

# The Oneida Lake Bulletin

Spring 2020

www.oneidalakeassociation.org

## OLA Celebrates Our 75 Year Anniversary!

by John Harmon, OLA Vice-President

### Our Beginning

On April 25, 1946, slightly less than a year after German forces surrendered to end World War II, the *Post-Standard* of Syracuse announced the very first public meeting of the newly formed **Oneida Lake Association** (hereafter OLA). The meeting was scheduled to take place in Lincoln Auditorium of the old Central High School in Syracuse. The organizers expected over two-thousand attendees from throughout Central New York. At this meeting, Benjamin Sauer, elected President at the foundational meeting of December 1945, planned to outline the vision of the OLA, including “Plans for developing the lake into the state’s best fishing and hunting area.” Looking back through the past 75 years, there is little doubt about that this original vision has been achieved. Although game fish populations have changed, Oneida Lake continues to boast one of the finest fisheries in all of the U.S. Folks from every state of the union come to test its waters, in every season of the year. Although we thank Mother Nature for providing us with this wonderful resource, we can also thank the OLA for its unswerving stewardship of Oneida Lake and its watershed.

The annual meetings of the OLA have continued uninterrupted for the last 75 years. It has long been a tradition to give away door prizes at these annual meetings. In fact, in the newspaper announcement of that inaugural meeting in 1946, the Association boasted that they would give away “a number of door prizes,” a tradition that has continued

to this day. However, none of the prizes was more symbolic than their promise to give away “a dozen pair of nylon stockings.” Initially, this prize might appear as a ploy to attract women members. The Association, however, had an even deeper message. The readers of 1946 recognized that nylon stockings were indeed a rare and coveted item during the months immediately following the war. The organizers used this prize to plainly announce that “the Association is able to get what it goes after.”

The Oneida Lake Association recorded an astonishing record of achievements in its very first six months. A review of several articles archived in the *Syracuse Post Standard* reveals the scope and breadth of the organization’s ability to get things done. For example, OLA sponsored a bill in the state legislature that gave free hunting and fishing to all vets of the recently concluded World War II. The organization also exacted a promise from the legislature to develop a committee to “investigate conditions of the lake thoroly” (1/3/1946). The OLA officers also prompted a study of water level control for the lake, resulting in “support of a project to have the state build a new dam at Caughdenoy to give better control of water levels” (4/19/1946). Each of those initiatives have paid off with programs that continue to benefit Oneida Lake to this day.

In just a few months, the OLA was 1,000 members strong. To their credit,

the early officers of the organization remained committed to taking action based on facts and research. One of their first resolutions was to “Take such steps as a survey would disclose as necessary to improve fishing, boating and bathing.” After Onondaga County quickly endorsed this resolution, the OLA pressed for similar considerations from Madison and Oswego Counties (2/19/1946).

One of the next—and most enduring—achievements of the OLA was their success “in cutting down pollution of the lake and its tributary streams” (4/19/1946). This goal remains at the forefront of OLA’s activities to this day.

As spring—and the fishing seasons—approached, the Board of Directors of 1946 turned their attention to the difficult issue of continued fish piracy on the lake. They strongly urged the state “to put a complete stop to illegal netting of pike, now running up the streams to spawn.” The Directors would not cease their pressure until they effected a “complete stop to the Illegal netting of pike” (4/19/1946). In one of the very many articles in the *Post-Standard* devoted to the early months of the OLA, we read that “Although organized only a few months ago, the Association has been successful in cutting down pollution of the lake and its tributary streams and has received a promise from the State Conservation Department that it will make a thorough survey of lake needs and conditions this year. The Association is working to stop

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# President's Message

To the OLA Membership,

Did you ever stop and think just how lucky you really are to have the opportunities to enjoy our beautiful Oneida Lake? There are many different types of quality leisure activities for people of all ages. Although there have been numerous challenges and changes over the years, Oneida Lake has remained a treasure. Thanks to the collaboration of many groups of people and agencies working together over the years, Oneida Lake continues to be recognized as one of the best walleye and smallmouth bass fisheries in New York State, and even in the United States. Because of this treasure, we need to be grateful for our founders of the Oneida Lake Association for their dedication and foresight, planning for the care of our lake for future generations. Over our rich 75 year history there have been many individuals who have put in their passion and time into our OLA mission statement by tapping into their own strengths. Over all those years, we have had many dedicated members serve on the OLA Board of Directors, and a number of them were our officers--Treasurers, Secretaries, Vice Presidents, and Presidents, along with numerous committee chairs. Also we have had a great and proud membership that has always been the heart and soul of the OLA. We have a great logo too!

