

# Fish Habitat Management Plan

THE BAY OF QUINTE

Fish: NOAA Photo Library, Historic NMFS Image Collection



*Healthy Fish Habitat = Healthy Fisheries = Healthy Communities*

In 1985, the Bay of Quinte was designated one of 42 pollution hot-spots, "Areas of Concern", around the Great Lakes. In 1986 the Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan was created to restore the Bay. The Action Plan is carried out by provincial and federal government agencies, municipalities, and citizen groups.

One of the problems in the Bay is the loss of fish habitat. Habitat has been altered, fragmented and destroyed by development demands and human pollution. As part of the Remedial Action Plan, a Fish Habitat Management Plan is being developed to help rectify the situation.

If we are to remediate and try to prevent further pollution and ecosystem problems, the time to act is now. A Fish Habitat Management Plan will benefit communities around the Bay of Quinte, and the fish that live in it.

Once the Plan is in place habitat will be protected and restored. Communities can then en-

joy the benefits of healthy fish habitat into the future. Benefits are many.

- Healthy diverse fish habitat, like wetlands, help protect biological diversity. This helps to maintain more stable fish and wildlife populations.
- Natural, healthy fish habitat includes shoreline vegetation, which reduces erosion and improves water quality by filtering toxins, bacteria and phosphorus before they reach our waterways.
- Shoreline property owners will be encouraged to participate in habitat protection and will be informed of the benefits of natural shorelines.

*Without fish habitat there will be no fish!*

The development and implementation of the Plan will involve local communities, municipal representatives, government agencies and anyone who would like to get involved. These parties and individuals will reach consensus regarding fish habitat issues so that the Plan is beneficial to all. Your concerns and information will be used to shape this Plan.

## The Fish Habitat Management Plan will:

- **Evaluate** the importance of different fish habitat areas
- **Protect** all fish habitat, especially areas critically important to fish
- **Restore** high priority areas (e.g. the restoration of a wetland may provide rich spawning grounds and habitat for a number of species)



## *Deciding what fish habitat is most important:*

The Fish Habitat Management Plan will build on the policy to achieve an overall net gain of the productive capacity of fish habitat for the Bay. To do this, we will determine what habitat is most important to fish, and protect these areas. However, it must be stated that:

### **All fish habitat is important.**

The relationship between specific types of habitat and the fish they support will determine how important a habitat-type is. This scientific information along with sanctuary and reserve locations, popular fishing areas, onshore land use, rare habitats, wetland information, local expert knowledge, and other concerns, will be incorporated into the plan.

When the Plan is completed it will provide the management framework for developers, municipalities, and landowners, working around fish habitat. Areas in need of restoration will be identified and prioritized. Habitat will be protected.

The Fish Habitat Management Plan is a significant step for Bay of Quinte stakeholders to take in restoring the Bay and ensuring future generations will enjoy the pleasures of a healthy ecosystem and the use of a stable, diverse fishery.

## **GET INVOLVED**

Local clubs and individuals can contribute to the Plan by sharing their knowledge of critical fish habitat locations (like spawning grounds) and any other concerns regarding fish habitat. Your information will help us to protect and restore fish habitat, and develop a Plan that is beneficial to everyone. Please take the time to get involved, it is your ecosystem and it will be your Plan.

For more information please contact:

### **The Big Cleanup Bay of Quinte Remedial Action Plan**

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