

Georgian Bay fish population in flux

Species introduced into the Bay over the years have upset the balance of indigenous species says Arunas Liskauskas

by Sue Russell

Members of the Land Trust who came to hear Arunas Liskauskas were rewarded with an excellent power point presentation of the history of the fish population in the Georgian Bay. Although most of us knew about the decimation of the Lake Trout by the Lamprey Eels we didn't know why other native species were disappearing. Nor did we know that many introduced species were having such an effect on the fish communities.

Even for those of us who are not ardent fisherfolk the changing population of the fish in the Bay is quite astonishing. Arunas gave an overview of the near shore and off shore fish communities. He explained that some of the offshore critical habitats had not changed over the past century but over all there has been extensive changes as many sites are not what they used to be.

For example, Lake Trout, which were historically the major predator fish in the deep water, were almost wiped out in the 1950s except around Parry Sound where they have maintained a near historical population. However their numbers are increasing throughout the Bay through stocking. As well, the Walleye and the Burbot in the medium depth waters were endangered. Not only was the Lamprey Eel a contributing factor in wiping out the indigenous stock, but over-fishing and the introduction of foreign species of fish also contributed.

Today the major predator is the Chinook Salmon which was introduced specifically to control the non-native forage fish which came into the lakes mainly in the hulls of overseas ships. Alewife and Smelt and other foreign forage fish became over abundant as the Lake Trout disappeared. It is important to maintain the numbers of predators or else the forage fish, such as alewife, will overtake.

The historical near-shore, or shallower water population, such as pike, sturgeon, walleye, bass and



Nancy Christie thanks Arunas Liskauskas for the very informative power point presentation on the fish communities in the Bay.

muskie, have diminished as well. Now the introduction of the zebra and quagga mussels has put pressure on the supply of plankton, which the mussels and the forage fish both rely on. As the food supply diminishes the fish population will also diminish.

At present historic indigenous fish such as the Lake Trout, Rainbow and Brown Trout, Whitefish, Walleye, and Burbot are increasing while the forage fish are in abundance. However, as the predators are becoming over abundant the whole fish community is "on the edge". With near-shore waters becoming warmer and shallower, biodiversity of historic predator fish and forage fish is increasing. Arunas could not comment on how this biodiversity would average itself out.

Arunas Liskauskas is a Management Biologist with the Upper Great Lakes Management Unit, Lake Huron Office of the Ministry of Natural Resources. He is a

Mission Statement of the Eastern
Georgian Bay North Channel Fisheries
Stewardship Council:

To provide guidance for the
protection, enhancement and
utilization of healthy,
sustainable fish population,
habitats and aquatic ecosystems.

Georgian Bay Land Trust and Nature Conservancy of Canada

Thinking of Georgian Bay brings to mind visions of diverse landforms, striated rocks, windswept pines, crystal clear water, blue horizons and spectacular sunsets. This "6th Great Lake" offers extraordinary biodiversity of both land and aquatic natural habitats - some of which are globally rare.

Parts of Georgian Bay remain in relatively pristine condition giving a taste of what explorers of long ago enjoyed - protected by their inaccessibility by either land or water.

Regrettably, this is not for long unless action is taken immediately. There is imminent danger of losing this as time is limited before the untouched areas become the focus for development. Once lost, this beauty can never be reclaimed.

Georgian Bay is an endangered area.

With this sense of urgency in mind, the Joint Venture of the Georgian Bay Land Trust (GBLT) and the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) was formed. GBLT is an organization of passionate volunteers recognizing the need for land conservation in the region. In its short 12 year history, GBLT has protected 11 properties on Eastern Georgian Bay and has emerged as Ontario's major land trust.

But as a volunteer organization, its resources are limited. The NCC is a national conservation organization with 7 regional offices. Since 1962, NCC has helped to preserve 1.7 million acres of ecologically significant land across Canada, an area the

size of PEI. NCC recognizes Eastern Georgian Bay as an area of national significance, and has designated it as one of 50 national "masterpiece sites" for focused conservation action over the next 5 years.

Working in partnership with NCC with shared objectives since 1999, the GBLT brings unique and passionate strengths to this Joint Venture. The collaboration significantly strengthens land conservation efforts on the Bay to forever preserve the magnificent natural features that we know and love. I look forward to sharing the progress being made in coming issues.

John Stark
Vice President of GBLT and
Chair of the fundraising
activities of the GBLT-NCC

Coming events this summer

GBLT sponsors auction & dedication ceremony


Silent Auction
2 0 0 3
Join your friends for the
2003 Georgian Bay Land Trust Silent Auction*
August 23, 2003
MacNamara House
(adjacent to Sans Souci Community Centre)
2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Cash or cheques accepted • Refreshments available
* In 2003, there will be both live and silent auctions featuring wonderful treasures.

Sans Souci, Saturday, August 23rd,

GBLT is sponsoring another silent and live auction. It will feature unusual, unique, old, new and "can't do without" cottage treasures and collectables.

Auction will be held at Sans Souci at the MacNamara House, adjacent to the Sans Souci Community Centre.

Last year's was very successful. Come early and don't miss out on the best of the lot.

Cognashene Sunday, August 3rd,

Come to Cognashene and join in the celebration for the dedication of the Lizard Island to the Georgian Bay Land Trust.