In order to address all of the different issues and concerns over the years, the OLA has had a lot of help and guidance. Working together to solve the problems on Oneida Lake there have been a number of truly dedicated and very intelligent professionals. For example, we have had support and guidance from the Cornell University Field Station at Shackleton Point, the New York State DEC, Region 6 & 7 Fisheries, numerous law enforcement agencies, the Oneida Lake Fish Hatchery staff, as well as village fire departments, all focusing on safety and quality of life on Oneida Lake. We are also thankful for the many outdoor writers, politicians, and business owners all around Oneida Lake.

Your OLA publishes two very informative *Bulletins* each year and our monthly E – Newsletter, which has a lot of the latest information about Oneida Lake. This digital publication was the brainchild of OLA Director and Past-President Scott Shupe. We are pleased that the OLA Board has evolved from an all-male group to one that now enjoys the leadership of women directors. Currently we have had a couple of very dedicated female directors who have really helped our OLA Board cover new and important areas as we continue to move into the future.

Besides fisheries concerns, we working on increased control of cormorants, reduction of sediment, cleaner water, weed pulls, road clean ups, safety concerns, and increased access around the lake and a whole lot more.

Unfortunately, due to virus concerns, we had to postpone our Annual Meeting scheduled for this spring. We hope to re-schedule as soon as health concerns permit. At this future meeting we will honor the legendary Dr. John Forney as our 75th Anniversary OLA Conservationist of the Year. **Please monitor our website for details.**



Bill Girvan, President OLA

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## The Oneida Lake Association, Inc.

Founded in 1945

*The Bulletin* is published by the Oneida Lake Association, Inc., so that its members may be informed regarding the activities of the association. The Oneida Lake Association, Inc., was organized in 1945 to restore and preserve the natural resources of Oneida Lake and its environs.

### Officers

President.....	William Girvan
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To submit questions or comments about *The Bulletin*, contact editor John Harmon at [jpharmon1@gmail.com](mailto:jpharmon1@gmail.com)

## **OLA's 75-Year Anniversary** — (Continued from page 1)

illegal netting of fish and will assist with a program to provide food to attract ducks to the lake in the fall and winter months” (4/19/1946).

### **The Ban on Netting and Selling Walleyes**

Previous to the founding of the OLA, Oneida's robust walleye population was both a blessing and a burden. As expected, this abundant fishery attracted a healthy population of sport fishermen. However, it also attracted numerous fortune hunters, much like the Gold Rush of 1849. Harvesting hundreds of walleyes through the use of large nets became a common practice in the 1800s. These “commercial” fisherman could sell their bountiful catch to restaurants and a public eager for this tasty table treat. Concerned about this predation, New York State outlawed this practice in 1897. Not surprisingly, Prohibition forced the practice to go underground—or underwater, in this case. Unwilling to give up this source of income, many of the net-fishermen became “pirates,” continuing their catches in the dead of night, boldly eluding the law enforcement through clever means. Although the officers of the law enacted several arrests and destroyed plenty of expensive nets, they couldn't quite eliminate the illegal practice. Harry Best, one of New York State's top game wardens stated, “We caught them pirates one after another, but you couldn't stop them.” Perhaps the single technological advancement that spelled the end of the pirates was the invention of the spinning reel. Attracted by an abundant source of feisty and tasty walleyes, anglers flocked to Oneida, using this simple device to enhance their fishing. They found, however, that they often got their legal tackle entangled in illegal nets, the very nets used by the pirates. Suddenly, the law found a legion of allies—sport fishermen. Recognizing that the pirates were infringing on

the quantity and quality of their sport, the public began to rally behind the goal of eliminating piracy. That's how the Oneida Lake Association was born. One of their first goals was to tackle the problem of illegal netting and the resultant sale of walleyes. The OLA Directors pursued this goal unswervingly until finally, in 1961, New York State passed a law that banned the sale of walleyes from Oneida Lake. To this day, The Oneida Lake Association Board of Directors carefully studies and advises the State of New York on how to promote fishing while making the most of resources to suppress piracy.

