

SPAWNING SANCTUARIES

FOR LARGEMOUTH AND SMALLMOUTH BASS CONSERVATION

Note: This StoryMap is best viewed on a computer or tablet



Found in Inbox

DP

David P Philipp
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Q basss project

2026-05-27

An Update re the MNR Decision

All:

Steve Cooke and I want to inform you that we just received notice from the OMNR that they will NOT be approving our research proposal to continue/expand the Bass Spawning Sanctuary (BaSS) Project. That was not a regional decision – the FMZ Committee gave it the green light – but rather a decision out of the head office in Peterborough – the reasons given were vague and duplicitous at best.

Several things:

(1) **Do not despair!** We are moving full steam ahead and will initiate the BaSSs in all 16 proposed study lakes NEXT YEAR...they will just be voluntary, not legislatively mandated

(2) We are trying to set up meetings with the OMNR central office players to try to understand the real issues at hand and then to develop a better process by which science generated by experienced research groups can be better assimilated within the OMNR.

(3) This puts the onus on us to provide all of the educational materials needed to explain the whys and wherefores of the entire project...but that means WE get to control the narrative and we will be able to function more efficiently being out from under the yoke of MNR oversight.

Here are what I see as the pros and cons of the Voluntary (but independent) BaSS program vs the Legislated (but under the auspices of the MNR) BaSS program.

Cons:

There is no threat of being cited for violation, although in reality, the likelihood across the 18 proposed BaSS project lakes of ever being actually cited is slim to none with two working COs.

Pros: Not having MNR involved will be viewed very favorably by anglers...their opposition to anything that has MNR associated is surprising resolute.

Forming a coalition of scientists, cottagers, and anglers will be WAY more effective in the long term for generating a community-based conservation ethic and a viable long-term innovative management strategy.

Our educational activities will be unimpeded by bureaucratic machinery.

We will need to expand, strengthen and integrate our various lake teams into a more effective whole, which will be productive, interesting and FUN!

To that end, we will be organizing a Project-wide get-together at some point in time after we get down with our lake spawning surveys to collect baseline data to discuss some next step strategies and get to know each other better...more details on that later.

MY Bottom Line: I personally have no problem with moving forward without the MNR being involved. It actually eliminates inefficiency headaches and makes us focus better on educating the public...and maybe the MNR will learn a few things about how to manage bass populations.

Dave



Steven Cooke

To: Bob [unclear] [unclear]

2026-05-27

RE: An Update re the MNR Decision

Just amplifying what Dave said. This has illuminated a number of problems with MNR that need to be fixed and extend well beyond our research proposal. There has been zero transparency on this and the MNR continues to assert that their data show bass populations in eastern ON are stable. We have never seen such data and they are contradictory to our assessments and a recent study we published based on angler perceptions over time related to the abundance and size of bass in key waters in our region.

Like Dave said, we can go it alone through the voluntary angle if need be which will be our plan for now as efforts continue behind the scenes to truly understand the MNRs apprehension. This seems to be an issue out of their fisheries team in Peterborough rather than a regional issue related to Kemptville District.

I work with governments around the globe and the smoke and mirrors here is next level. We played by their rules and did everything we were supposed to yet we never were given the courtesy of a meeting (with those raising concerns) so we could discuss and address such concerns before this "decision" was made. Perhaps there was a middle ground that was attainable... Sadly, that opportunity was not provided.

More soon...

