

The Oneida Lake Bulletin

Record Turnout at OLA's

SUMMER/FALL EDITION 1996

"Take A Youngster Fishing" Contest!



A nice walleye inspires a healthy grin on Jeremy Ackerman of Canastota.



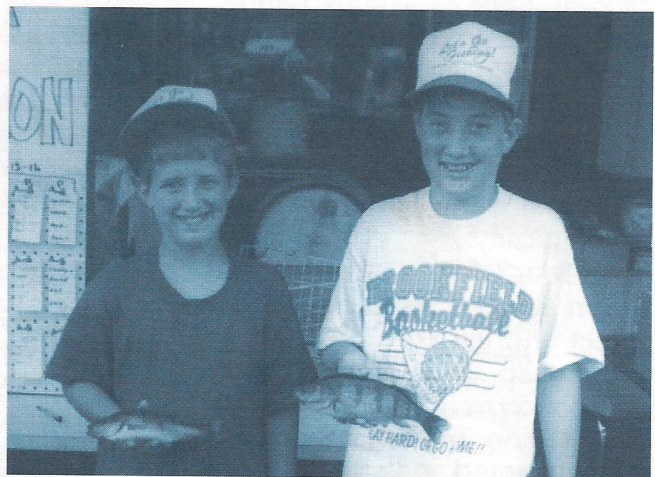
Kyle, Bob & Erin Worden of Canastota, proudly display a chunky smallmouth bass.

The OLA salutes all these young anglers!

Under Age 6 Category

Kayleigh Ackerman	Coty Lee Gorton
Cassy Butler	Cassia Hameline
Joey Button	Corey Hanlon
Adam Copeland	Nick Jannone
Laura Chrissley	Val Kyser
David Classen	Ashley Lane
Rae Ann Clemens	Zachary Lansing
David Craig	Andy Lisak
Anthony DePaolo	Kevin Lisak
Joseph Desens	Emily McDonald
Adam Donner	Tyler McDonald
Billy Faucett	Justin Niles
Brianna Giancola	Kirsten Niles
Brittany Giancola	Edward Rogers
Mike Glahn	

(Continued on Page 5)



Brandon and Josh Snyder of West Edmeston, show off their fine perch.

President's Report

Oneida Lake Bulletin
Summer/Fall 1996

Oneida Lake has benefited in some special ways during this spring and early summer.

Your Oneida Lake Association has worked hard to introduce our next generation to fishing's great joys. The Association held a "Take A Kid Fishing" Contest on the last weekend of June and the event attracted over 200 children. I would like to thank all the sponsors for their support. Brewerton Sports and Marion Manor were especially outstanding. These two businesses hosted the contest, its related fishing seminars and its casting competition. Their owners, Steve Rogers and Jerry Randall, gave generously of their time and contributed numerous prizes. To Jerry, the event's chairman, let me express an additional, well-deserved "thank you" for an outstanding job!

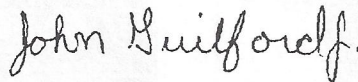
Our lake's south shore users are now enjoying the newly remodeled New York State Boat Launch, east of Bridgeport. The launch's dedication occurred on June 21 and was attended by many state and local officials. Our Association extends its gratitude to all who helped make this project a reality. Access to our great natural resource improves dramatically with the opening of this fine facility.

Your Oneida Lake Association strives to continually protect and improve the lake. In doing so, we address a variety of concerns. Last spring, some east shore members and residents noted an increase in the trash that floats in after ice-out. Glass bottles, propane tanks, and miscellaneous construc-

tion debris mar our beautiful shore and create potential health problems. The Association encourages a "carry on, carry off" policy throughout the year. And, if you come upon a mess left by others, stop and remove it. Remember- Oneida Lake is our lake to protect and preserve.

I wish all of you a safe, marvelous, summer and fall.

John Guilford, Jr.
OLA President



From the Editors-

Welcome to the summer/fall edition of the Oneida Lake Association's Bulletin! "Fishing '96" is this issue's theme and all of our articles reflect this. Cornell biologist Tony VanDeValk's prose explores Oneida's walleye population's dynamics, Jerry Randall details in-depth fishing techniques and fishing spots on the Oneida lake while Richard Colesante's writing informs us about the Oneida Fish Cultural Station's activities, and our lead article cites the 200 plus young anglers who shared in our "Take A Youngster Fishing" Contest's joys. We applaud these children who are, in a very real sense, a big part of the future of fishing and of the Oneida Lake Association itself.

