

The Oneida Lake Bulletin

Fall 2022

www.oneidalakeassociation.org

Oneida Lake Imperiled: Two Contrasting Examples

By Jack Henke

Last spring's spearing incident at Scriba Creek alerted Central New York sportspersons to the vulnerability of Oneida Lake's resources. Similar threats to our lake's environmental integrity have occurred throughout history.

This article examines two contrasting cases from Oneida Lake's past that involved serious threats: 1) The fish pirates' depredations of the 19th and 20th centuries. 2) The double-crested cormorant crisis in the 1990s and early 2000s. As you read, think about the factors that contributed to each threat. Also, consider what made the attempts to counteract these perils successful or ineffective. History is an invaluable teacher when we internalize its lessons.

Fighting the Fish Pirates

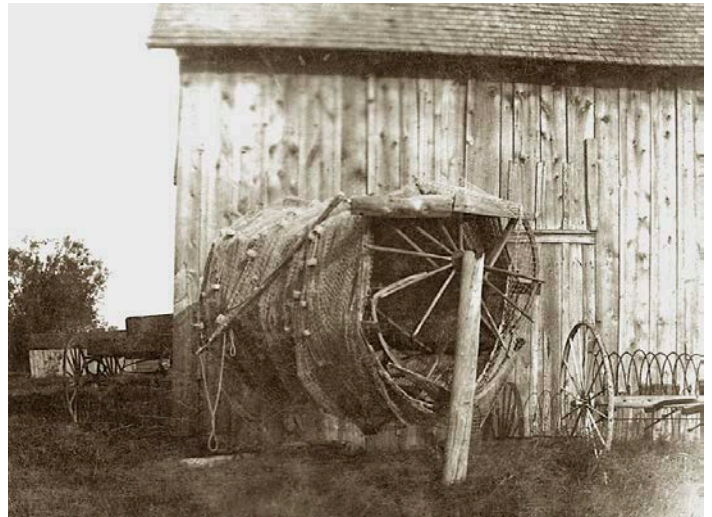
Oneida's bounty was harvested at every opportunity, using any means available, by the ever-increasing population of lake area residents in the 1800s. Netting fish was a common practice that provided sustenance and additional income. Laws that prohibited the use of nets were passed as early as 1875 and toughened by a state-wide ban in 1897, publicized throughout New York. Newspapers coined the term, "Oneida Lake fish pirates," to refer to netters who defied the regulations.

Enforcement could be challenging, even dangerous. A vicious backlash often greeted game protectors (ECOs) and anyone who supported anti-netting laws. In 1878, after Osbert Messinger, proprietor of the Messinger House on the bay that bears his family's name, allowed game protectors to use his boats for a net search,

pirates torched his fleet. George Crownhart, who owned a hotel on Lower South Bay, openly condemned netting and also served as a deputy constable. His reward? Pirates burned his hotel in 1885. Undaunted, George rebuilt and never flinched in his opposition to illegal fishing. On occasion, arrests involved assaults and gunfire. In

1882, Game Protector William Lindley was overpowered and nearly drowned by pirates at Toad Harbor. He was saved only when his son fired warning shots over his assailants. Like Crownhart, Lindley persisted and, until he resigned his protector's job to establish a boat-building factory in Canastota, confiscated scores of nets.

Effective law enforcement was hampered by entrenched societal values. Fish pirates lived in lakeside communities. They were farmers, tradesmen, and friends to neighbors who accepted their practice and benefited from their generosity. Millard Rogers, who with his brother, Chuck, founded the Brewerton Bait Shop in 1947, recalled: "In the early 1900s, the mortgages of all the churches and half of the homes in Brewerton were paid with pirate profits." In 1885, Game Protector Lindley told a reporter that he had little confidence in local game constables and



Fish pirate nets, drying near Brewerton, around 1910.

that town justices couldn't be trusted to render a guilty verdict against their neighbors. One judge, a former fisherman, stated, "I have no sympathy for people who enforce the state's fish and game laws."

As a more prosperous American society emerged in the latter 19th century, recreational fishing's popularity increased. Concern for conservation gained traction in urban areas. Local sportsmen's groups arose, in part because Oneida Lake's fish piracy received newspaper coverage. Opposition to illegal netting, which many blamed for poor fishing years, contributed to the organization of the Anglers' Association of Onondaga, in Syracuse, 1890.