SJC

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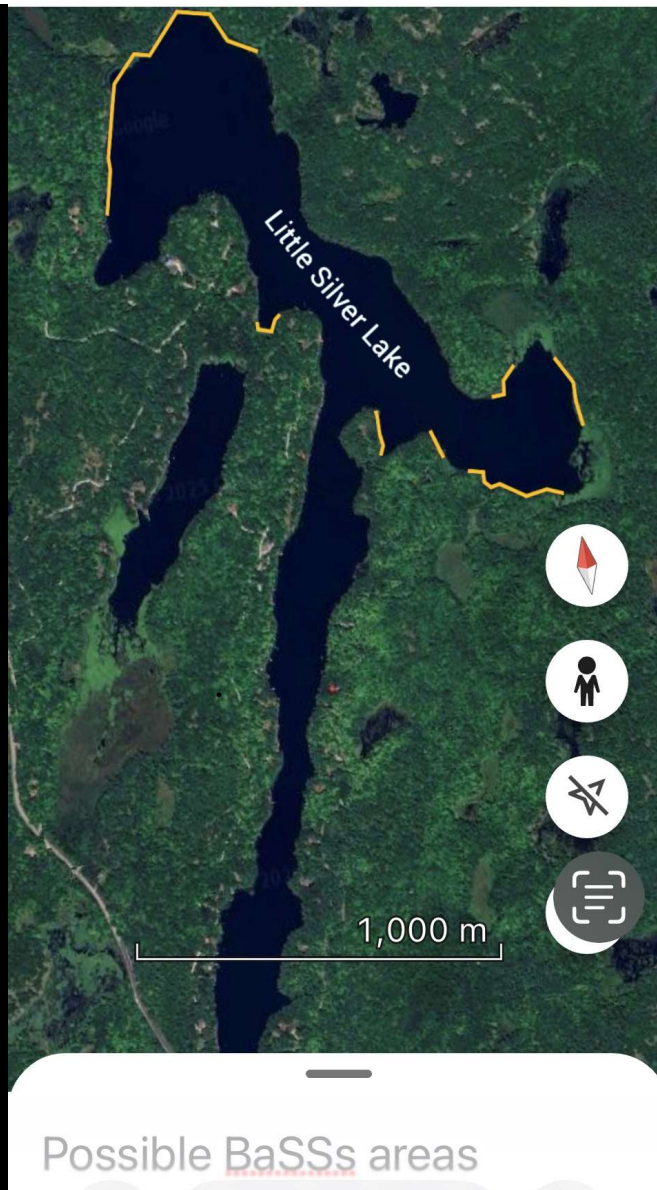


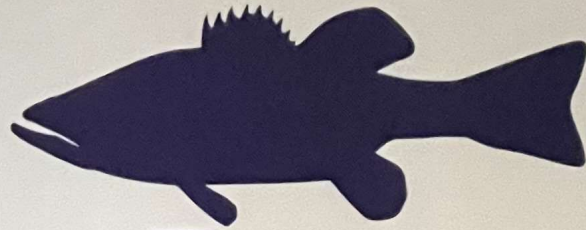












Bass Nest Area

PLEASE
No Fishing
UNTIL BASS SEASON OPENS

Result: More and Bigger Fish

MORE INFORMATION:
upperrideau.com/bass



LEAD ALERT

Lead fishing tackle kills
loons, eagles, swans, and other
wildlife due to lead poisoning.
Please use non-lead tackle
when fishing this lake!



Prevent wildlife death
and entanglement.
Discard unwanted fishing
line in a trash receptacle
and lead tackle at a
local hazardous waste
collection site.

Get the Lead Out!

Loons and Lead Fishing Tackle: *The Facts*



Ontario's official bird, the Common Loon, is in trouble.

Yes, this iconic beauty, whose haunting call graces so many Ontario lakes and rivers, is in serious decline across our province, and most of Canada. A recent study has shown that breeding success has declined by over 30% since the early 90's in Ontario, and is now critically close to the minimum level needed to sustain the species (0.48 chicks per mated pair per year).^{1,9}



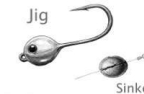
Lead poisoning is the #1 cause of death in adult loons.

While several factors are contributing to the decline and vulnerability of the species, studies in Ontario and across North America have identified lead poisoning from ingested fishing tackle as the leading cause of death in adult loons.^{2,3,4,9} (And, at least 78 other species are documented as suffering from lead poisoning, including bald eagles, great blue herons, trumpeter swans, ospreys, mallards, and mergansers.)



