

Sault Ste. Marie-Blind River District MNR

# Fisheries Management Update

## 2025



# Fisheries Management Update

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- Fisheries Assessments
  - Alona Bay Creek Steelhead
  - Broadscale Monitoring - Walleye
  - Summer Profundal Index Netting - Lake Trout
  - Moss Lake Stocking Assessment
- Fish Stocking Modernization Project



# Steelhead Population Assessment - Alona Bay Creek

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- Mark-recapture survey to estimate size of spawning population (2025 & 2026)
- Scales samples provide info on life history
- Morphometrics, scales, sex, floy tags & clips
- Data informs FMZ 9 & FMZ 10 planning



**St:** total number of years spent as a juvenile parr in the stream environment. Typically between 1-3 years.

**Lk/Sp:** total number of years spent as a juvenile smolt in the lake environment. Typically between 1-3 years. The largest mature fish usually spend longer at this life stage.

**Mat:** age at maturation. Usually between 3-5 years.

**Lk:** total number of years spent in the lake environment (including both immature and mature life stages).

**Spw:** total number of spawning events. Can be as many as 7 spawning events in successive years.

**Age:** total age of the fish. Can be as old as 11, although most don't make it past age 8.

# Broad-scale Monitoring Assessment (BsM)

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- Focus on walleye lakes to:
  - better understand the status of our local walleye populations
  - evaluate ongoing stakeholder concerns
  - establish a local baseline to test effectiveness of recent reg changes
  - support FMZ 10 walleye planning
- CPUE (kg), age and length frequency distributions, age classes, growth, biodiversity, etc.
- Trout (Aweres Twp.), Caribou, Ottertail, Echo and Desbarats Lakes



# Echo Lake - BsM

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- Collaboration with GRFN, Trent University and MNR
- Tissue samples support M.Sc. Thesis
- Data sharing with UGLMU, GLFC, DFO-SLCC and the Invading Species Awareness Program
- Fish mortalities donated back to GRFN
- Additional benefits; invasive species detection



# Summer Profundal Index Netting (SPIN)

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- SPIN is lake trout focused and allows for population/density estimates
- CPUE can be converted to BsM CPUE for direct comparison
- Primary question: what proportion of recruited fish are stocked vs naturals?
- Recent surveys:
  - Turkey Lake - ~50% LT catch were naturals
  - McMahan Lake - ~80% naturals



# Moss Lake - Stocking Assessment

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- Managed as trophy lake (first stocked in 2023)
- Assess effectiveness of stocking (and growth rate)
- 2024:
  - Approx. 3½ lbs and 47cm in length
- 2025:
  - Approx. 5lbs and 52cm in length
  - Variation
- No forage fish, only invertebrates
- Do not yet meet the minimum size requirement of 55 cm