The Anglers' Association sponsored anti-netting campaigns, funded game protectors' salaries, and purchased a motor launch in 1894 to enhance enforcement. Some Association members helped

(Continued on page 3)

President's Message

Here's a fun fact: Since its inception in 1945, the Oneida Lake Association has spent those years acquiring its own **fleet of ships!** This fleet has proven to be very valuable in the many successes that the OLA has enjoyed. In fact, this issue is dedicated to our many ships.

First and foremost, the OLA remains committed to **Stewardship**. After all, stewardship is embedded in our By-laws, first laid out 77 years ago. Article II, Section 3 states that the purpose of the organization is "to advocate and work for the improvement of conditions affecting Oneida Lake, including conditions affecting or pertaining to fishing, hunting, boating, and camping on the shores, islands, waters, and tributary waters." Over nearly eight decades, the Board of Directors have never swerved from this commitment to stewardship. We have fought for proper management of the fishery and successful blockage of the unlawful sale of walleyes. Cormorant predation has also reminded squarely in our crosshairs. And the recent poaching incident in Scriba Creek sparked an immediate call to action. Even our many road signs that dot the shoreline reflect the commitment of all of our members: "It's Your Lake. Keep it Clean!" In fact, the OLA Board hosts a roadside cleanup event each year. And our Directors also put together at least two water chestnut pulls, helping to rid our lake of this invasive species.

Another ship in our fleet is **Sportsmanship**. I'm so proud of our many members who display a profound sense of sportsmanship while enjoying the lake's treasures. For example, I read dozens and dozens of brief anecdotes where anglers have offered fishing tips, spare equipment, assistance launching a boat, and hearty congratulations when someone else catches the big one! As I'm out on the water, not a summer goes by that I can't count at least ten incidents of one boat towing another. And, of course, I've done my share of towing, as well. During the large Hobie Cat regatta each May, we witness many considerate boaters who slow down and skirt around the sailors, allowing them

to race unhindered. Finally, it feels great to read about the many folks who post pictures of the trash that they voluntarily clean up. It is stunning that there are still people who leave behind such a mess after they spend time on the lake.

Most recently we added another ship to our fleet: **Scholarship**. A generous grant from the Fenech Foundation and Meyer's RV of Syracuse allowed us to pursue a long-held goal—to provide scholarships to the next generation of students who will some day take on the care and protection of our lake and other bodies of water. We awarded \$500 each to a high school winner and a current college student studying at Cornell University. We look forward to assisting another pair of students next year.

The OLA Fleet is rounded out by **Relationships**. Much of the great work we have done can be attribute to the lasting, powerful relationships that we have developed over the decades. Our list of friendly relations is truly quite amazing. For example, we have a strong relationship with the Oneida Lake Fish Hatchery. We support the great work that they do, keeping our fishery healthy and robust. We invite the Hatchery Director to speak at each of our Annual Membership Meetings. We also have a long-standing relationship with the Cornell University researchers at Shackleton Point. This relationship ensures that every stance we take has a science-based foundation, and we thank the researchers for their significant insights.

We all know very well how the economic engine of the lakeside businesses is fueled by our many OLA members, and thousands more, as well. We support the diverse array of businesses that surround the lake, from bait shops, to marinas, to boat dealers, restaurants, hardware stores, grocery shops, and many, many more. In turn, you have probably seen that many of these enterprises have posted a flyer that says that they support the OLA. In fact, in every recent issue of this Bulletin, we feature one of the many businesses that pitch in to fill our lakeside needs.

We also want to take a moment to reflect on one more relationship, that is, our thanks and commitment to the DEC Environmental Officers. Visit Page 4 to read more about them. We also have a terrific relationship with the Fisheries Division of the DEC.

Finally, we truly appreciate the supporting relationship we have with our many members over the last 77 years. As always, you can write to us at president@oneidalakeassociation.org and let us know your thoughts and concerns.

