Coho Egg Collection 2012: In with the new

Regulars to the Metro East Angler’s website and recipients of its Newsletter know that since fall of 2006 the MEA has had its own campaign to bring back Lake Ontario salmon. Since the early days, they have advocated for their return to a very supportive Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). In 2007 the MEA launched this program with the collection of approx. 100,000 wild Credit River eggs, and in the fall of 2008, they stocked 79,808 yearlings. This would become the last substantial Coho egg collection for many years. In the years that followed, volunteers would find their hard efforts to collect permitted amounts of eggs falling short. It is with great satisfaction the MEA reports that this year has seen their permitted quantities of eggs filled.

The typical planning that goes into programs, like the ones at Ringwood, is as follows:

Directors of the MEA meet with their MNR liaisons a few times a year. On those occasions details about the MEA programs are determined. Specifics like types of species raised, stocking numbers permitted, stocking locations for species and the permitted amount of eggs to meet all goals. These details are all determined at such meetings. The eggs can come from either a wild source, as is the case for the Coho and Rainbow programs, or they can be internally provided through the MNR’s hatchery system. This is how the MEA currently gets eggs for their Brown trout program. When eggs are collected from a wild source MNR permits are required to make the practice legal. The MNR issues permits for wild egg collection and that document specifically states the maximum number of allowable eggs to be collected. The permit also specifies those rivers and creeks available to the licensee for egg collection. Every year the MEA’s permitted number of wild Coho eggs has been roughly the same. Over the years, however, the small returning runs of Coho salmon to their broad stock river, the Credit, has required the MEA/MNR to add other rivers and creeks to the original permit. In an effort to collect the maximum permitted amount of eggs, the MEA has always endeavored to leave no stone unturned.

However, this year in only two trips to the Credit River the MEA volunteers were able to secure their permitted amount of eggs. Some of the Coho gathered this year were in various stages of vigor as a result of being held for a period of time in pens. Past experience indicated that eggs collected this way had variable viability, so, to offset the likelihood that some of the eggs were poor quality, the MEA followed up on rumors that Bowmanville Creek had some Coho passed over the Goodyear dam this fall. It seems that while local volunteers tossed large quantities of Chinook salmon over they also passed a fair number of Coho. A small MEA contingent went down to electro-shock both the Goodyear and the Hampton dams. Only a small number of fish were observed and the only female had already spawned. Some believe the Coho salmon “ripen” earlier on Bowmanville creek compared with their Credit River counterparts. This possibility has been noted by the MEA crew for future reference when egg collection begins again next fall.

The Metro East Anglers wish to thank the Ministry of Natural Resources and its staff for all the help. Thanks to MNR Biologist, Mark Heaton, MNR Fish Technicians, Aaron Law, Dave Bielhartz, Robert McGowan and MNR volunteer, Callie Moore.

Great Job Done By All
Metro East Anglers Inc. Community Newsletter

We hope that this Newsletter will not only communicate the happenings out at the Ringwood Fish Culture Station but also provide a collective gratitude towards those whose charity is so vitally important to this project. It is our desire that you will get behind this Newsletter by thinking of ways you can contribute to it. As we are a community supported organization, this Newsletter can only get better if the community has a hand in its evolution. As we welcome all those who want to contribute we ask only that you respect our Partners, Sponsors and Members in any article you feel a desire to write. Interesting volunteer experiences or other positive stories related to the MEA, the Ringwood Fish Culture Station or our Sponsors are a nice way to foster a sense of community goodwill. The Board maintains the right to edit material viewed as inappropriate for this Newsletter. If you are interested, please submit articles to me at:

steve.lynas@gmail.com

If you are not an MEA member yet and want to join. Then please send an email to:

metroeastanglers@gmail.com

All we need is your name, email address and mailing address. With this information you will then be put on our MEA Inc. mailing list for future Newsletters and any upcoming events.

Rest assured that all precautions are used to ensure your email is not shared with any unwanted lists. Emails will be sent as blind copies and nobody else will be privy to them but you.

Our annual Coho salmon stocking signifies both the end and beginning of a season for me. This October The Metro East Anglers stocked approximately 18,000 Coho yearlings into the Credit River. They were a very hearty school with an average weight of 30 grams. For those that follow this Newsletter you will remember that a year ago the MEA had an unfavourable egg collection. This unfortunately translates into a smaller then permitted stocking number.

These three stocking runs represent the end of our first year under its new mandate at the Ringwood Fish Culture Station. Together with our partners, The TD Bank’s, Friends of the Environment Foundation, The Toronto Sportsmen’s Show, Rapala Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, our mandate to restore and continue the Coho stocking program is moving forward. It is important that these generous supporters are recognized by all those who have come to enjoy these fish species in our environment. The MEA is committed to continuing the work necessary in bringing back the Coho stocking numbers to MNR permitted levels, a commitment that we began over six years ago when we were considered Ringwood’s “host club”, by the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. It was at that time, during our massive eight to ten day Chinook egg collections, that Coho were first seen by us in significant numbers on the Credit. Today there are signs that the numbers are starting to improve. This years egg collection yielded four times that of last year and we reach our permitted egg quantities in only two trips to the river. Optimists see this as a sign that the MEA efforts in 2008/2009 are starting to pay off. However, it is likely a bit too early to say for sure. What is important to note however is that the MEA remains the only organization in the entire Province of Ontario carrying a Coho program with any significant numbers.

