

Working With Partners to Improve the Health of Great Lakes Areas of Concern



Monitoring fish communities in Nipigon Bay.

The Ministry of Natural Resources works with many people and organizations to help protect and restore the rich biological diversity of the Great Lakes Basin ecosystem. One of the ways the ministry accomplishes this is by participating in the 2007 *Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem* (COA).

Under COA, the ministry is currently working with more than 240 partners on 200 projects across the Great Lakes Basin. More than 20 of these projects focus on protecting and

restoring fish and wildlife habitats and populations, as well as tracking, evaluating and reporting on the recovery of habitats and species in 14 Canadian Great Lakes Areas of Concern (AOCs).

AOCs are locations that have experienced environmental degradation and now have plans for rehabilitation.

The Great Lakes Basin is a unique ecosystem that is home to an incredible diversity of plant, fish and wildlife species.



Young muskellunge from Spanish River.

Projects include:

- Rehabilitating 14 hectares of Cooper's Marsh in the St. Lawrence River (Cornwall) AOC by creating channels, ponds and other habitat for use by fish and waterfowl.
- Assessing the health of the nearshore fish community in the Bay of Quinte AOC.
- Lessening the impacts of 8 in-stream barriers to fish migration and rehabilitating more than 10 hectares of wetland along the Humber and Rouge rivers in the Toronto AOC.



Photo: Jason Mortlock

Assessing the health of the Bay of Quinte fish community.

- Creating fish spawning habitat at Farr Island in the Hamilton Harbour AOC.
- Monitoring for signs of adult lake sturgeon at the newly-built 150-metre-long spawning shoal near Fighting Island in the Detroit River AOC.
- Creating 12 hectares of fish and wildlife habitat to reduce water pollution in Wheatley Harbour AOC, delisted in 2010.
- Helping landowners create more than 50 hectares of fish and wildlife habitat in the St. Clair River AOC.
- Completing more than 30 wetland evaluations in the Niagara River AOC.
- Monitoring the recovery of muskellunge populations in Spanish River AOC, now an area in recovery.
- Partnering with U.S. fish and wildlife biologists to track and evaluate the recovery of the sport fishery in the St. Mary's River AOC.
- Monitoring fish communities in the Thunder Bay, Nipigon Bay, Jackfish Bay, and Peninsula Harbour AOCs to evaluate recovery of the environment.

Other fact sheets in this series:

- Working with Partners to Protect and Restore Great Lakes Habitats
- Working with Partners to Rehabilitate Native Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Species
- Working with Partners to Prevent the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species
- Working with Partners to Research and Monitor Changes to Great Lakes Ecosystems and Species

Learn More

Visit ontario.ca/greatlakes for more information about the ministry's partnerships and its efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem through COA.

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