John Harmon

John Harmon, President OLA
www.OneidaLakeAssociation.org
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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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Imperiled

(Continued from page 1)

wardens hunt for nets. The Anglers built a distinctive clubhouse on Norcross Point at Lower South Bay and allowed protectors to use their boats. They paid the salary of Onondaga County Deputy Sheriff Harrison Hawn, who was hired to pursue the pirates in 1891. Occasional instances of successful enforcement created newspaper headlines. In June 1917, for example, the Association boasted that game protectors seized fifty-eight nets in a night's work.

Despite this organization's labors, which resulted in scattered victories in the field and the courts, fish piracy endured through the 1930s. Nets could easily be replaced and local public opinion was a powerful opponent. The bottom line, however, was that piracy brought profits and the Anglers' Association's anti-netting efforts never adequately addressed that basic economic reality.

As the 20th century passed, fish piracy slowly faded from the Oneida Lake scene. Several factors contributed to this welcome change, one of which was the Oneida Lake Association's genesis in 1945. The OLA took a huge step to eradicate commercial angling when, in 1960, its directors and members successfully lobbied state legislators and Governor Nelson Rockefeller to ban the sale of Oneida Lake walleyes. After the governor signed the law, OLA President Millard Rogers stated, "The dollar sign has finally been removed from a valuable natural

resource." Had campaigns that targeted economics occurred decades earlier, the history of Oneida Lake fish piracy might have been considerably shorter.

The Cormorant Crisis

Displaced from breeding areas along the East Coast, double-crested cormorants began to migrate inland in the 1980s. One nesting pair was observed on Oneida Lake in 1984, forty pairs in 1989, and 269 by 1997. This local population swelled to more than 2,500 birds after migratory cormorants from Canada arrived in autumn.

From the mid-1990s to the early 2000s, cormorants decimated Oneida Lake's walleye and yellow perch populations. Cornell biologists began to examine the birds' effects on Oneida's fishery in the early 1990s. Their studies revealed that only one-third of the walleyes born in a particular year survived to adulthood; cormorants consumed the remainder. Statistics released by the Field Station demonstrated the crisis's magnitude. From spring 1996 until spring 1997, cormorants eliminated about 100,000 walleyes and 1,100,000 perch. In 2001 the birds consumed around 355,000 walleyes and 2,000,000 perch in a similar time frame.

Although cormorants targeted primarily immature fish, their predation produced drastic effects. Oneida's adult walleye population plummeted to around 200,000. In response, the DEC raised the size limit for keeper fish from 15" to 18." The lake area's economy suffered. Anglers fished elsewhere, marinas lost customers, bait/tackle shops lost revenues, and businesses that catered to fishers, such as restaurants and motels, felt



Double-crested cormorants on Wantry Island, 1998.

the income pinch. In 2015, Dr. Stephanie Shwiff, of the National Wildlife Research Center, USDA-APHIS, published a paper that analyzed the economic damage caused by cormorants in the immediate Oneida Lake region. Dr. Shwiff estimated that the loss of spending from out-of-state anglers alone cost lakeside communities millions of dollars.

Buoyed by strong support from local businesses and Central New York sportspeople, the OLA responded vigorously to the cormorant threat after Cornell released statistics in 1999 that clearly showed the birds' effects on the lake's fishery. The *OLA Bulletin* printed articles about the crisis in every issue. Armed with Cornell data, Association representatives spoke at a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services' public fact-finding meeting in 2000. After Wildlife Services' officials recommended that states be allowed to manage cormorant populations through "depredation permits," the OLA ignited an effective lobbying campaign that pressured the DEC for stricter controls. In early 2003, Association members flooded state legislators' offices with thousands

(Continued on page 4)

To submit questions or comments about *The Bulletin*, contact editor John Harmon at jpharmon1@gmail.com



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Imperiled

(Continued from page 3)

of emails and letters. This worked. The region's elected representatives persuaded the DEC to limit Oneida's cormorant population to 100 birds. In subsequent years, the lake's walleye and perch populations began to rebound.

Although aggressive cormorant management is absent today, over 1,000,000 adult walleyes and a renewed yellow perch population now thrive in Oneida Lake's waters. Cormorant controls contributed to this resurgence. Confronted with an environmental crisis, the OLA developed a plan of action, executed the plan, and saved a fishery.