### **Cormorants!**

A review of the OLA *Bulletins* from 1999-2002 reveals that the Association declared war on a true enemy of the lake—the double crested cormorant. One of the opening salvos was fired by then President Kurt Snyder. In his President's Report he stated that “We urge the further implementation of the DECF/USDA cormorant control program, so that these birds no longer constitute a threat to fish.” The OLA Board of Directors took up this challenge and focused their efforts on reducing cormorant predation for the next several years. Each issue of the *Bulletin* provided more and more evidence and testimony that revealed the shocking extent of the cormorants' damage to the Oneida fishery. Cornell University, the Oneida Fish Hatchery, and the DEC all contributed to a wealth of data that indicted the cormorants. Here's one fact printed in the Summer 2000 *Bulletin*: From the spring of 1996 to the spring of 1997, the lake's cormorants gobbled about 33,000 walleyes that were age 1. They also ate 24,000 that were age 2, and 43,000 that were age 3 and older. That's a total of 100,000 walleyes! Data revealed similar cormorant feeding rates for subsequent years, as well. And almost overnight, the once thriving perch population became threatened, as well.

The damage to the lake's fishery and surrounding economy was clear. A study by the U.S. Wildlife Research Center illustrated how cormorants cost the four counties around Oneida Lake some 1,400 jobs and more than \$40 million in fishing-related economic impact. Clearly, something had to be done. And the Oneida Lake Association led the charge. The OLA tirelessly and vigorously partnered with the DEC, as well as the Fish and Wildlife Division of the federal government to develop a program to reduce or eliminate the presence of these birds on Oneida Lake. The partnership led to the convening of a large, diverse stakeholder group, representing everyone from anglers to birdwatchers. In the end, standards were set for a harassment program that chased a substantial population of cormorants off the lake. According to the DEC website, this non-lethal hazing program reduced cormorant population from “as many as 2,700 cormorants per day . . . to less than 200 birds per day from 2005-2008, while the resident summer population was consistently less than 150 birds per day.”

Since 2008, cormorant hazing has been challenged by the loss of federally appropriated dollars and animal-rights group lawsuits against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Nevertheless, cormorant management activities have continued to evolve, and our partners in the DEC and at Cornell have never wavered in their commitment to the defense of Oneida Lake's irreplaceable fishery. The OLA continues its staunch defense to this very day.

### **Connection to the Cornell Biological Field Station**

Although Oneida Lake and its watershed provide an abundance of natural resources, perhaps one of our greatest treasures is the intellectual resource provided by the Cornell University Biological Field Station located on the southern shore of the lake on Shackleton

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## **OLA's 75-Year Anniversary** — (Continued from page 3)

Point. This academic resource provides the launching station for a variety of research initiatives concerning the lake. The Oneida Lake Association quickly realized the benefits of linking its goals and initiatives to the scientific power of the Field Station. One of the early leaders of the Field Station, Dr. John Forney, provided invaluable scientific insight into the preservation of the lake and its fishery. Dr. Forney's research and leadership at Shackleton Point have made Oneida Lake one of the best-studied and best-managed lakes in the world. His numerous long-term initiatives include:

- Maintenance and expansion of fish hatchery operations at Constantia
- Understanding of Oneida Lake's food web and the effects of invasive species, such as zebra mussels, water chestnuts, round gobies, and, most recently, spiny water fleas
- Documenting and mitigating the damage done by overpopulation of cormorants
- Providing a science-based target for phosphorus concentrations in the lake
- Improvement of conditions for native water birds and other wildlife
- Melding of science, policy, and public involvement that laid the foundation for a walleye management plan for Oneida Lake, one that still stands today.

Additionally, the OLA also owes many thanks to the work of Dr. Ed Mills, also of the Cornell Field Station. Dr. Mills, an OLA Past President and current Director, states that "the research and leadership team at Cornell University's Biological Field Station at Shackleton Point have made Oneida Lake one of the best studied lakes on the planet with over seven decades of informing natural resource managers, policy makers, and the public about Oneida Lake's world-class fishery." In this way, all decision-making and

position statements of the OLA remain solidly based in science and research, just as they did when the Association was founded.