Dom Maio
Jack Henke

The winner of the
Captain Ray Brown
Fishing Trip Drawing
was nine year old
Patrick Donohue

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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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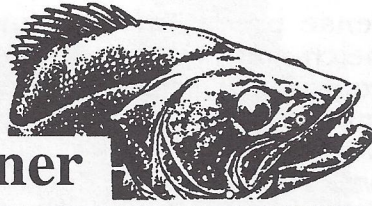
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The OLA Fishing Corner



Oneida Lake - Heads or Tails?

by Jerry Randall

There is no doubt that Oneida Lake's walleye fishing is changing. Much debate exists as to what the future holds, but the present is what matters to anglers in 1996 and some OLA members are altering old techniques in an effort to adapt to current conditions. Listen to what a few are doing.

Steve LaComb lives in Sylvan Beach and fishes the lake every chance that he gets. Steve has had a good year thus far and the keys to his success have been the changes he's made to his fishing habits over the past eighteen months. What are Steve's secrets? Number one has been "area of concentration." Steve finds most walleyes in eight to twelve feet of water, often adjacent to weed beds. *Very* early in the morning and *very* late in the evening have been the most productive hours and Steve concentrates his efforts accordingly. Dark floating jig heads tipped with worms have worked best, but Steve has found success using sonars, worked slowly along the bottom. If you fish similar areas with these techniques expect to spend a lot of time cleaning weeds off your hooks, but your reward may be a heavier stringer of walleyes.

Bob Moore lives along the lake between Bridgeport and Lakeport and generally fishes close to home. Bob has had a good walleye year and, like Steve, attributes this to changing his fishing habits. Bob and

his angling partner, John Bannon, have taken most of their fish in twelve to eighteen feet of water, using sand pike jigs, sometimes tipped with a worm. Nothing new here - but Bob and John now use lighter line, smaller lures, and fish earlier in the morning. In general, their approach to walleye success was to "go subtly," a nice adaptation to lake's greater water clarity.

Oneida Lake is in a state of flux and will probably continue to change. Those fishermen who are willing to adjust - to try new areas, lures, times, or presentations - will have the best chance to experience angling success.

On the Other Side of the Coin

A funny thing happened as I thought about writing this article. I walked by a counter in my store and two gentlemen stopped me, stating that they needed to return a rental boat. I asked how their fishing was and the response was "music to my ears." "Great" was the word used by Vince Eckel, from Rome who, accompanied by son Dennis, landed seven bass in the fourteen to sixteen inch category, lost a few at boatside, and also caught a number of sheephead. Their one complaint was that they ran out of bait too soon. That same evening Larry Reames and his partners located a nice school of eleven to twelve inch perch in thirty feet of water, off Buoy 113, for the third consecutive day. Results like these remind us that, despite changes, Oneida Lake continues to be a

great resource.

Looking ahead - fall perch fishing approaches! Last year's superb perch angling would be a tough act to follow, but all indications are that this year will be better. The Cornell Field Station staff estimates that there are approximately one and one-half million adult yellow perch in Oneida and that this number is on the upswing. I have to agree - and - I feel so strongly about the upcoming good perch fishing that I offer the following guarantee - if I'm in error, stop by my store between November 1 and November 15 and receive a free bucktail jig.

You can find yellow perch in many locations on Oneida's eastern sector. Upper South Bay's outer most weeds (located roughly along a line drawn from Oneida Creek's mouth to Lewis Point) are an excellent place to start. Many weed beds exist along this axis - try the deeper weeds for better action. Also, large schools of perch roam the eastern shoreline, from Verona Beach to Sylvan Beach. During early October of 1995, for example, scores of limit catches came from the area off the Sylvan Beach public bath house and from near the "rock pile" at the end of the concrete pier. Check with my staff for updated information. And - good fishing to all of you! ■

Factors Affecting Oneida Lake Walleye Production

by Tony VanDeValk

Cornell Biological Field Station

(Editors' note - A decline in Oneida's walleye population often provokes irrational responses.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

Factors Affecting Walleye Production

Fishermen accuse New York State of selling adult pike or shipping our lake's pike fry to other states. Both indictments are completely false. In the following article, Cornell Biologist Tony VanDeValk sets the record straight regarding the true causes of the walleye population fluctuations.) *****

In the past, Oneida Lake's walleye production has been closely linked to yellow perch populations. During the 1960's and 1970's, walleyes fed mostly on perch and, sometimes, on their own young (cannibalism). When walleye numbers were high, their predation reduced the young yellow perch population by late summer. Low perch numbers intensified walleye cannibalism until early summer of the following year, when another hatch of perch eased the pressure. Cannibalism caused low walleye year-class recruitment, thus reducing the numbers of adult walleyes ("recruitment" refers to the numbers of young walleyes that survive and mature). This situation, with fewer larger fish, consequently lessened pressure on young walleyes and perch. Their populations could then increase, starting the cycle again. In summary, survival of young walleyes was determined by the interaction between adult walleyes and young perch in Oneida Lake.