While the Field Station's 2001 statistics seem a distant memory, we must ask, "Could history repeat?" Will other threats imperil our lake's fishery? If so, recalling the OLA's effective, coordinated response to the cormorant crisis would be a wise course of action.



The fearless William Lindley, of Canastota, was one of the most effective game wardens (ECOs) in Oneida Lake's history.

A Salute to Our ECOs

By John Harmon

We all know and respect the many laws and regulations that have been put in place in order to keep our Oneida Lake fishery thriving and robust. Our world class fishery attracts numerous bass tournaments, countless recreational perch anglers, and many eager fishermen who target the one million adult walleyes who populate our lake. And there isn't a day on the calendar that you can't go out and target one or more fish species. Rain or shine, warm spray or eight inches of ice, dead calm or a challenging roll, someone is fishing the lake.

This rich resource came about through careful research and science-based decision making that developed the angling laws and regulations that determine seasons, bag limits, and allowed methods of take. And once the science arm of the DEC has developed the regulations, it is up to the men and women of the Environmental Conservation Officers (the ECOs) to enforce these rules. Fortunately, the vast majority of anglers demonstrate their commitment to our resources by following the rules without any law enforcement intervention. As always, however, there will be a few unscrupulous people who flout the law, thereby jeopardizing the abundant fish populations that we all value. And, yes, even among the law-abiding fishermen and women, there are those who grumble about the ECOs on social media, in the same way that drivers grouse about state troopers with radar guns. The OLA Board of Directors, however, honors and thanks these dedicated officers whose job it is to protect our fishery. None of us wants to go back to the days of fish piracy, commercial netting, or spearing fish as they spawn.

The history of the ECOs takes us back to 1880, when Governor Cornell appointed eight hardy men to the role of Fish & Game Protectors. In fact, these Protectors are the oldest statewide law enforcement

agency in New York State. They pre-date the NYS Troopers by 37 years! At \$500 a year, it was their job to work day and night to enforce the then current laws governing hunting, trapping, and fishing. In the 1960s, as the country became more concerned about environmental pollution, the Protectors expanded their role to become Conservation Officers.

What is the current mission of the ECOs? According to Matthew Krug, Director for Environmental Conservation Officers and Investigators for the PBA of NYS, "First and foremost, we are police officers, with a specialty in the environmental conservation law. We enforce all other laws including vehicle and traffic as well. We are here to protect the people, wildlife and environment first and foremost."

Like most other law enforcement agencies, ECO recruits must undergo a rigorous training program. Krug explains, "We currently have a 29-week academy where we become certified as police officers throughout New York State. We also receive significant additional training in wilderness first aid, search and rescue, tracking, swift water rescue, as well as boat and ATV operation. This is a strenuous training academy to prepare us to work alone, where we are often thirty or more minutes from back-up. Experience with hunting and fishing helps significantly, but more importantly we must remain motivated to help and to communicate with people."

The job, of course, is not without challenges. ECOs work throughout the night, in rough terrain, wintery conditions, and plenty of watery environments. Perhaps the greatest challenge is the obstinance of those breaking the law. For example, Krug stated that he broke and dislocated his shoulder attempting to stop a fleeing trespasser on a dirt bike. According to Krug, "Yes, he was stopped!" He also

(Continued on page 5)

added, “I have handled rattle snakes and alligators, and even had my lunch interrupted by a rabid coyote.”

Serving as an ECO, however, also comes with rewards. Krug explains, “Most days of work are interesting, minus the ever-increasing amount of paperwork generated internally and by criminal “justice reform” measures. However, the sheer variety of the work lets the day go by quickly. I can be investigating a dumped garbage complaint, backing up the state police at a domestic call, and then going on a boat to remove a rattlesnake from a campsite. I have worked across the state from fifty miles off-shore in the Atlantic to the streets of Brooklyn, and all the way up the High Peaks.”