### **The Establishment and Upgrading of Boat Launches and Fishing Access Sites**

The OLA has long been a champion of the recreational anglers. To that end, throughout its 75 year history, OLA has lobbied for more and improved access to the lake, especially for boaters. Its successes include the Brewerton/Route 81 access site, as well as advocacy for access at Godfrey Point, Lewis Point, and the Cleveland Pier. This work continues to this day. Most recently, the OLA has learned that its lobbying efforts for a boat launch on Cove Road (near Sylvan Beach) now nears fruition. And only in the most recent months have we learned that New York State will finally fund a major rehabilitation of the Cleveland Pier, giving increased access to our north shore fishermen. OLA has pushed hard for both of these recent improvements.

### **Modernization of the Constantia Fish Hatchery**

From its earliest days, the OLA has supported the modernization, maintenance, and appropriate staffing levels of the DEC Fish Hatchery in Constantia, one of the few Oneida Lake institutions that is longer lived than the OLA, having been established in 1897. The hatchery's netting and stocking programs have contributed millions upon millions of walleye into Oneida Lake in the past 123 years. Sound conservation measures from the DEC, as well as a continuous stocking program for walleyes have contributed to the world-class fishery that we enjoy in Oneida Lake. In fact, just a few weeks ago, the DEC proudly announced that the adult walleye population in Oneida Lake had once again returned to one million strong!

In addition to rearing and stocking walleye, the Hatchery is dedicated to the re-establishment of Oneida Lake's sturgeon population. This project, too, has enjoyed great success. The OLA continues to support the Fish Hatchery in a variety of ways, including lobbying for funding for equipment and personnel, as well as sending members to volunteer as guides during the netting and spawning season. Current OLA Director and Past President, Richard (Rip) Colesante, who retired from his professional career as Supervisor of the Hatchery, says "The programs are strong, vibrant and successful—consistently stocking large numbers of walleye on an annual basis and stocking a record number of sturgeon in the 2019 production season. The Hatchery is an extremely valuable asset to Oneida Lake."

### **Conclusion**

A comprehensive listing of the many achievements of the Oneida Lake Association goes far beyond the scope of this *Bulletin*. Other examples include the support of youth fishing, water activities such as boating, bird watching, nature photography, water safety, and much more. The Board of Directors remain proud to continue this 75-year tradition well into the current century. We thank our thousands of members, both past and present, for supporting us in the effort to preserve Oneida Lake as a jewel in the heart of New York State.



*OLA Directors keeping your lake clean!*

# OLA Hopes to Celebrate its Diamond Jubilee at the 75th Annual Meeting

by Cap'n Tony Buffa

**Out of concern for everyone's health and safety, we have decided to postpone our Annual Meeting, originally scheduled for the end of April.**

We do hope to reschedule this meeting at some date in the future. Once we have a date, we will publish it on our website and on our Facebook page. Please follow our updates.

Once we have a date, our plan will be to follow the original design of the meeting. We all look forward to the time when we can gather together to celebrate an evening of historical significance, informative presentations, and recognition in conservation. We will announce a special keynote speaker as the time gets closer. We also plan to have our usual presentations from Cornell's Field Station at Shackleton Point, NYSDEC law enforcement division Region 7, and Oneida Lake Association officers, who will address topics of interest. Cormorant Control, Walleye Egg Take for 2020, and Walleye-Perch-Bass-Sturgeon- Goby population estimates for 2020 will fill a robust agenda. Questions and answers will follow each speaker's presentation.

We encourage you to attend with your family and guests. Our exhibitors' displays will also be there for your viewing. OLA membership renewals and recruitment will be available as well. In the meantime, you may update your membership online at our website or through a mailing that you recently received. We welcome your support for all the programs the Association monitors.

This year's theme is **"ONEIDA LAKE: THE WORLD'S ONLY LIQUID DIAMOND."** Celebrating Seventy-five years of the Oneida Lake Association is synonymous with the magnificence, resiliency and perpetuating fascination that defines Oneida Lake. The OLA needs your support. Come to the meeting and celebrate Oneida Lake's heritage seen through the watchful eye of the OLA. Our lake's well-being is constantly being challenged; we need your help and support.