In the late 1980's and early 1990's, large gizzard shad hatches wreaked havoc with the walleye - perch relationship. The presence of an alternative prey species decreased predation on young walleyes and the adult walleye population increased. When gizzard shad disappeared in the 1990's the lake was left with an artificially high walleye population. This caused in-

tense predation on young perch and walleyes. The few young perch that survived grew quickly, making them unavailable as prey for younger walleyes. As a result, the latter fish grew slowly, which subjected them to cannibalism for longer periods of time. Consequently, lower walleye year class recruitment occurred. Anglers harvested great walleye catches from 1992 through 1994, but the recovery of the walleye population has been slow. Other year classes simply have not provided adult fish to restore former numbers.

Two recent changes in Oneida Lake may lower future fish production. First, phosphorus (P) levels declined in the mid-1980's and have remained relatively low through 1995. Phosphorus is the nutrient that determines algae production, on which fish production ultimately depends. Total phosphorus and dissolved reactive phosphorus (what we call DRP, phosphorus immediately available for algae growth) have declined by 50% since 1985. This drop in our lake's fertility was brought about by improved water quality management in the surrounding watershed (i.e. - more sewage treatment facilities) and, possibly, by a depletion of the amount of phosphorus in the lake's sediment, accumulated during the high "loading" years of the 1960's and 1970's.

Secondly zebra mussels, first observed in Oneida in 1991, have exploded in numbers and are extremely abundant throughout the lake. Zebras graze on (consume) algae. Coupled with the phosphorus level decrease, zebra mussel feeding will further reduce Oneida Lake's algal biomass. Zooplankton, which dine on algae, will decline in numbers. This could lead to a decrease in young fish production (they

relish the zooplankton) and, therefore, a decreased adult walleye population.

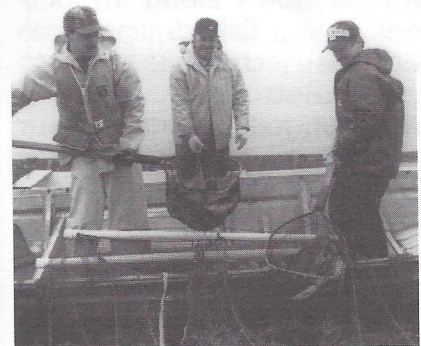
However, there are a large number of "unknowns" in our lake's case. For example, zebra mussels may decrease open water algae production but increase the numbers of bottom dwelling invertebrates (shrimp and midges). Since the mussels invaded Oneida, densities of these invertebrates have increased. Yellow perch, which consume these organisms, benefit. Walleyes, of course, utilize perch and their population may be less affected by decreased algae production that was originally thought.

The Cornell Field Station's on-going Oneida Lake research focuses on a better understanding of walleye dynamics and the environmental changes that are currently occurring. We can be assured that the walleye will continue to be the lake's premier sport fish, but a return to past production levels seems unlikely. ■

News From Your Oneida Fish Cultural Station

by Richard Colesante and Mark Babenzien

Ice disappeared from Oneida Lake during Easter Sunday night. We consider this to be a normal ice-out date.



Fish & Wildlife Technicians, Bill Schara and Ron Tawner join Fish Culturer I, Mike Dixon in "tending the nets"



Fish & Wildlife Technicians, Andy Damachowskie and Steve Zen Zen haul in one of the many healthy nets of walleyes caught during the week.

Walleyes, however, had been in Scriba Creek for about one week, signaling that the annual spawning "run" had begun. Hatchery crews set fourteen trap nets in the lake on Monday, April 8, and four additional nets on the day after. Nets were first tended on the latter date and 1300 walleyes were transported to our hatchery. The number of adult walleyes that were netted increased over the next eight days until a total of 31,200 fish were collected. We gathered 300 million eggs from these specimens. This year's netting, in which many large fish were caught, indicated a healthy

population of Oneida Lake walleyes. Walleye eggs hatched during the week of May 6. Approximately 130 million fry were stocked in Oneida Lake. Pontoon boats transported these fish to offshore release points. Around 50 million fry were stocked in other New York State waters.