Volunteers from the MEA used a weekend to take their three loads of salmon high up on the Credit River to Norval for stocking. In the parking lot of, “Nashville North”, the MEA found the perfect place to back the stocking trailer and unload their, “precious cargo”. This year we leased a stocking truck and added sponsors logos to the sides of the stocking trailer. Proudly displayed are those logos as we make our way to each and every stocking location along Lake Ontario.

Like all MEA supported watersheds the Credit River is heavily urbanized and as such suffers from many of the negative environmental factors that make natural reproduction for these cold water species challenging. Such factors include, but are not limit to, soil erosion, high levels of salt wash from streets, the notable warming of water temperatures over time and the run off from storm drains. Urbanization has alter the environment these fish reproduce in so radically that their reproduction numbers have significantly been reduced. It is believed by some that the natural reproduction of Salmon is as low as 5 to 10%. In a hatchery environment we can get up to an 80% survival rate on the eggs we collect. We can then raise those fish beyond their most vulnerable months in the wild and plant them back as yearlings into the same watersheds they were taken from. Work is being done to improve stream and river habitat but a continual stocking program is essential to having these species available as those habitat projects slowly improve our urban watersheds.

By Steve Lynas

Coho Stocking 2012: Out with the Old

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By Steve Lynas

This year’s leased stocking trailer proudly displaying sponsor’s logos
Whitby Pier Salmon Fishery On Fire
Fall 2012

Fish on!
This year at Whitby Harbour Chinook salmon fishing was not disappointing. The great opportunities for fishing brought together some new and old faces to the pier. With large quantities of salmon being caught off the pier face, well over the triple digit mark, anyone who put their time in landed a sizable King. Previous years were just not as productive in terms of fish quantities being caught off the pier. Since late summer 2011 anglers have been experiencing fantastic opportunities for fall Chinooks off the Whitby Pier. Whitby Pier fishing has provided opportunities for many people to land their first Chinook Salmon. One young man I talked with said it was, “the first game fish he had ever caught.” Once these Salmon hit an angler’s rod the fierce fighting strength of these fish has them “hooked” for life. Being a year round angler at the harbour I first started to see Salmon “porpoising” off the pier in early to mid August. It seemed quite a bit earlier to me compared to previous years I had witnessed them. I was able to land my first Salmon on August 22. By the beginning of September fishing really started to turn on. Anyone going out an hour or so before sunset would stand a very good chance of catching a large salmon. As the word quickly spread about the pier fishery the number of anglers started to increase. On an average night the pier would be lined from the parking lot to what we refer to as the, “Boat Launch”.

These fish remained in large numbers in the harbour until late September. The last one I saw was caught on October 17th. The near shore fishery off the Whitby Pier is providing many anglers with opportunities to fish for these large predators. Opportunities they normally wouldn't have unless they wanted to river fish. Which, in my opinion, does not provide the same experience. Out of 55 fish I personally counted this past fall, 49 had their Adipose fins clipped. This has supported my belief that the Whitby Salmon Pen Imprinting Project works and it is starting to show some real returns. This has also encouraged me to step up and volunteer. Last spring I joined other volunteers who help raise and nurture Chinook salmon fry in a large netted pen at the Whitby Marina. It is their belief that this type of imprinting will help improve a fall fishery in the Whitby harbour. It is my belief they are right.

Written by
Matthew Chambers, MEA Member, 2012

Fishing Tid-Bit: Did you know that Rapala is the maker of Blue Fox Spinners and that these Spinners were the go to tackle this past fall when members of the MEA fished for Brook and Lake Trout at the beautiful, The Reserve Beauchene in Northern Quebec. Visit Rapala online at HTTP://WWW.RAPALA.CA/
Coho Egg Collection Snap Shots
The Browns are Back:

The Metro East Anglers have a long history of raising and releasing Brown trout into GTA watersheds. In the 2006/2007 season we used a surplus to help expand our standard stocking location to include sites such as, Ashbridges Bay, The Humber River, The Burlington Canal, Frenchmen’s Bay, The Don River, Lakefront Promenade, Oshawa Harbour, Whitby Harbour and Athol Bay. In that season 81 070 Browns were stocked out of the Ringwood facility with a 21.5 gram average size recorded.

Athol Bay who you might ask?

In the heart of beautiful Prince Edward County and just this side of Sandbanks Provincial Park lies Athol Bay. Back in 2006 we were privileged to partner up with a local club there called, The Central Lake Ontario Sports Anglers. In November of 2007 we were able to stock 20 212 Brown trout yearlings into that area. In a few short years a noticeable increase to the Brown trout fishery is said to have occurred. In fact so successful was that stocking to their local fishery there that when word got out the MEA had negotiated a program out of Ringwood which included Browns they wanted to be included. So on November 18th of this year the MEA volunteers made the 2 hour drive from Ringwood to Athol Bay. There we met with Al Van Dusen and other members of CLOSA to stock out 12,000 of our 26 gram average sized yearlings. I must say that it was déjà vu all over again as we arrived at the site location and water levels were at record lows once again. We had to pull out all three of our stocking hoses for a total length of approximately 70 feet. With that length we just managed to reach the water’s edge with a foot or two to spare.

