



Oneida Lake Association
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Greetings!

Members should be receiving their Bulletins shortly. In fact, over 500 members elected to receive their copy electronically on or about October 3-4. Doing so helps control our expenses, and enables us to retain the mere \$5 membership. We hope that you enjoy this issue, and that you have a safe, pleasant autumn.

Please share this Newsletter with your lakeside neighbors, fellow anglers and boaters, or others who have an interest in the lake. Urge them to pony up the "fin" for membership. In perspective, most of the stickbaits in your tackle box cost more!

If you are a member participating in an event where you can help sell memberships, please contact Director Vella or Schantz. We now have a small banner advertising the Association that we will use at the Spring shows and similar events. We will make this banner available for membership sales opportunities.

Members and friends of Oneida Lake who may have other questions for one of the OLA Board Committees, or wish to contribute a short story, timely anecdote of an experience on the lake, relevant article, or civil opinion to be distributed in this newsletter are urged to contact us. This is your Newsletter and Facebook page. Use them to increase our membership and membership knowledge.

SAD NEWS: Former President OLA **William Schriever** passed away October 5. Bill was a tremendous asset to the organization for several decades, showing dedication in the cormorant challenge and actions following his discovery of water chestnut in the lake, as well as support of Cornell and lake-centric agency programs.

WHAT THE BOARD IS DOING: As reported earlier, the PEER Court Injunction that retards productive agency management of **double crested cormorants** still has not been lifted. It appears unlikely that there will be a decision until Spring 2017 regarding allegations that USFWS improperly renewed depredation permits that allow harassment of the predatory bird – thousands of which are now migrating through Central New York. The OLA Board will continue to monitor and report on any relevant news. Cormorant counts in September revealed well over 12 times the NYSDEC target of 100 birds on the lake. Region 6 & 7 biologists were

splitting the workload, chasing birds up to 4 days a week. That harassment essentially ends in October, once duck season opens.

MONITORING:

NYSDEC produces a number of press releases and other matters to which anyone can subscribe. One of the items we review, for activities of concern to the Oneida Lake drainage and our lake's users, is the Environmental News Bulletin that summarizes current permitting and regulatory changes and decisions made by the State. If you are so inclined, The ENB is available at:

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/enb/enb.html> DEC is accepting formal comments on its proposed freshwater sport fishing regulations through November 11, 2016. The proposed regulations are developed after careful assessment of existing regulations and the desires of New York anglers. Click on this link to [Review the proposed regulations or make a comment.](#)

Veteran's Day has been designated as New York's newest free fishing day. The requirement for a license and enrolling in the Recreational Marine Fishing Registry has been waived for November 11, 2016. [Learn more about free fishing days.](#)

Member awareness of invasive species has increased. Early this month 3 folks asked if what they found in Oneida Lake was Hydrilla. The nasty southern invader has been confirmed in Cayuga Lake. These questioners engaged the expertise of less than twelve professionals who immediately seized on the importance to our lake of investigating. At this point four questioned locations appear to be Elodea, not Hydrilla. The key is to count the number of leaves in each whorl.

The matter reflects the importance and successes of public education and awareness of invasive species in our lake and other local waters. We hope that our members and friends continue to find use in materials at our website. There are a couple of references, including <http://www.oneidalakeassociation.org/Hydrilla%20fold%20brochure%2003092012.pdf> and the wonderful resource <http://www.oneidalakeassociation.org/Plant%20ID%20Booklet%20handout%20for%20Oneida%20Lake%20%204-8-16.pdf> provided by Bob Johnson that should be looked at by all members. As one of the professionals commented, "Please note that there are two species of Elodea that look like Hydrilla. Many people think Elodea nuttallii is Hydrilla. Here is a link for both: <http://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=elnu2> and <http://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=ELCA7>."

ROUND GOBY NEWS: Lars Rudstam and Tom Brookings have dive footage of bottom conditions that they are reviewing and editing. Look for some 2015-16 video of current goby representations on the lake bottom to be posted on the Oneida Lake Association webpage soon. It was reported that limited diet analyses of cormorants indicated much of the late summer feed was converting from a mix of 40% yellow perch and 30% gobies to 65% gizzard shad and 20% gobies as the former mature and school up in cooling waters. Last winter did not result in a shad die-off, and Cornell reported some 10" class fish in the nets this summer.

A FELLOW FROM BINGHAMTON (WHO IS NOT YET A MEMBER, but we are sending him a card with a copy of this newsletter!) SENT IN THIS MESSAGE:

what has happen? have been fishing oneida lake for 30 years and i have never seen the fishing so bad. I was wondering if the season should be closed 15th feb due to climate herd through grave vine that march guys were slaughtering walleyes in creeks because it was warm in march? just wondering?

Skip C. - You are not alone in underperforming this season. But a season change is probably not yet warranted. Yes, the fishing in the lake has changed, just as the lake itself has. Short term, the effects of invasive species is largely at fault. Longer term cyclic global climate changes are a story as yet untold.

