Lake!**

**EXPRESS
YOUR
CONCERNS!**

**IF YOU HAVEN'T
SIGNED UP YET
AS AN O.L.A.
MEMBER, DO IT
NOW!**

From The Editors -

We welcome you to the Summer 1999 edition of the Oneida Lake Association *Bulletin*.

For several years, anglers have bemoaned the lake's poor walleye fishing. "Where are all the walleyes?" they cried. We now know the answer to that question. Double-crested

(Continued, top of page 3)

ONEIDA LAKE ASSOCIATION INC, FOUNDED IN 1945

The Bulletin is published by the Oneida Lake Association, Inc., 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.

OFFICERS

President William Schriever
Vice Pres Charles J. Engle, Jr.
Vice Pres John Guilford, Jr.
Vice Pres Joseph Mastriano
Secretary Kurt Snyder
Asst. Secretary Robert Gang III
Treasurer Edwin Olmstead

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Term: April 1999 - April 2002

Richard Colesanti Harvey Chase
Patrick A. Leone, Jr. Arnold Armani
Edward L. Mills

Term: April 1998 - April 2001

Dominick P. Maio Steve Rogers
Parker J. Stone Richard Percival
Tom Pierce Marshall O. Naumann

Term: April 1997 - April 2000

George Angeloro Robert Cote
Anthony Buffa Robert Ripberger
William Sweredowski Jack Henke
Chuck Abate

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

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

(Continued from page 2)

From The Editors -

cormorant predation has decimated Oneida Lake's walleye population throughout the 1990's.

Your Oneida Lake Association will be addressing this problem. Be assured that the Association will do everything in its power to restore our walleye population.

Now is the time to work through channels, through lobbying and political pressure. Congresspersons,

Senators, and Assemblymen must be made aware of the critical situation on our lake.

Now is *not* the time to motor onto the lake and shoot every cormorant in sight. Outside of government sanction, this action must *never* occur.

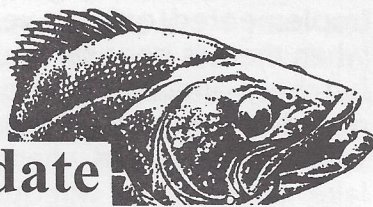
The cormorants are protected by Federal legislation. We are a nation governed by the "rule of law" and only government, acting on our urging, must solve this problem. ■

-Dom Maio
-Jack Henke

fascinating. With their elongated nose and prehistorically sculpted body, they present a very unusual image, one that creates a strong connection with prehistoric times. In the same ancient fisheries vein, we are currently raising about 30,000 juvenile lake sturgeon (around an inch long) that are part of an on-going restoration program for this endangered species. Our display tanks also boast several sturgeon whose length exceeds thirty inches!

Stop by our facility this summer for a voyage through New York's aquatic natural history. Visiting hours run from 8 A.M. until 3:30 P.M., seven days a week, from April 1 until September 1. We look forward to hosting you. ■

The OLA Hatchery Update



Summer 1999 Hatchery in Review

by Richard Colesante and Mark Babenzien

Our staff collected about 220 million walleye eggs this year, but we handled fewer adult fish than normal. This was an unusual spring and many walleyes moved into their spawning streams while the lake was still ice-covered. These fish, of course, couldn't be netted - our nets can only be set when Oneida is ice-free. Hopefully this phenomenon accounts for the limitations of our egg take.

This spring we nurtured 140,000,000 walleye fry and virtually all were stocked directly into Oneida Lake. This stocking was very successful and Cornell biologists netted record numbers of young

walleyes nine days after the fry were released. We strongly hope that these fish will mature into a thriving walleye year class!

Our other activities include research efforts on recirculating water systems, disease treatments, and feeding. These studies are focused at improving the survival of walleyes during the several stages of hatchery production.

We now have about 500 young-of-the-year paddlefish that we raised from eggs. These healthy fish grow about one inch per week. At the time of this writing, they are four inches long. Paddlefish will be stocked in the Allegheny River and Reservoir, near Jamestown, when they reach eight to ten inches.

Paddlefish are absolutely

DEC Announces Plan to Restore Lake's Walleye Population

Within the last few months, the Oneida Lake Association has strongly expressed your concerns about the lake's reduced walleye population and poor walleye fishing to the Department of Environmental Conservation. DEC officials responded quickly and, on June 18, an informational meeting convened at Shackleton Point. There, several OLA Directors met with Cornell University biologists Lars Rudstam and Tony Vandevalk and with Doug Stang, DEC Fisheries Bureau Chief, Pat Festa, DEC Inland Fisheries Chief, and Les Wedge, DEC Region 7 Fish Manager. Also representing the DEC was biologist Richard Colesante, director of the Oneida Fish

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

DEC Announces Plan

Cultural Station.