At the meeting, the OLA will give its prestigious "Conservationist of the Year" award to an outstanding local environmentalist. This year's award is special. It will be given to an individual who has been uniquely influential in the modern day history of Oneida Lake. The award, entitled "OLA 75th Commemorative Conservationist of the Year," is the most prestigious ever given. **The meeting will then close with the distribution of door prizes and the drawing for a Pelican-RAM X Premium kayak (with paddle and safety flag) and a REMALI CaptureCam 4K Ultra HD Waterproof Sports Action Camera Kit.** The winners will be chosen from attendees and our at-large membership. An attendee will win the kayak; an at-large member will win the camera.

This is a meeting you do not want to miss; replete with fun, facts, entertainment, and love for the lake you hold so special in your life.

**Please continue to monitor our website, our Facebook page, and our E-news for further details.**

## Board of Directors Election

The annual election for members of the OLA Board of Directors will take place at our next Annual Meeting, scheduled for sometime at a later date. **Please monitor our website for details.** Members in good standing who attend the meeting will have the opportunity to vote on the following slate of director candidates who have been selected by the Nominating Committee to stand for election for a three-year term on the Board: Ryan Asmus, Mike Barretta, Gina Duggleby, Dr. Edward Mills, George Reck, and Bruce Shantz.

## Breaking News: DEC, OLA, and Cornell Push for New Cormorant Tools

by Matt Snyder, OLA Director

Leaders of the Oneida Lake Association, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and Cornell University have been hard at work on restoring the full range of cormorant management tools to wildlife management professionals.

This chapter of the cormorant saga goes back to 2015, when the Animal Legal Defense Fund, Friends of Animals, and other radical animal-rights activists banded together to file suit against the federal government to halt cormorant management. This action led to a federal injunction against the Fish and Wildlife Service's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the legal basis for large-scale management activities.

Since the injunction, management has limped along under severe limitations. These restrictions did not diminish the dedication on the part of fisheries and wildlife staff from the DEC, who have done their best to haze Oneida Lake cormorants and collect a limited number of birds for diet sampling by Cornell University. However, it did significantly

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# Onondaga County Sheriff's Office Air-1 Helicopter

The Onondaga County Sheriff's Office Aviation Unit was established in 1975, then known as the Air Stop Program. The first helicopter used was a two-person Hiller, which was replaced in 1980 with a Bell 206 helicopter.

The Aviation Unit currently has one chief pilot, two pilots/deputies, and two tactical flight officers/deputies. The helicopter utilized today is a single-engine Bell 407, also known as "Air-1." This helicopter has four rotor blades and can fly at a top air speed of 162 mph. It can seat seven adults and is equipped for medevac transport. The Bell 407 has a three-hour/300 mile flight range and has a larger payload capacity than the ships that came before it. Additionally, it is equipped with a 30 million candlepower Nightsun spotlight, a Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) device (which is synced with the Nightsun), flotation gear, Billy Pugh rescue net and ring, a rappelling hook for SWAT placement, Bambi Bucket for fire suppression, Project Life Saver equipment, video recording and downlink capabilities, a complete communications system that can access all frequencies, and a 200 watt PA/siren system.

Air-1 is a multi-mission helicopter capable of performing numerous functions including, Patrol, Search and Rescue, and Fire Assistance. Over the past years, Air-1's missions over Oneida Lake have varied from water rescues involving capsized boats, missing anglers, skid rescues and drownings. Air-1's flight crew is often assisted by the Sheriff's Office Navigation Unit and local fire departments that provide water rescue equipment.



Last year Air-1 responded to eight calls for service on Oneida Lake, two of which required the search for drowning victims and one for a reported boat fire.

Air-1 also patrols Oneida Lake regularly, checking for individuals who traverse the ice in the winter with snowmobiles or on foot. They also patrol in the summer to keep watch for boaters and public beaches, responding to signs of distress or calls for help.

The Oneida Lake Association thanks the Onondaga County Sheriff's Office for providing this valuable equipment and highly trained personnel for the safety of all of those who enjoy the lake.