One member targets (on different days) walleye, perch and sunfish. Anecdotally, his incidental catch of bass generally runs about 25 per season. This year he caught but five. And he still has not found sunfish to fill his freezer. His success ratio is consistent with Cornell's angler surveys that show this year's catch rates are down about 20-30%.

A Director commented regarding closing the season in February and general fishing this summer. *"This year walleye showed up a week or so before the close of season and fishing was good, but you are talking about a relatively small number of anglers fishing for a period from a few days to maybe a week. I watch the March run closely; lately I catch fish in the canal area in March for about a week, but usually only on the last couple days of season, maybe 3 out of 5 years. I don't think we are talking about a big take of fish. If the lake hadn't opened up and caused the fish to run those fish would have likely been caught through the ice staging to run. For this year, my guess is less fish were taken prior to the spawn, because of the poor ice conditions - there was actually less angling pressure. Something to watch as time goes on though, maybe closing the canal and tributaries earlier rather than the entire season on Feb 15 and limiting ice fishing, this would essentially end the ice fishing on Oneida since many years the ice isn't safe until almost February."*

Similarly one observed the *"It seems like the gobies have affected the walleye bite or at least their behavior. That coupled with an abundance of bait has made the bite worse than normal this year. I don't think that the walleye population was decimated in the last week of walleye season. Especially considering that the winter walleye bite was slower than it has been and the ice fishing season was short (less fish taken)."*

Another commented that *"I have marked huge schools of bait on the lake this summer. I think that coupled with the gobies showing up has made fish tough to catch. Also as the fish transition to feeding more on gobies, tactics might have to be adjusted. That said I have done ok lately fishing around the weeds in the evening. I have caught limits of walleye several times in August and September fishing in less than 12 feet."*

Another responded that *"I am a jig fisherman, and this year jigging for walleyes was pretty much a waste of time. Early on blade baits (sonars) worked some of the time. There are a LOT of jig fishermen on the Lake and I believe that is mostly the reason people are saying things have changed. I know some anglers rely on trolling and that seemed to be the technique that still caught fish."*

And yet another responded that *"Whenever walleye have easy pickings bait fish-wise they totally shut down to most presentations; and no fresh water game fish totally shuts down like walleyes do. If anglers are not married to Oneida Lake they should try one of the other walleye fisheries in our area like Delta Reservoir, Canadaraigo Lake, or the Unadilla River or switch to another species to target in Oneida Lake. He further opines that "There is more to the total picture than gobies & shad. A good % of walleyes in recent years have been foul hooked [by both ice fishermen and ripping blade bait variants]. I wonder what the real creel survey of walleyes would be because most anglers are not going to admit they are keeping foul hooked fish. Maybe it's about time to serious look at our 100 plus year walleye stocking policy too?"*

As we enter the time period for the anticipated walleye "nite bite," the fish are happy and suspended now, foraging throughout the lake on the plentiful bait fish.

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SIGNAGE: The Association has around the lake several business-sponsored

signs. Due to deaths and business closures, four of these signs are available for 'adoption'. If you are a business owner, or know of one who might want to sponsor a sign, please contact Director George Reck.

YOUTH EDUCATION: Director Duggleby continues to lead a team seeking a plan and structure to create and distribute a series of **lake-related lesson plan** supplements for area schools. Started last year, our goal is to have the first group of kids getting their feet wet by 2017-18, leaning over to look closely at the water body so defining of our CNY environment. Teachers need interesting supplements to the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) that will help keep students engaged with learning. Employers frequently complain that new hires are not completely prepared. We opine that some students who can be challenged, while spending time outside the classroom, could bring more robust skill sets to college or their first job. Our lesson plans would relate aspects of the physical and biologic sciences to our local economy, and introduce technical skills and tools associated with measuring and monitoring critters in the streams and lakes, the water itself, the plants therein, and the social studies of the people on Oneida Lake. We have interest from a couple of area college professors, and can likely draw on some programs from the past files of the Cornell Biologic Field Station. If you are an educator, consulting environmental engineer, businessman or have simply and avocational interest in partnering with OLA in this initiative, please contact a Director. Their names and committee assignments are on our webpage.

NUISANCE GEESE WORKSHOP: Stay tuned, for OLA is facilitating a March 2017 workshop for lake area residents, towns, and businesses managing turf where the birds congregate and cause issues. Agency representative will interact with attendees to discuss the growing problem with the resident, nonmigratory flocks, who has what responsibilities, and what actions can be taken. More information will be forthcoming in future newsletters.



[Website](#) [Who We Are](#) [What We Do](#) [How to Help](#)

The Oneida Lake Association is a member of the New York State Conservation Council <http://www.nyscc.com/> and the New York State Federation of Lake Associations <http://www.nysfola.org/>.

Report environmental violations. Please remember to obey all laws, rules, regulations, and codes of ethics as they pertain to boating, fishing, hunting, and management of Oneida Lake and its drainage basin. Be civil. **1-844-DEC-ECOS (1-844-332-3267)**

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