The DEC's action plan, designed to revive Oneida Lake's walleye population, contains four options, two of which have, in part, been already implemented. Each option is detailed in the following article.

Option One - Increase the number of walleye fry stocked in the lake by the Oneida Hatchery.

Stocking more fry would at least provide the potential for developing better year classes. In years when there are many young yellow perch, on which walleyes feed heavily, walleye fry will have a greater chance of surviving. This increased stocking can boost the number of adult walleyes in a particular year class by about 50,000.

But, if the lake doesn't produce enough food for adult walleyes, the latter will simply feed on their own fry and few will live until fall. This happens in years when young yellow perch and other walleye food fish numbers are down. Stocking more fry under these conditions will have an insignificant effect on future adult walleye numbers.

Option One has become reality. In 1998, 100 million walleye fry from the Constantia Hatchery were stocked in Oneida Lake. 1999 witnessed the stocking of 135 million fry and 150 million will be stocked in 2000. The stocking figure for 2000, of course, is dependent on the hatchery's ability to produce that quantity.

Option Two - Stock Oneida Lake with 500,000 walleye

"pond fingerlings" at the end of June.

Pond fingerlings are 1.5 to 2 inches long which, at the end of June, is approximately the same size as their lake-reared counterparts. As with Option One, this move will be effective only in years when conditions are prime for walleye survival. In other words, if there isn't enough other bait fish in the lake, predator fish (including walleyes, bass, sheephead, etc.) will gobble up the fingerling walleyes.

Consequently, the DEC plan makes fingerling stocking contingent on two additional items. First, the stocking will be implemented only in years when there is poor survival of hatchery and naturally produced fry. Secondly, fingerlings will only be released when the lake contains an adequate population of young yellow perch and other forage fish.

How will these conditions be evaluated? Cornell University conducts trawling operations nine days after walleye fry are placed in Oneida. These trawlings yield data on walleye and yellow perch fry quantities and this information will be the determining factor behind the fingerling stocking decision.

Option Three - Limit predation by cormorants.

Cormorants are significant predators on walleyes of ages 1, 2, and 3. These fish range from about 7 to 13 inches and will, in all probability, become legal "keepers." In Oneida Lake, age 4 walleyes are big enough for fishermen to harvest and are larger than cormorants' preferred prey. The birds also take tremendous quantities of immature yellow perch.

The critical cormorant situation and this option are discussed in an accompanying article that begins on page 1 of the *Bulletin*. In essence, this option involves harassing cormorants into leaving the lake and oiling eggs in cormorant nests. It has reduced predation, but cormorants still slaughter thousands of fish.

Option Four - Increase the size limit to 18" on adult walleyes until the population returns to stable levels.

Raising the size limit would protect more adult walleyes and would help stabilize the population levels. An 18" limit would effectively shelter 52% of the current adult female walleye population in the lake, and would also shield most adult males.

But angler harvests would be seriously reduced. On the positive side, however, this regulation could save as many as 18,000 walleyes per year.

The regulation could become law by October 1, 2000. The decision concerning the change would be made around March of that year. The DEC has already completed the necessary paper work for making this change and, if they decide to implement it, will be holding public hearings. The hearings' times and locations will be well publicized.

If Cornell's samplings indicate a rising walleye population, this regulation change will, in all likelihood, be nullified. Last May's survival of walleye fry was probably the second or third highest on record. Biologists must wait through next winter, however, and then calculate how many of these fish survive to form the 1999 year class. ■

(Continued from Cover)

"Cormorant Problem"

In 1996, 60,000 walleyes became cormorants' dinners.

Late last summer, a program of cormorant harassment began. New York State was able to secure permission for this from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (cormorants are regulated by Federal laws) because cormorants were encroaching on the nesting space of the common tern, an endangered species. Noise makers, air horns, and the like were used to annoy cormorants and hundreds left the lake. Cornell University biologists' calculations revealed that this harassment saved about 30,000 walleyes. Still, the remaining cormorants on Oneida consumed another 30,000 walleyes.

Harassment, according to calculations, saved 90,000 yellow perch from cormorant destruction.

But - the birds were still able to eradicate another 90,000 perch.

Imagine the scenario in 1998, without harassment - 60,000 walleyes and 180,000 yellow perch killed by cormorants. Imagine this, and you have an idea of the scope of the 1990's losses.

The 1995, 1996, and 1998 statistics are only for age 2, 3, and up walleyes. They do *not* include age 1 walleyes. Many of these fish were also eaten.

At a meeting at Shackleton Point on June 18, 1999, in which DEC officials presented a plan to restore Oneida Lake's walleye population, one biologist reflected on the last 4 years and stated that "If our (walleye) year class predictions were 'on the line' (meaning - if the predictions came true), we would have built up the population again. We would have had over

500,000." And the lake can support these fish - its forage base is extremely strong.