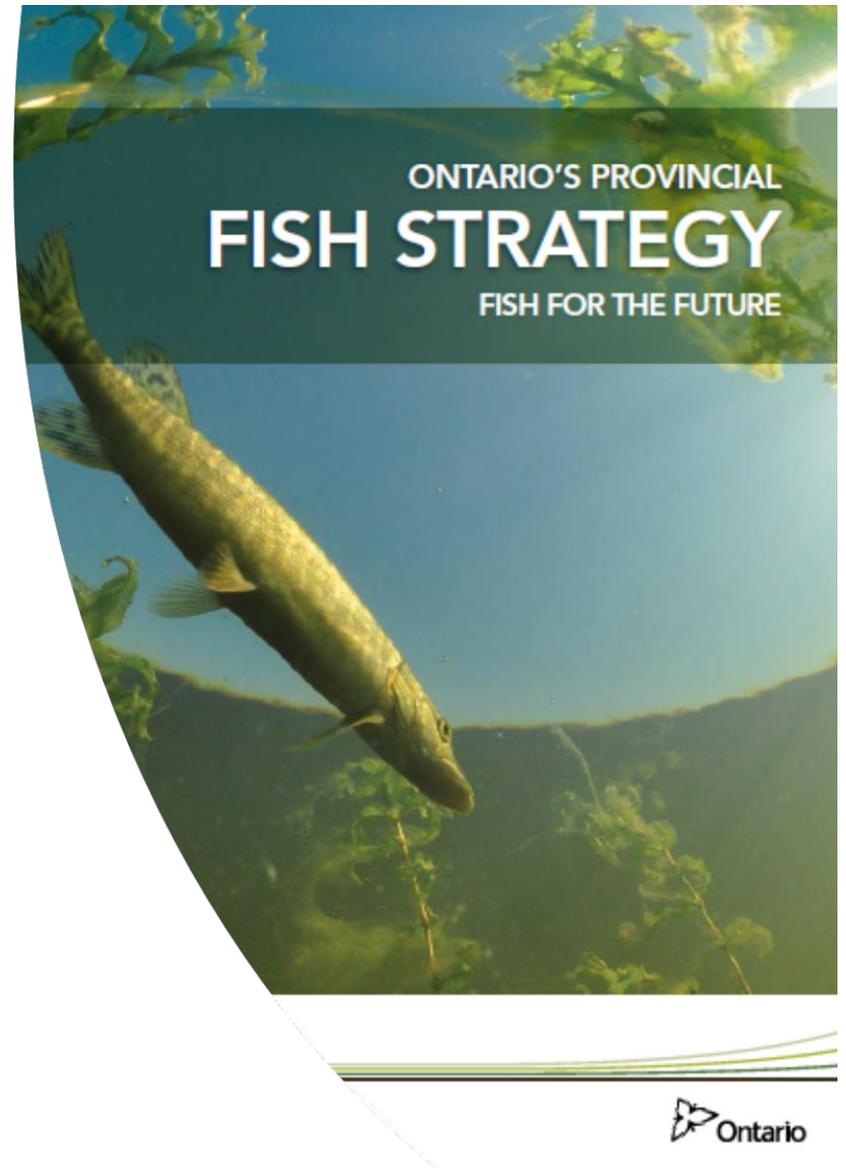
- \*New\* Season: open all year**  
**Limits: S-1 and C-0; must be greater than 55 cm**
- **\*New\* Moss Lake (46°39'01"N., 84°09'26"W.) - Jarvis Township**
  - **\*New\* Lost Loon Lake (46°40'53"N., 84°08'25"W.) - Jarvis Township**



# Fish Stocking Program Modernization

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- A modern cost-effective fish stocking program that meets the current needs of Ontarians by:
  - improving angling opportunities
  - increasing the economic, social, and cultural benefits
  - aligning our practices with current policy, guidelines and science
  - ensuring fiscally and ecologically responsible fisheries management



# Fish Stocking Program Modernization

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- High priority project
- Blueprint for enhancement of other MNR district stocking programs
- Science-based program that informs regulation effectiveness and provincial policy/stocking guidelines
- Destination fisheries & tourism
- Inclusive approach by engaging stakeholders and rightsholders



# Fish Stocking Program Modernization - Phase 1

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- Winter splake stocking (sub-adults in Hart, Vixen, Tower & Paquette)
- Aurora trout (Greenhorn & Sorley)
- Trophy brook trout (Moss & Lost Loon)
- Year-round seasons for brook trout
- Discontinuation of LT supplementation (Lonely, Trout-Dablon, Jarvis)
- Rehabilitation LT stocking (Spruce & Trout-Aweres)
- Bathymetry & stocking rate calculation updates (numerous)



# Fish Stocking Program Modernization - Phase 2

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- Bathymetry, access points & stocking rate updates
- Dissolved oxygen modeling and assessment of LT supplementation
- Explore additional stocking opportunities
- Jarvis canoe route strategic planning
- Angler utilization/satisfaction survey
- Efficiencies & cost-saving opportunities (i.e. fall fingerlings vs spring yearlings)
- Stakeholder/rightsholder engagement



# Fish Stocking Program Modernization

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We want your input!

- What's working? What's not?
- What would you like to see in our District Fish Stocking Program?
- Let's think outside of the box... "crazy" ideas are welcome!