New York State is divided into nine regions, each patrolled by a dedicated unit. Here in Central New York, the ECOs of Regions 6 and 7 are assigned to our lake. In fact, we congratulate Captain James Boylan for his years of leadership heading up Region 7. His promotion takes him to Albany. The OLA welcomes Captain William Powell, the newly appointed supervisor of the Region 7 unit. Captain Powell began his career in March of 2000, spending his first two years as an ECO in Region 3 (Westchester County) before transferring to Region 8, where he has spent most of his career up to this point. He has served as Region 8 Captain for the last five years. With the promotion of Captain Boylan to Assistant Director, he was asked to temporarily oversee Region 7 until a replacement can be named.

Captain Powell states that “I am a proud veteran and former US Army Sergeant. My family’s service to our country spans four generations, with both of my sons currently serving in the US Navy and deployed overseas on their respective ships. I am also a second-generation Conservation Officer. My father became an ECO in 1966 and retired as the Region 8 Captain in 2001. Between us,

the Powell family has been protecting NY’s natural resources for over 56 years.”

Captain Powell echoes Krug’s remarks about the many challenges of an ECO. “The diversity of the job alone can be overwhelming: hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, burning, solid waste, hazardous waste, mining, air quality, water quality, wetland enforcement, returnable containers, and more. Not only are ECOs expected to respond to and handle any number of these Conservation related issues, as Police Officers in NYS they often find themselves assisting local police agencies at domestic violence scenes, active shooter responses, burglaries, robberies, and many other more traditional law enforcement incidents. Our ECOs are well trained and capable of handling almost anything that comes their way. They are comfortable patrolling from a truck, boat, snowmobile, UTV, ATV, bicycle, and even on foot across any type of terrain. In my opinion, this is what sets them apart from all other law enforcement members. Despite these challenges, our members push forward with the Department’s mission of protecting New York State’s natural resources and do so in a safe and professional manner.”

When asked about the offsetting rewards of serving as an ECO Powell states: “**Enforcement.** Whether it is ensuring that your air and water is safe from pollution, protecting our fish and wildlife for future generations, stopping unlawful encroachment on protected wetlands, or shutting down illegal solid waste operation – the enforcement aspect of our job makes a difference to a lot of different people on any given day. And **Outreach.** ECOs are the definition of Community Police Officers. Not only do they handle enforcement issues in their communities, but they conduct and participate in a lot of different outreach activities as well. ECOs put on youth hunts across the state, oversee fishing clinic, speak at all Hunter



An ECO helps train the next generation of hunters.

Safety Courses, attend school functions and local fairs, and much more. These are probably some of the most fun and rewarding days on the job.”

Clearly, the OLA looks forward to working with Captain Powell during his tour of duty here in Region 7!

Officer Krug also summarized his job by saying “I represent approximately 215 officers and investigators, statewide. As the union representative, the biggest complaint the officers have is not being allowed to do their job. Sometimes that has to do with inadequate staffing, as we are at our lowest field officers in decades, to new laws being put on the books that stretch our ranks even thinner. Or Albany stopping us from enforcing poaching regulations due to sensitive political views. We need more officers statewide, as our ranks have not kept up with the additional job duties. In 2020 I wrote a letter to Commissioner Seggos, requesting an additional 160 officers, but so far only 19 have been hired, and many more have retired since that letter was written.” We thank Officer Krug and Captain Powell for their tireless service, as well as all of the men and women who serve as ECOs.

If you are interested in applying for a position as an ECO, visit www.dec.ny.gov/about/746.html

How Spiny Water Flea is Changing the Oneida Lake Food Web

By Peter Jordan & Lyda Buck

The Spiny water flea is an invasive zooplankton that was introduced to Oneida Lake in 2019. These small creatures have a long, barbed spine reaching up to a quarter inch in length, and they eat other native zooplankton in the lake. Cornell University Undergraduate Research Intern Peter Jordan has spent the last two summers at The Cornell Biological Field Station at Shackelton Point (CBFS) researching the Spiny Water Flea. This past summer, Peter was joined by Lyda Buck, another Cornell University Undergraduate Research Intern helping to figure out how much of an impact these tiny animals are having on the lake.

In Oneida Lake, the Spiny Water Flea sits in the middle of the food web. This means it is important to understand what effect they have on the zooplankton they

eat, and the fish that eat them. At CBFS, Lyda Buck has been looking at how other native zooplankton populations change in relation to the Spiny Water Flea population. Meanwhile, Peter Jordan has been looking at the diets of fish, mainly Yellow Perch, to see if they are eating Spiny Water Flea.