Cornell University estimates that we now have about 250,000 walleyes in Oneida Lake.

This year, the harassment program will continue. In addition, cormorant eggs are being oiled so that only 100 nests will be allowed to produce young.

Still, there will be several hundred cormorants on the lake. Migrant birds will swell the population prior to harassment. Thousands of fish will become bird food.

The situation raises a delicate and critical question. How long will the losses of Oneida Lake's walleye and perch populations be allowed to continue? ■

(The Bulletin thanks Connie Adams and the Cornell Fish and Wildlife Coop Unit).

STORAGE for BOATS, CARS, & RV's

(315) 699-7643

ADT Security All Sizes

O.F.K. WOOD

KIRCHNER'S FISHING KAMP

North Shore
of Oneida Lake

*Owners are;
Bill & Nancy Kirchner*

15 Years Experience

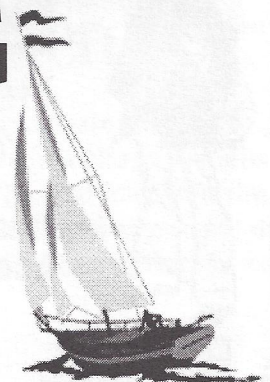
Clean Modern One or Two Bedroom Cottages

Furnished with microwaves & Cable Television

- Boat & Motor Rental
- Fishing Licenses
- Fish Cleaning Facilities
- Gas at dock
- Bait & Tackle
- Open for winter ice fishing
- Docking (Day, Week, or Season)
- Launch on Premises
- Electric at dock

812 State Rte 49 / PO Box 264 / Cleveland, NY 13042

(315) 675-3662



HARDTER WELDING SUPPLY

PROPELLER SERVICE & REPAIR

Inboard & Outboard / Repaired,
Pitched & Balanced

204 Salina St. **457-3181** Liverpool, NY

BREWERTON PHARMACY

Nicholas & Nancy Chervinsky
Registered Pharmacists

- Cosmetics ■ Film - Cameras ■ Bathing Supplies
- Suntan Preparations ■ Sunburn Remedies

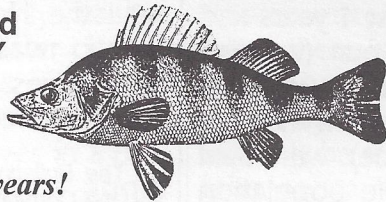
Next to the Bridge
Brewerton, NY **676-4441**

Mickey's Bait & Tackle

715 South Bay Road
North Syracuse, NY

458-7998

*An Oneida Lake
Tradition for over 50 years!*



Boat Works Ltd.

One Stop
Headquarters For All
Your Boating Needs

Marine Supplies / Hardware
Accessories / Rigging

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hobie Cat | <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaners & Waxes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day Sailers | <input type="checkbox"/> Motor Flushers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inflatables | <input type="checkbox"/> Oils & Lubricants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Precision | <input type="checkbox"/> Safety Equipment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Capri | <input type="checkbox"/> Trailer Parts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dinghies | <input type="checkbox"/> Paint |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hobie One | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canoes | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paddle Boats | |

**The Boating Store... that's
not just for boaters!**

(315) 438-8915

CES Certified Environmental Services, Inc.

1401 Erie Blvd. E. / Syracuse, NY 13210-1207
Phone 315 478-2374 / Fax 315 478-2107

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos Surveys | <input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos Analysis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos Abatement | <input type="checkbox"/> Laboratory Testing |
| Project Monitoring | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Audits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TCLP Analysis | <input type="checkbox"/> Stack Testing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health & Safety Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Field Sampling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos & Lead Training | <input type="checkbox"/> Sample Pick-Up |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waste Characterization | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Underground Storage | <input type="checkbox"/> Site Remediation |
| Tank Removal | Project Management |
| Monitoring | <input type="checkbox"/> Drinking Water Analyses |

New York State Department of Health Certified
NYSDOH ELAP ID # 11246

New York State Department of Labor
Licensed Asbestos Contractor
NYSDEL License # AC-93-0415

- In House Laboratory Services
- Complete Client Confidentiality
- NYSDEC, NYSDOH & USEPA Approved Methodologies
- Documented Chain-of-Custody
- Strict Quality Assurance / Quality Control (QA/QC) Practices

Treasure Island

Cast Your Dreams in Gold!

Alex Mosher, Thousand Island Region Jeweler, now offering cast in 14K gold: intricate, one of a kind productions, of your boat, cottage, local lighthouse or landmark. Deep relief, two dimensional renderings fashioned into highly detailed pendants, pins or tacks.