The celebration will take place on the Lizard Island. See boating chart #2202, sheet 2. The Lizard is just west of Mallobouy Island, (which is just west of the Muskoka Landing Channel) on the new outer channel around Cognashene.



Lily pond in the middle of the Lizard

Winter visit to Umbrella Island a novel experience for cottagers

by Rick Zanussi

February 21, 2003

With today's global warming, ice conditions on Georgian Bay often don't allow safe travel. 2003 was a strong exception, as temperatures plummeted and ice became uncharacteristically thick. I personally measured thirty inches of ice on the "outside" areas of Georgian Bay in the Parry Sound area. It has been five years since we last had safe ice conditions, allowing extensive travel on the "outside" ice of Georgian Bay.

Taking advantage of the very safe conditions we wanted to travel to the Umbrella Islands, taking with us a number of friends and relatives who had been fortunate enough to visit this special place only during summer. Although our family is relatively comfortable with ice travel, most in the party felt quite apprehensive travelling across a few kilometers of exposed Georgian Bay ice on their way out to the Umbrellas. It can be a strange sen-

sation snowmobiling where one is so used to boating!!

Upon our arrival we stopped at the infamous "lagoon" where many of us have enjoyed some wonderful summer days. The stark contrast

absolutely no wind, most spent their day in only shirt sleeves. Standing on that ice, looking out to the west over a never ending wavering surface of ice, is what we like to call a "lifetime moment".

The Georgian Bay Land Trust must be commended for allowing our group such a terrific venue for our wonderful winter day. We are pleased to share our moment with your sign!! Even the dog had a great day.

The Zanussi and Snyder families are permanent Archipelago island residents, the others are Archipelago seasonal cottagers in both the South Channel and Sans Souci areas but are mostly South Channel folk.



Visitors to the Umbrella Island in February: starting with the young boy in front and going clockwise: Darren Zanussi, Karlene Argenta, Sarah Bassendale, Edward Pintwala, Terry Argenta, Kelly Snyder, Julie Snyder, Leo Argenta with Punch in his lap and Robin Argenta.

between the seasons was so evident, and many wondered if this was the same area they visited by boat! Eight snowmobiles look much different parked in the middle of the lagoon, than a couple of boats tied to shore.

As often happens in our winters, we enjoyed a very hot sun and bright blue skies. Coupled with

The following names were erroneously omitted from the donors' list in the winter issue of Landscript. We do apologize.

David & Susan Herbold
Mrs. Charles Hudson
Paul R. Jenkins
T.K. & Emily McClintock
Raymond & Kit Sawyer

Small businesses contribute generously

Georgian Bay has given all its stakeholders so much - its unique but fragile beauty, its wonderful tranquility and its ability make us all realize what is important to each of our families. Now the Bay strongly needs our help in return - help to resist the enormous pressure toward over development which would destroy for all future generations the marvellous things we and our families have received from the Bay.

Some of our donors - including manufacturers, wholesalers, service industry owners - have started to give back to the Bay. Their companies are contributing financially to the ongoing work of the GBLT, whose dedicated volunteers are working to hold back the tide of over-development pressure.

These businessmen have looked at the total yearly cost of operating their cottages and then have had their businesses generously allocate funds based on

that cost. In this way they are assessing their joys of the Bay in monetary terms and are able to give back a little of that joy. Such contributions to date have ranged from 10% to 40% of the yearly operating cost of their cottages on either a one time or multi-year commitment basis. Contributions are a tax deductible expense for the business as the GBLT is a registered charitable organization.

Perhaps you or someone you know is in a position to help in this way. The Bay will thank each contributor personally in its own special, timeless way.

For more information regarding small business contributions to GBLT please contact Bill Montgomery - Tel: 416-239-4742 or e-mail: wmonty@rogers.com.

Our Mission Statement

" The Georgian Bay Land Trust seeks to preserve the unique archipelago and its adjacent water bodies which lie along the eastern shore and North Channel of Georgian Bay that are of ecological, geological and historical importance, and to promote the appreciation of this special area."

Tribute Gifts have been received in Memory of:

Joan Andrews
of Sans Souci
who died on April 9, 2003

Ruth Chantler
of Parry Sound
who died on April 5, 2003

Frances Helen Elise Christie
of Sans Souci
who died on January 1, 2003

William James Loudon Clark
of Go Home Bay
who died on March 26, 2003

Isabel LeBourdais
of Sans Souci
who died on March 14, 2003

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of Go Home Bay
who died on March 7th, 2003

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Membership Form

Yes, I would like to become a member* of The Trust. (\$100.00 per year)

Yes, I want to help The Georgian Bay Land Trust preserve and protect unique and significant sites. Enclosed is my contribution* for \$.

Please send me more information on the Georgian Bay Land Trust and its projects.

*Tax receipts will be issued.

Name: _____
please print name(s) as you would like it (them) listed in our records

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____

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I am a member of the following Cottagers Association: _____

*The Georgian Bay Trust Foundation Inc. is a registered charity (#13195 8811 RR 0001)

Please send contribution to:

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2482 Yonge Street, P.O. Box 99
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Call Bill McCoy at: 440-247-6147
Make Check out to Great Lakes Basin Conservancy

If you already renewed your support, we thank you and ask you to pass this form to a friend or a colleague who might be interested in learning more about The Georgian Bay Land Trust and its programs.