# Oneida Lake's Newest Critter: The Spiny Water Flea

By Dr. Ed Mills, OLA Director

Oneida Lake has been subject to over a century of biotic introductions and ecological changes. Sea lamprey, white perch, zebra and quagga mussel, and the round goby are perhaps the most significant organisms to have invaded Oneida Lake in recorded history. Oneida Lake currently hosts 36 non-native fish, plants, and invertebrate species. The most recent critter discovered is the spiny water flea.

## Origin and Spread

The spiny water flea is a microscopic crustacean, native to freshwaters of northern Europe and Asia, first discovered in Oneida Lake in September 2019 by Kristen Holeck, a researcher at the Cornell Biological Field Station (CBFS) at Shackelton Point, and her Field Biology class. The spiny water flea was first found in the region in Lake Ontario in 1982 (associated with Great Lakes shipping and their release of contaminated ballast water) and has spread to all of the Great Lakes, and many smaller lakes in Canada, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Since 2008, the species has spread to New York's Great Sacandaga Lake, Lake George, Lake Champlain, and, now, Oneida Lake.

## Biology

An adult spiny water flea is about 0.5 inches long with nearly 70% of its body length recognizable as a long tail spine (to deter predators) containing 3 to 4 barbs (see photo). The animal has one large eyespot that is usually black and feeds on zooplankton like *Daphnia* that is popular food item of young fish Oneida Lake including those in the larval stage of life.

## Impact

The spiny water flea's ability to depress important food items like *Daphnia* could negatively impact larval fish through reduced growth and ultimately their survival. While young larval fish will not be

able to feed on the spiny water flea because of the barbed tail spine, larger fish can feed on this crustacean. The Cornell Field Station found in September of 2019 that young yellow perch (2.5 inches long) had stomachs full of the spiny water flea; young white perch and emerald shiners also fed on spiny water flea. Cornell researchers will be monitoring the spiny water flea and assessing its impact on the lake's fishery and ecosystem in 2020.

## What You Should Do

The spiny water flea spreads to other water bodies through movement by humans and their water related equipment. Oneida Lake anglers are likely to see the spiny water flea on their fishing lines (see photo), downrigger cables, fishing nets, and other fishing equipment in the 2020 fishing season. As a good lake steward protecting Oneida Lake and other nearby lakes, fishing gear infected with the spiny water flea must be properly disinfected before moving to nearby lakes and rivers. Research indicates that drying is the most effective way to kill all stages of the spiny water flea. Methods to clean and disinfect fishing gear can be found at [www.dec.ny.gov/animals/50121.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/50121.html). This animal can survive in water contained in bait buckets, live wells, bilge areas, and other water containing areas of boats.



*Spiny water fleas attached to fishing line.*

*Photo credit:*

*Jeff Gunderson, Minnesota Sea Grant*

<https://www.nps.gov/isro/learn/nature/invasive-species-spiny-water-flea.htm>

Adults and eggs may also be associated with mud and debris so boat anchors and ropes may be a source of contamination. Boaters should be sure to adhere to the Clean, Drain, and Dry message by cleaning their boat, draining all water holding compartments, and drying as a standard practice before entering and after leaving Oneida Lake.



*A microscopic view of the spiny water flea.*

*Photo credit: J. Leibig, NOAA, GLERL 2001*

# The Lure of the “Magic Lure”

By Bill Girvan, OLA President

Anglers of any era, on any body of water have always been looking for the magic fishing lure. Today’s avid anglers know there are certain lures and baits that become their go-to choice under specific conditions and seasons. Although there are many types of lures, colors, sizes to choose from along with kinds of lines and diameters plus very technical electronics that all come into play, we all have that one favorite lure.

Today we have a whole class of lures called stick-baits that are very effective on Oneida Lake. But let’s take a step back in time to the early 1960s. This is the era when the first Rapalas found their way into the tackle boxes of Oneida Lake anglers. Fishing was a lot simpler then, and if there ever was a magic fishing lure, it was those original floating Rapalas, with only one model, two sizes, and two colors. Lauri Rapala designed and fine-tuned this minnow-like lure in Finland. It didn’t reach the US until about 1960, hitting the Oneida Lake area about spring 1964. It was the “Magic Lure” that had an action just like a swimming minnow. Did it ever catch fish, especially walleyes! At the time, I was working at my first and favorite job at Yorkville Bait & Sport Shop just outside Utica. The owner was John Maciol (father of Oneida County Sheriff Rob Maciol). He was an outstanding angler who loved fishing for walleye and smallmouth bass on Oneida Lake. He was also an OLA member from about 1950. Besides getting all types of bait, I also hung around the store meeting and asking the customers all about fishing. Those early floating Rapalas were Silver /Black and Gold/ Black ( 2.75” and 3.5”), and they came in a box of 24 lures. The silver/black 3.5” was the best seller; you couldn’t keep them in stock! They sold out quickly and back then fishermen didn’t buy duplicates in lures like they do today. Just about every day, John brought a new box or two of Rapalas into



