

Duffins Creek in Ajax gets 12,000 new brown trout Metro East Anglers and Oshawa Scouts stock fish at Ajax park

DURHAM -- Duffins Creek in Ajax got 12,000 new residents recently, thanks to Metro East Anglers and Oshawa's 33rd Scout Troop.

The new residents, all brown trout approximately one year old and weighing 25 grams, were raised by the Metro East Anglers at the group's hatchery, Ringwood fish culture station in Stouffville, from eggs provided by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

On Nov. 24, Scouts helped release the fish in Duffins Creek at Rotary Park, after visiting the hatchery and learning how the trout were raised.

"Everything went great," said Bruce Burt, MEA volunteer, adding the Scouts braved a chilly and windy day to release the fish. "We try to get kids involved helping us stock fish whenever we can, it's good education for them."

MEA is run solely by volunteers using donations and sponsorships, and officially became a registered charity this year to continue its work supporting Lake Ontario. Since it began in 1995, the group has stocked millions of salmon and trout in GTA watersheds, with a large number of those fish stocked in Durham Region. Many of the group's members live in Durham as well.

Mr. Burt said the brown trout stocked in Duffins Creek will benefit the creek by diversifying its fish population, as well as benefit residents.

"Brown trout is a more warmer water species, so they tend to stay closer to shore, so some will go out in the lake and some will stay in Duffins Creek," he said. "Because they stay closer to shore, they do provide good shore-fishing opportunities for the public, and we hope by stocking the fish, eventually they'll establish themselves and use the creeks, in all of the GTA perhaps, as a spawning habitat."

He explained the trout need help maintaining local populations due to the effects of urbanization, such as road salt runoff and shoreline soil erosion.

Group members also execute rehabilitation programs including shoreline tree plantings to improve water quality in GTA creeks and rivers, which in turn improves survival rates for local fish.

The group also operates a rainbow trout fish ladder on the Rouge River that helps fish access almost 100 miles of spawning grounds, while allowing members to measure and tag the fish for research purposes. As well, it operates chinook salmon pen projects at the Bluffers Park, Oshawa and Whitby marinas, and Port Darlington, raising tens of thousands of chinook annually that are likely to return to the GTA as spawning adults, further increasing fishing opportunities for local residents.

For all its efforts, MEA received an environmental award from the Town of Ajax in 2007.

For more information on the group, and to donate in support of its work, visit www.metroeastanglers.com.

Reporter Tara Hatherly can be found on Twitter @Tara_Hatherly and on Facebook by searching Tara Hatherly.



Duffins Creek in Ajax gets 12,000 new brown trout. AJAX -- Cameron Kendall and Ethan Ernstberger, of Oshawa's 33rd Scout Troop, helped the Metro East Anglers stock 12,000 brown trout in Duffins Creek at Rotary Park. Nov. 24, 2012. *Submitted photo*