To understand the impact Spiny Water Flea is having on the zooplankton in Oneida Lake, zooplankton populations from before 2019 were compared to zooplankton populations after 2019 when Spiny Water Flea entered the lake. The analysis showed zooplankton species like daphnia, bosmina, and copepods significantly declined when the Spiny Water Flea population was high. Researchers are

concerned that with less of these smaller zooplankton to feed on algae, there could be more algal blooms and lower water clarity.

Previous studies done in Minnesota lakes have shown that the Spiny Water Flea can also be harmful to fish, in particular Yellow Perch, which are the primary consumers of zooplankton in Oneida Lake. Studies showed that the Yellow Perch avoided eating Spiny Water Flea if possible. Growth of Age 0 Yellow Perch (Perch in their first year of growth) decreased after Spiny Water Flea was introduced. Additionally, the long, barbed spine on a Spiny Water Flea could poke through the wall of the stomach in small fish and cause internal damage.



3rd Instar Spiny Water Flea. The 3 sets of barbs on the spine and an egg brood pouch on the back indicate a fully grown adult. Image credit: Spiny Water Flea, J. Liebig, NOAA GLERL, 2001

Research was also done to test if these results held true in Oneida Lake. Contrary to previous research, in Oneida Lake, Age 0 Yellow Perch chose to eat Spiny Water Flea over other types of zooplankton. Additionally, Yellow Perch were bigger on average at the end of their first year of growth after the introduction of Spiny Water Flea. Around 250 Age 0 Yellow Perch were dissected for this project, and not a single stomach wall showed signs of damage from Spiny Water Flea spines. In most cases, the spines were broken down into smaller segments and mixed in with the rest of the stomach contents.

So, the Spiny Water Flea appears to be good for fish growth and bad for native zooplankton. What does this mean for the lake? In short, it's probably too soon to tell, but it is important to understand Spiny Water Flea is having a noticeable effect, and it could lead to long term impacts on the fish and zooplankton communities in the lake. Plenty of other fish species in Oneida Lake eat zooplankton during their first year of growth, and if the Spiny Water Flea is impacting their food source, it may negatively affect fish growth. On the contrary, we may see bigger Yellow Perch in the lake if the increasing growth rate holds as the fish get older. Yellow perch as large as 13 inches have been found with Spiny Water flea in their stomachs, and an estimated 35% of all adult Yellow Perch incorporated Spiny Water flea into their diets in 2021.



Lyda Buck onboard the CBFS Limnology Boat reading a Secchi Disk used to measure water clarity in Oneida Lake.

(Continued on page 7)

Spiny Flea

(Continued from page 6)

This research has highlighted the importance of understanding how invasive species change the environments they enter. Almost every invasive species to enter Oneida Lake, from Zebra and Quagga Mussels to Round Goby, have noticeably changed the lake. Just because the Spiny Water Flea is tiny and difficult to see doesn't mean we should discount their potential to change Oneida Lake as well.

This research has also raised some further questions: Will the Spiny Water Flea population continue to grow? Will other fish alter their diets to eat more

of this new food source? Will we see an increase in harmful algae blooms or a reduction in water clarity? And will we see a net increase or decrease in fish growth? Although all these questions are complex and multifaceted, the more of them we attempt to answer, the better we will understand the Oneida Lake food web and ecosystem. Understanding these complex systems is key in making good management decisions, giving us a much better chance at properly managing Oneida Lake to maintain a healthy, productive fishery for everyone to enjoy.



Peter Jordan closing off the end of the bottom trawling net used to sample Age-0 fish in Oneida Lake.



Don't Get Hooked

By John Harmon

Even the most inexperienced angler knows the basic concept: You choose some bait, dangle it in front of a fish, and hope the hook does its work. The fish, of course, have a different point of view. Their job is to remain wary, and not get suckered into taking the bait. And for the most part, they do a very good job of this! And when it comes to *phishing*, so should you.

Over the past few months, I have received several emails from alarmed OLA members who send me a link to a disturbing article that they have read on Facebook or Instagram. Most of these articles contain the headline "10 Most Polluted Lakes in the US," and sure enough Oneida Lake is on that list. "Articles" such as these are also known as "click bait." And since you see the word "bait" in there, you should take a lesson from our finny friends. Don't bite!