This summer, the Oneida Fish Cultural Station has fingerling walleyes and lake sturgeon in its production tanks. The hatchery's other exhibits provide further educational and environmental enrichment. Stop by for a rewarding visit. ■

(Continued from Cover page)

Under Age 6 Category

Michael Strinberg
Aaron Sullivan
Anna Tedesco
Sam Tedesco
Christopher Terre
Ashley Torrey
Gregory Torrey
Joshua Wheeler
Cameron Wilson
Nina Williams
Jake Woodward
Bobby Worden
Erin Worden

Ages 6 & 7

Andrew Armani
Danielle Bowles
Derek Brown
Brian Craig
Nick Dematteo
Stephen Fisher
Ashley Graves

Megan Guilford
Michael Hameline
Michael Hameline
Kirsha Higby
Michael Jaje
Erica Juno
Charles LaDue
Melissa Lane
Jenny Lee
Nick Maliszewski
Erin O'Brien-Mazza
Jack Macauley
Craig Mullins
Patrick Murray
Zachary Palmieri
Robert Pattridge
Jill Piontowski
Jeffrey Pratt
Timothy Prichard
Coner Randall
Ben Riordan
Harvey Simmons IV
Chad Smith
Chase Stoffle

Samantha Tacnacki
Travis Tomaselli
Kate Winters
Earl Woodridge
Kyle Worden

Ages 8 & 9

John Ariola
Brian Babenzien
Heather Blanton
Jeremy Bogan
Danielle Brown
Daniel Curtis
John Darby
David Desens
Jessica Edick
Peter Euston
Mikey Gammariello
Jeffrey Grozzanti
Stephanie Guilford
Richard Hackford
Christine Harrison
Amanda Herbert
Nikolaus Kowalski

Katie Lansing
Tom Larrabee
Jessie Lee
Ross Leone
Danny McCauley
Melissa Miner
Jenna Peterson
Zachary Pienkowski
Chris Pienkowski
Michael Prichard
Jodie Ray
Brian Rolfe
Mike Schulthies
Kevin Slomba
Shawn Smith
Steve Smith
Tom Smith
Wesley Tomaselli
Alex VanBeveren
Chris Vona
Brian Winters

Ages 10 & 11

Heather Ackerman
Patrick Baldwin
Christopher Calandra
Andy Carolla
Steve Cimilluca
Joshua Davis
Tom Dziedzic
John dematteo
Sarah Donohue
Bryan Durst
Shannon Edick
Josh Fuller
Bryan Coleman
Quentin Grass
Rebecca Hadlich
Joshua Harrison
Jonathon Harrison
Wilbur Hill
Tom Juno
Joey Justo
Danielle Lansing
Eric Maliszewski
Brent Leone
Jason Mislevy
Thomas Mosley
Joey Muffin
Stephen Mullins
Jeff Pack
Stephen Peterson
Rebecca Roach
Brad Rollson
Anthony Rosetti
Jake Rudisill
Tammy Sands
Jeffrey Shelter
Angela Smith
Stephanie Smith
Tim Smith
Brandon Snyder
Alicia Stange
Zach Stark
Ryan Stoffle
Danny Therre
Joseph Vona
Cody Wakeman

Ages 12 to 16

Jeremy Ackerman
Joe Baker
Kelly Baker
Quintea Barr
Rebecca Bottomky
Donald Claffin
Tim Curolla
Nate Damanski
Brian Davis
Floyd Dodson III
Matt Eddy
Holly Grass
Mark Grass
Kim Guilford
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Jill Halstrom
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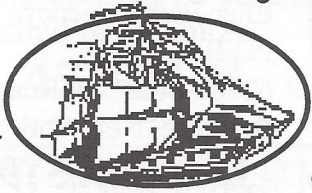
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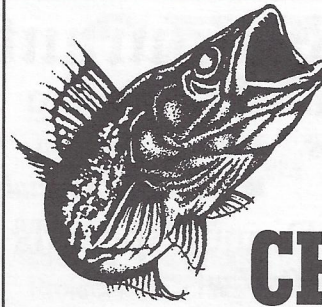
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