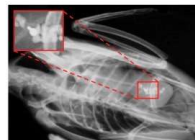
The lead equivalent of 20,000 car batteries enters our lakes and rivers annually from lost fishing gear.

An estimated 180 metric tonnes of lead from sinkers, jigs and other tackle is lost in Ontario's fresh waters every year.^{5,6} That's about 20,000 car batteries worth, or 44 fully loaded dump trucks worth, of lead dumped in our lakes and rivers every year.



Lead is invisible to loons as they forage for food.

Loons ingest small pebbles from lake bottoms to help grind food in their gizzards. In this image of an Ontario lakebed, 7 pieces of lead tackle were added to show how a loon might inadvertently mistake them for a pebble. And because loons swallow their prey whole, including fish 12" or more, they are susceptible to consuming fish with tackle embedded, such as when fish break the line or anglers cut the line. Loons are also known to grab at fish and baits as they are being reeled in. In all these cases, loons can literally swallow "hook, line, and sinker," leading to lead poisoning.



A loon dies painfully within 2-4 weeks of ingesting lead.

Lead is a soft and toxic heavy metal. Once ingested, the grinding action of a loon's gizzard reduces the lead to fine particles which then pass into the bloodstream, poisoning the loon's tissues and organs. The lead from just one small lead split shot sinker is enough to poison a loon, killing it within 2-4 weeks of ingestion.^{7,8}



Tungsten simply outperforms lead and is safe for loons.

Tungsten is more dense and durable than lead, giving anglers several advantages, e.g.:

- Superior transmission of subtle bites
- 70% higher density = smaller size for same weight
- Sinks faster with less water resistance & fewer snags
- Better return on sonar electronics

And tungsten does not poison loons like lead does. Other safe alternatives include steel, tin, bismuth, ceramic and glass. While alternatives can cost more, when an angler's overall expenses are considered, the cost of switching to lead-free tackle has been estimated at a modest 0.3% to 3.6% for an assortment of sinkers and jigs.³

¹ "Canadian loon survey" 40 year report, birdscanada.org, 2021

² Population-level effects of lead fishing tackle on common loons, T. Mary Grady, Journal of Wildlife Management, 2015

³ Lead fishing tackle and jigs in Canada: Review of trap use patterns and toxic impacts on wildlife, A.M. Schramm et al., Canadian Wildlife Service, 2003

⁴ Maine loon mortality, Susan Gault, Maine Audubon 2013

⁵ Study to gather use pattern information on lead sinkers and jigs and their non-lead alternatives in Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2018

⁶ Survey of recreational fishing in Canada 2010, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2015

⁷ Lead poisoning in loons, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

⁸ Loon family photos by Matt Huras

Visit birdscanada.org for more information.

Manufacturers and Sellers of Lead-Free Tackle

These days, there are a wide variety of non-toxic alternatives to lead fishing tackle to choose from, including quality products made from tungsten, bismuth, tin, steel, metal composite, glass, clay, stone and putty.



****NOTE THAT NOT ALL SELLERS LISTED BELOW ARE 100% LEAD-FREE. PLEASE ENSURE WHEN MAKING YOUR SELECTIONS THAT YOU ARE PURCHASING LEAD-FREE TACKLE. THANK YOU.****

D&D Lures (bismuth & tin tackle)

Dave Drouillard
Windsor, ON
(519) 256-8073
ddlures@cogeco.net
Has Facebook page

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An Initiative of Wolfe Lake Association, Westport, Ontario, Canada

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Order summary



#36 Tungsten Flipping Jig "Natural Craw" x 1
3/8 Oz

\$8.49



#36 - Natural Craw - Tungsten Scrounger Jig x 2
3/8 Oz

\$16.98



#22 - Blood Craw - Tungsten Scrounger Jig x 2
3/8 Oz

\$16.98

Subtotal	\$42.45
Shipping	\$13.76
Taxes	\$7.31

Total	\$63.52 CAD
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