



Oneida Lake Association
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2022 Oneida Lake Open Water Creel Survey Summary

Every five years researchers from Cornell University conduct full open water and ice fishing season creel surveys on Oneida Lake – the largest inland lake entirely within New York's borders and one of the top fisheries in the state. From May-October angling boat counts and roving angler interviews were conducted to estimate total effort and catch for the 2022 open water season.



Angling effort totaled 220,000 boat-hours, which was slightly higher than the average observed since 2010 (204,000 boat-hours). Most (70%) angling trips included walleye as a target species and 16% included largemouth and/or smallmouth bass. Fewer than 12% of angling trips targeted yellow perch until October when 70% of all trips included yellow perch as a target species.

Walleye: This year the creel limit for walleye on Oneida Lake increased from 3 to 5 fish per day. Catch rates for anglers targeting walleye averaged 0.54 fish/angler-hour, well above rates observed from surveys conducted in 2013 and 2018. Estimates of walleye harvest are based on estimates of angler effort combined with estimates of angler harvest rates from all trips. The total walleye harvest was 107,000, the highest observed since 2010 (Harvest did not exceed 60,000 walleye during any year over that time

span). These trends suggest that recent strong year classes have likely contributed to increased angling success. Ninety-three percent of all legal size walleye (≥ 15 inches) caught were harvested.

Black bass: Catch rates for anglers targeting black bass averaged 0.62 bass/angler-hour, increasing from 0.70 to 0.92 from May through July and decreasing thereafter. Anglers reported 4 smallmouth bass for every largemouth bass caught in 2022. Anglers targeting smallmouth bass averaged 0.52 fish/angler-hour which was higher than smallmouth catch rates in 2013 (0.37 smallmouth bass/angler-hour) but slightly lower than in 2018 (0.55 smallmouth bass/angler-hour). As with most modern day bass fisheries, less than 1% of all legal size black bass caught were kept.

Yellow perch: Angler catch rates for Oneida Lake yellow perch are typically highest in the fall and 2022 was no exception. Catch rates for anglers targeting yellow perch averaged 0.68 fish/angler-hour for the first 3 months of the season, increased to around 1.00 fish/angler-hour in August and September, and increased further to 1.38 in October. Harvest rates mirrored catch rates as few yellow perch caught were released.

Complete results of both the open water and winter surveys will be available this spring in DEC's Oneida Lake Annual Report.

(Photo Courtesy of OLA Director Tony Buffa)

Fall Clean-Up!

Though the calendar said that astronomical winter was over a month away, November 18 turned out to be a raw, wintry day. As a result the Roadside Clean-up Crew shrank to just two--Trail Boss, (and OLA Director) George Reck and his assistant, OLA President John Harmon. Together they swept up two bags of debris from the roadside at the Bartell Road off/on ramp. Harmon tried to document the event with a picture, but his fingers were too numb to get a photo!

Join us in the spring for another go at it!

9 Element Plan Public Meeting

The OLA Board is pleased to announce that it has representation on the panel that is studying Oneida Lake in order to make recommendations for its future. This panel employs the model of the 9 Element Plan, a document designed to research several aspects of the lake and its surrounding communities. The Panel conducting this research includes OLA Director Dr. Ed Mills, a renowned scientist from Cornell University. OLA Director Matt

Kazmierski also sits on the panel, representing the DEC.

To its credit, the panel seeks input from the public as part of its fact-finding. Please read the flyer below for your opportunity to participate.



**Oneida Lake Watershed
Nine Element Plan
PUBLIC MEETING**

A Nine Element Watershed Management Plan describes a community's water quality concerns and provides a strategy to address those concerns.

This plan will be developed in partnership with people who live, work, visit, and enjoy Oneida Lake and the creeks and streams around it, with guidance from state and local agencies.

Madison County has received funding from the New York State Department of State to develop this plan with support from the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNY RPDB) and in cooperation with a Watershed Advisory Committee.

There will be a virtual public meeting on January 24th where you can learn about the Nine Element framework, the project schedule, and the draft vision and goals for the lake and watershed.

Public participation is vital to this process! Please plan on attending one of these meetings to learn more about Oneida Lake and to provide your input on a vision and a set of goals for the watershed.

ONLINE
Tuesday, January 24th
7:00 pm
via Zoom
(registration is required)
Register online at:
<https://bit.ly/3hg3BvA>



  **Department of State**  **Central New York
Regional Planning & Development Board**

This flyer was prepared with funding provided by the New York State Department of State under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund.

Website photos

We continue to receive a treasure of photos from our members. Keep 'em coming.