The remainder of our Browns, some 25,000, were stocked on November 24th into Ajax’s Rotary Park. Much like the Athol Bay stockings this represents the continuation of some positive results of what began in 2007. In that year we stocked Brown trout throughout the area. Frenchmen’s Bay got 10 011, Whitby Harbour got 10 260 and Oshawa Harbour got 10 132. It would not be long before MEA members started getting reports of a notable number of fish being caught in the warm water flows that concentrate throughout that area. It would seem that without a doubt those 2007 stockings had a significant effect on what was fast becoming a decent Brown trout fishery in, not only Athol Bay, but the Greater Toronto Area.

This years stocking in Ajax’s, Duffins creek, started off shaky with about 4cm of snow covering the truck and its stocking trailer. It was a bitter cold wind that met volunteers down at the lake, but all endeavoured to persevere for the adventure that was putting these fish back into our environment.

This year we invited Scout leader, Steve Ernstberger and his troop from the 33rd Oshawa Scouts to assist us with the stocking. Much thanks goes out to all the Scout leaders for helping the Metro East Anglers finally get their community involvement badge.

One of the MEA’s most important sponsors, Rapala Canada, was represented on stocking day by President, John Newton. It is always appreciated by the MEA when one of our sponsors decides to accept an invitation in this way. We strive to use a couple of these event opportunities through the coarse of our year to invite all our sponsors. We feel this is a great way for them to receive positive attention for their generosity. It also helps foster a sense of community goodwill and illustrates a commitment to working together in conservation.

Once again thanks to John Newton and the support we receive from the people at Rapala Canada. We also thank the TD Bank’s, Friends of the Environment Foundation, The Toronto Sportsmen’s Shows, and the Ministry of Natural Resources. Each has contributed to making the MEA programs a community success. Without the continued support of our sponsors the MEA could not make possible any of the programs we have been working hard to provide.

Thanks to troop members from Oshawa’s 33rd Scouts Division and their Scout leaders. It was a fun day by all despite the cold windy conditions.

After the kids got tired of bucketing Brown trout into the river we let John finish up by pulling the plug on our “fish cannon”.

By Steve Lynas

John Newton, President of Rapala

Watch Brown Trout Released in Athol Bay Click link
https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=fhGa_p6bHDU

Our website is currently a work in progress so please be patient. It can be found by clicking the following link
https://www.metroeastanglers.com/
On September 26, 2012 MEA Inc. held our annual General Membership meeting from 7:00 to 9:00 pm at the Ringwood Fish Culture Station. The meeting was chaired by Glenn Anderson and Bruce Burt.

The first topic of discussion provided the 2011/2012 end of year finances for the club. The budget forecast for 2012/2013 was presented and is expected to increase over the 2011/2012 budget for the following reasons:

- A new feeder system is being considered
- The demand for fish food will increase as the number of fish in the hatchery for the 2012/2013 season has increased dramatically
- Expect hydro costs to increase with the warmer winter last year and conservation measures we attempted last year we were able to reduce the hydro substantially.

* One action item is currently being looked at is the possibility of a GST rebate.

To be in accordance with being a charitable organization we will be posting the club’s Charter/Bylaws on the MEA Inc. website.

Then next item of discussion was the 2012 stocking plan. Coho stocking runs would commence in early October. The entire Coho inventory of 37,000 would be released in the Credit River in Norval. The Brown trout will be delivered to a variety of Lake Ontario locations. First 10,000 Browns would be delivered to the CLOSA team in Wellington. The location of the remaining 25,000 fish was still undetermined at the time of the meeting; however the following were potential sites: Frenchmen’s Bay, Bluffers, Whitby, Duffins.

Finally the plan for the 2012 Coho collection plan was presented. The MEA is permitted to collect 130,500 eggs this year. The river collection sites were still under review but the primary location would be the Credit River. For future meeting agenda topics, please let one of the board members know so that it can be added to the agenda ahead of time.

Thanks to all that turned out. It made for a productive meeting and great to have some face to face conversations.

The Metro East Anglers Inc. is a Registered Federal Charity established in September 2011, under the following Mission Statement:

Our Mission is to Establish a Conservation Club for the Purposes, of *Preserving Protecting and Restoring Rivers and Lakes*. This will be achieved in Partnership with the OMNR through the following activities:

- Raising of fry at a hatchery for release into Lake Ontario and its tributaries
- Operation of a fish ladder on the Rouge River to improve spawning opportunities for Rainbow Trout in that watershed
- Operation of 4 pen projects in the GTA and Durham regions to help acclimatize and imprint over 50,000 Chinook Salmon fry to our area, increasing survival rates and record