the store. The fishermen couldn’t wait to get to “The Lake” with their new magic lure.

At that time, the daily limit of walleye was 10 fish, and there were a large population of adult walleyes that couldn’t resist that life-like action of a minnow. Waders would cast these lures and play around with retrieve speeds, twitching, but reeling in slow seemed to work best. You didn’t need wind, as when the bats came out the walleyes were in like clockwork on the calm nights. Rapalas also worked well while trolling with some weight added to the line 2-3 inches above the lure. They also worked well casting from boats too. Looking back, I caught over 475 of my first 500 walleyes at the lake by my High School graduation in 1970 on that combination of a 3.5” Silver/black floating Rapala. Oneida Lake really

helped build my confidence as a young angler.

Rapala came out with the Blue /Silver color by spring of 1970 and Countdowns came along shortly after, followed by imitation Rapalas. Over the years, numerous molds and sizes of Rapalas and numerous other stick-baits by other manufactures hit the market. They all catch fish and their actions are all spinoffs of those original floating Rapalas. Other popular walleye lures and baits of the 1960s on Oneida Lake included the Garcia Eelet, L & S jointed Marrow Lure, Helen Flatfish, Sidewinder Spoons, Little Wonder Spinners - with a fly, Dixie Spinners, Bucktail Jigs, and Heddon Sonar, plus Eels, Sand Pike and Night Crawlers too. The 1960s really were the good old days on Oneida Lake!

## Push for New Cormorant Tools

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limit the scope of cormorant management.

Under the current administration, the Fish and Wildlife Service has responded by proposing a new, more robust EIS designed to better withstand animal-rights activists' legal machinations. Fisheries and wildlife leaders in the DEC and Cornell have brought their many years' worth of expertise to the EIS design process, and OLA recently provided the Fish and Wildlife Service with public comments strongly in support of the revised EIS. Your OLA will be watching and encouraging agency leaders and elected officials to restore full cormorant management capabilities to state and federal governments.

## Tip-ups North

Long before the invention of GPS, the OLA developed a program to help those ice fishermen who might get disoriented during a winter blow. In the January 1959 issue of the Utica newspaper, the OLA expressed concern for the "lives of men and women who become lost during blizzards" as they fished the ice of Oneida Lake. The OLA advised fishermen to always place their tip-ups on the north side of the holes they cut. In this way, a fisherman who is wandering in a blizzard could come across a tip-up, and readily determine a north-south line, often the shortest path to shore. Former OLA President, Millard Rogers, even came up with the idea of a metal tag affixed to the tip-up proclaiming, "This tip-up is NORTH."

## The Oneida Lake Association Moves Into the 21st Century

As you many have noticed, on your membership application, you have the option to get the Bulletins electronically instead of being mailed. This saves the organization in printing, postage and mailing costs! To communicate more routinely we started an e-newsletter that is emailed out periodically. We have noticed however, that many of you don't "open" the file to read the newsletter sent from Constant Contact – Please be sure this email doesn't land in your Spam folder! We want to communicate with you, our members, easily and efficiently – email is a great way to do that!

~ Thank you!

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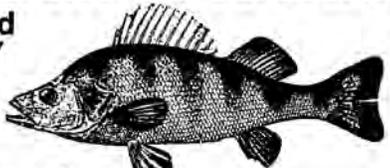
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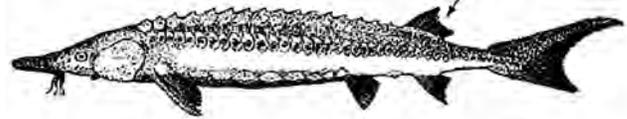
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