Check out this clever "self-portrait" by Don Therre. Look closely at the Oneida Lake Bubble and you will see the photographer.



The OLA Reports--with regret--the Cancellation of the Lions Walleye Derby

In a letter to the community, they write:

For the past 43 years the Lions clubs of this area have sponsored the annual Walleye Fishing Derby on Oneida Lake. During this time thousands of anglers have enjoyed the challenge of catching "the largest walleye" or perhaps the elusive "tagged Fish".

In addition, the anglers have won thousands of dollars in prize monies, purchased pins, hats, etc. Many have competed yearly, and we thank them for their support.

Our goal as Lions is to serve the community and through this Derby thousands of dollars have been raised and distributed to local, state, national, and international causes. We are very proud of our accomplishments.

It is with great regret that we will not be having the Derby in the future.

We hope that another organization will take over. We are very willing to assist with volunteers and equipment. If interested, please contact us at: lionswalleyederby@gmail.com

We wish to sincerely express our gratitude to those who have participated in, sold tickets or volunteered countless hours in our many years of holding the Derby.

Sincerely,

Bruce Hall, Chair

ECO Graduation

It was my great honor to accept an invitation to attend the 23rd Basic School for Uniformed Officers Graduation at the Expo Center. I was able to witness the moving ceremony for eighteen men and women who spent the last 29 weeks of their lives preparing for a career of service as Environmental Conservation Officers.

Several current officers and their units were on hand to welcome these much needed recruits into their ranks. In his address to the graduates, Officer Brandon Swart, the president of the newly commissioned class, stated that he has "learned so much, and changed a lot" during their training. He emphasized that all the recruits arrived with so many differences, yet they all had "the same goal, the same mission, working as a team." He closed his remarks with "It's time to go to work!"

The recruits represented all corners of the state. From right here in Syracuse we congratulate Christopher Goonan. Officer Goonan was generous enough to give me a few minutes of his time to answer a few questions:

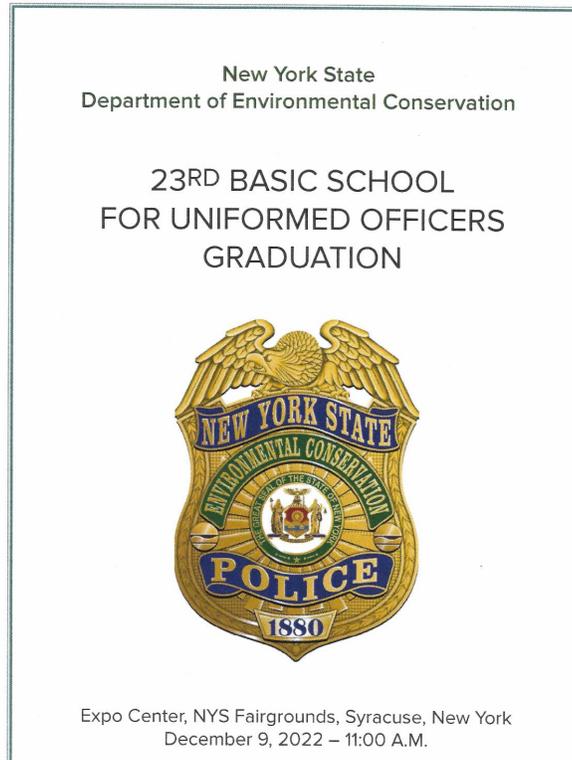
Why did you choose this career path?

"It all started when I became interested during a summer camp when I was a kid. I was always concerned about environmental quality, and especially fish and wildlife."

What was your favorite class or course during Basic Training?

"I really liked Emergency Vehicle Operation Training. And, of course, Fish and Wildlife."

Where is your first assignment?



"Region 2. I'll be working in Manhattan, so that will be a change."

The OLA congratulates and welcomes all of these recruits. We look forward to supporting them as they enforce the science-based regulations that keep our fish and wildlife populations thriving. ~John Harmon, OLA President

Have a safe and wonderful Holiday Season!



Pay your dues, and HELP PROTECT ONEIDA LAKE!!!!

\$8 annually

Recruit your neighbors and friends TO JOIN US!



Donate



Memorials and contributions to our program are most welcome.

OLA is a 501(c)4 organization serving and protecting the Oneida Lake environment.



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

OLA is a 501(c)4 not-for-profit organization.

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/>.

Please remember to obey all laws, rules, regulations, and codes of ethics as they pertain to boating, fishing, hunting, and the management of Oneida Lake and its tributaries.

Report environmental violations.
1-844-DEC-ECOS (1-844-332-3267)

Edited by John Harmon and Matt Snyder
Send us your notes and articles for use in future ENews!

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