Here's how it works. Someone writes an "article" with little or no basis in fact and then attaches a highly provocative, eye-catching headline. (You remember *The National Enquirer*, right?). Their goal is to get you to click on the article. Why? Because they get paid for every click. Again, why? Because you will notice that you can't get more than a paragraph into the article without encountering an advertisement. So the more time you spend on an article, the more they can monetize your attention. And if you should click on an ad, either by choice or by accident... jackpot! It might be only a few pennies per click, but with thousands of fish in the

(Continued on page 9)

The Oneida Lake Business Profile

TowBoatU.S. Oneida Lake

By OLA Director Matt Snyder

The Oneida Lake Business Profile is a regular feature in the Oneida Lake Bulletin to showcase businesses that serve Oneida Lake Association members. For this issue, OLA Director Matt Snyder interviewed Karla and Grant Langheinrich, the proprietors of Oneida Marine Group, Inc.

Note to Readers:

If you are an OLA member interested in signing up, call the Langheinrichs at 315-744-2229 and mention that you saw this article in the Oneida Lake Bulletin to receive a \$25 discount on an annual membership. If you are interested in becoming a Captain, call the same number for information on the process and employment opportunities.

What does your business do, and whom do you serve?

TowBoatU.S. Oneida Lake provides services on demand to boaters. A \$99 annual Unlimited Freshwater Towing Membership entitles the member to professional on-water towing services as well as fuel drops, battery jumps, and soft-ungroundings on freshwater lakes and rivers. It covers the member on any boat that they or their immediate family own, borrow, or charter, and it covers the member on any water that has a TowBoatU.S. presence. It does not cover salvage or repair, which are more appropriately covered by insurance. More than 800,000 people in the U.S. have memberships.

On Oneida Lake from May 1-October 1, the operation typically has five to seven captains in rotation. The rest of the open water navigation season, TowBoatU.S. keeps at least one boat available to Oneida Lake from ice-out to ice-in, with calls answered subject to captain availability. All employees are United States Coast Guard-Licensed Captains subject to USCG licensing and testing requirements. If anyone has interest in becoming a Captain, contact us for further information on the process and employment opportunities.

We are based out of the east end of Oneida Lake and provide coverage on Oneida Lake, the Oswego Canal/River, along with a significant portion of the



TowBoatU.S.

Erie Canal east and west of Oneida Lake. Our primary Oneida Lake towboat is a 23' Pacific Skiff, and our second boat is a 23' Sea Ark. We also operate TowBoatU.S. operations in Rochester, NY and Clayton, NY.

Oneida Marine Group, Inc. also has the capability to provide underwater salvage, hazmat cleanup on the water, and divers to safely conduct underwater tasks.

TowBoatU.S. operates under the umbrella of Boat Owners Association of the United States (BoatU.S.) the nation's largest boating advocacy, services, and safety group and a strong partner to OLA on navigation issues affecting Oneida Lake boaters.

Oneida Marine Group, Inc. d/b/a TowBoatU.S. Oneida Lake

Address: Snug Harbour Marina
1515 Willow Ave. E.,
Verona Beach, NY 13162

Phone: 315-744-2229

Email: oneidamarinegroup@gmail.com

Online: oneidamarinegroup.com OR visit
boat.us.com and search
"Towing on Oneida Lake"

Opened: 2012

Employees: 15

Founders/Proprietors: Karla and
Grant Langheinrich

What is your main connection to Oneida Lake?

Grant's family had a camp on Fish Creek, so he enjoyed a childhood rich with fishing and boating on the lake. Prior to getting involved with TowBoatU.S. operations here, Grant spent several years working on the lake in a public safety capacity. Grant reports that local marine patrols all appreciated the arrival of TowBoatU.S. when it initially arrived on the lake in 2012, because it reduced the demand for law enforcement officers to perform routine, non-emergency towing services and to focus on more critical law enforcement and safe boating issues.