Diamonds, gems or enamel accents available.

NEW RELEASE!

Oneida Lake in 14K Gold or Sterling Silver. Available as a pin or pendant.

Call or e-mail for photos, details and prices.

13 James Street, Alexandria Bay, NY 13607

Phone:(315) 482-2294

E-mail - treasureislands@yahoo.com

Web Site - http://treasureislands.net

Weber's Restaurant

German Specialties & Catering

- Fresh Steaks & Chops
- Fresh Seafood
- German Specialties
- Weekend Specials

Daily Lunch & Dinner Specials

"12 Beers On Tap"

(315) 472-0480 820 Danforth Street
Corner of First North



AEGIS

Group of
Central
New York
Incorporated

EDWIN L. OLMSTEAD

The Business & Personal
Insurance Specialists

6250 South Bay Road
PO Box 3580
Syracuse, New York 13320
Phone 315 699-5195
Fax 315 699-8357

FREMAC MARINE

Sales, Service & Marina

Wellcraft, Tracker & Nitro Bass Boats

Johnson, Yamaha, Mercury & Force Outboards

Mercruiser, Volvo Sx Cobra & Yamaha I/O's

(315) 633-2661

Located on Route 31 in Lakeport, NY

COMPLETE
MARINE
SERVICE &
PARTS
FACILITY

BREWERTON

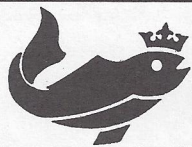
BOATYARD, INC.

All Inboard & Inboard/Outboards
Wood Fiberglass & Metal Hull Repairs

315-676-3762

5405 Bennett St.
Brewertown, NY

Large Ship Store
Open Year Round!



Captain
Tony Buffa's

FISHING CHARTERS



Lake Ontario

*Noted for trophy size Trout
& Salmon*

"The Bandito II"

30 Foot Sportcraft with a 10 Ft
beam and a 6 pass. capacity

Port: Oswego Marina,
Oswego, New York

Oneida Lake

*New York State's
Finest Walleye Fishery*

"My Gal Cal II"

28 Foot, OffShore with
a 6 Passenger capacity.

Port: Thrall's Lakeport Marina
Lakeport, New York

(315) 633-2694

We're here to make a difference.SM

At Fleet Bank, we're working hard to make a positive
difference in the way you bank. After all, we're a different kind of bank.
Backed by all the resources of the Fleet Financial Group, we're able to
offer you the kind of innovative products and services you need today.
So stop in soon and find out how we can make a difference for you.



A Member of Fleet Financial Group

**Brewerton / Central Square / Constantia
Camden / Sylvan Beach**

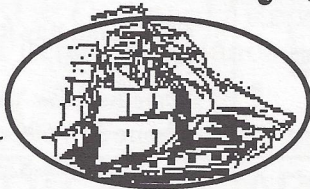
1-800-228-1281

Member
FDIC



**Like having BOSTON
in your backyard!**

Public
Boat
Launching!
Seasonal or
per Launch



Marine
Mechanic
on Premise

JOHNNIE'S PIER 31

— Restaurant & Marina —

OPEN-YEAR-ROUND

Seafood-Steaks-Pasta

Overlooking Beautiful Oneida Lake!

Just 10 minutes from the Turning Stone Casino

Thruway Exit 34, Canastota, NY

3/4 mile west of Route 13 on Route 31

(315) 697-7007



*Captain
Ray Brown's*

**FISHING
CHARTER**

**Expert Walleye & Perch Fishing
on Oneida Lake**

Fish aboard the 26' Thompson Hardtop

"OBSESSION II"

Conveniently Located at Marion Manor Marina

Fully Insured / USCG Licensed Captain

We use Daiwa Total Quality Equipment!

For Information & Reservations
on our 6 and 3 Hour Trips, call:

(315) 623-9886

e-mail: rbchart@dreamscape.com

Internet <http://www.charternet.com/fishers/obsession/index.html>

COMPUTER GENERATED GRAPHICS,
COST EFFECTIVE ADS, BROCHURES,
DIRECT MAILERS & CATALOGS

Maio STUDIO

Creative Advertising & Design

315 623,7588 fax 315 623,7288

e-mail: dmaio@trilithic.com

BORIO'S RESTAURANT

"Overlooking Beautiful Oneida Lake"

Six minutes from the PennCan Mall

Off Lakeshore Road

■ LUNCHES ■ DINNERS

■ RECEPTIONS ■ BANQUETS

CLOSED ON MONDAYS

699-2249

"PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR ADVERTISERS"

OLA

ONEIDA LAKE ASSOCIATION, INC.

PO BOX 3536

SYRACUSE, NEW YORK 13220-3536

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SYRACUSE, NY
PERMIT NO. 575