The Langheinrichs first joined the

(Continued on page 9)

Business Profile

(Continued from page 8)

Oneida Lake Association in 2010 and have been regular supporters and sponsors of OLA activities. They interact with OLA members at the Association's annual membership meeting and have been a participant in the Sylvan Beach Boat Show, the Central New York Boat Show, and several other local outdoor shows and boat shows.

Tell us about the history of your business.

TowBoatU.S. services first reached Oneida Lake in 2012, launched by Capt. Tom Tyo. Capt. Tyo employed and mentored Grant over the first five years of the business, then Tyo sold it in 2017 to Seaway Marine Group where Capt. Grant also worked on a part-time basis. The Langheinrichs bought the business from Seaway in 2019, and still regularly partner with Seaway on certain projects.

Are you seeing any changes, trends, or issues on Oneida Lake?

Traditionally, Oneida Lake was one of the group's least busy ports, but this year it has been the busiest port. Overall, in 2022, business has slowed down from 2020 and 2021, because of the price of fuel. However, since 2019 Oneida Lake saw a huge uptick in boats on the water, new boaters, and calls for tows.

More broadly, over the past 20 years, there has been a huge shift toward pontoon boats, with many newer boaters looking for ease and convenience. Unfortunately, along with the influx of new boaters, we have seen an increase in the number of incidents where operators don't respect the risks of Oneida Lake with its highly variable water depths, weather, and other factors such as sea state.

OLA extends its thanks to Oneida Marine Group, Inc. for participating in the Oneida Lake Business Profile.

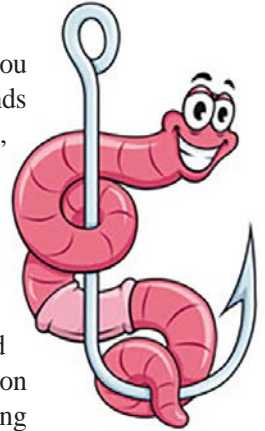
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Don't Get Hooked

(Continued from page 7)

sea, it adds up to spendable money for these "authors."

So, how can you tell if it's click bait? First, like anything you read, take a look at the author. Every single time someone sends me this same story, it's by different "author!" Same content, different author. Of course, they are not the author at all. They are merely copying a story and putting their name on it. I research the author of every one of these articles that is sent to me. They range from influencer wannabes to college kids just trying to get some pocket change. For example, one "author" describes himself as a "professional writer and editor for books, blogs, and websites, with a particular focus on animals and finance. When I'm not working, I enjoy playing video games with friends." By "working," I suppose he means posting items on social media, looking for clicks. Another "author" (of the same article) gushes that "I am living a dream, being a multi-media personality and DJ!" We all know that a great DJ is key to a successful wedding reception, but let's not rely on them for our environmental reports. Instead, take a look at the writings from the researchers at the Cornell Field Station on Oneida Lake. They publish a variety of articles, including a brief report in this Bulletin! And you won't see any ads for dog food or energy bars. That's another clue: Look for an abundance of ads interrupting your reading. That's another sign of click bait.



And while you're researching the author, try to find some actual references or citations in these articles. Can you fact-check any of the information they are presenting? Or as the fish say, "Is this a real worm?"

Finally let's take a look at the article itself. There are a few variations of the article out there, but when you get to Oneida Lake section, it often begins with a few geographic features of the lake (which can easily be found with a simple Google search). It then reports some concerning information taken 25 years ago regarding algal blooms and agricultural run-off. If you read to the end of the report, it states that DEC has "delisted Oneida Lake" because of the implementation of "best management practices," so the article itself admits that it's not actually on any polluted list at all!

In conclusion, don't let the DJs put you on their *playlist*!

Instead, let's get outside and spend some time fishing, kayaking, sailing, or taking photos of those magnificent sunsets!





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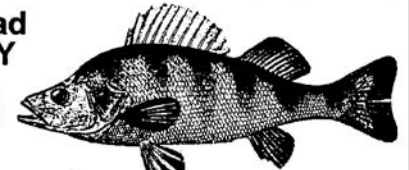
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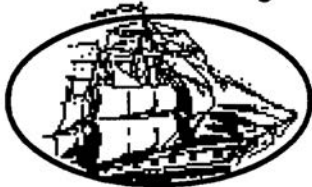
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