

ELOSTA Monthly Membership meeting

Wednesday July 19, 2006

Minutes

(Also available on www.elosta.org)

- President Charlie Ames, called the fifth monthly meeting to order at 7:05 PM at the Lodge in Gander Mountain's Cicero store. Twenty five persons were in attendance at the start of meeting. Mac MacKenzie acted in his capacity as Secretary.
- President Ames made a motion to accept the June 21st meeting minutes as they appeared in the Newsletter. His motion was seconded and carried.
- Tom Lott read the Treasurer's Report for the period June 19th – July 18th, 2006. Deposits received from annual dues and Ad fees, totaled \$342.50. Checks written for editing the Newsletter, printing costs, and a \$100 donation to the Pro-Am tournament totaled \$594.15. Elosta's current balance is \$9186.11. The ongoing net-pen account remains at \$1,566.25. The motion to accept the report as presented was seconded and carried. Copies were made available for those who were interested.
- Doug Fuegel noted that the Coalition released the walleye fingerlings from the seven rearing ponds near Cape Vincent. About 140 thousand fish were placed in Lake Ontario and various tributaries. The fish were healthy but slightly smaller than those released last year, 1.5 – 2 inches compared to 2 - 2.5 inches. The reason was attributed to cool weather which slowed the development of a desirable algae bloom.
- Charlie then turned the floor over to David MacNeill, Fisheries Specialist with NY Sea Grant Extension at SUNY, Oswego. His subject for the evening was "Understanding Risks and Uncertainties in Fisheries". He opened his presentation with the following quote by David Rumsfeldt to further emphasize the complex situations and risks encountered in fishery management." As we know, there are known knowns. There are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns. That is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns, the ones we don't know we don't know."

Management decisions would be extremely simple if our only concern involved the act of stocking a given number of fish to harvest a given number of fish. For example, we have available a great deal of data concerning typical weather conditions, predation, water quality, and the availability of prey species

etc. We could consider a stable situation involving only these variables to be similar to playing with a deck of cards with a given number of spots and suits. We could mathematically derive the probabilities of drawing a particular hand – such as a pair or a flush. However, our level of predictability and the risk factor will change considerably if include cards with 11 or 12 spots and a fifth suit. In fisheries management this would be similar to factoring in an unknown such as an invasive species, an unknown virus, or an extreme budget cut. The outcome could not be predicted with any degree of certainty.

These uncertainties in dealing with unknowns often result in a major communication gap between the managers and stakeholders. The complexities of the problem and the limited tools currently available to ascertain the overall level of risk to the resource are often overlooked. Managers are often considered to be uninformed or, for some perceived reason, simply ignoring the obvious facts and not doing their job.

Realistically, managers can only regulate stocking levels, harvest levels, water quality concerns, and predation. They become frustrated when they cannot adequately convey an appreciation of the task at hand and the underlying forces that manipulate fish populations.

In an ideal situation an established fishery would reach a natural balance based upon the “carrying capacity” of the resource. Dave went on to identify some of the many unknowns that could influence carrying capacity and system balance. The inability to fully evaluate an unanticipated influence initiates a degree of uncertainty and risk in the various options that might be available to the manager. Bottom line – “fisheries management is not rocket science”.

- Dan Bishop described the status of the ongoing channel modifications to the Salmon River. Realignment and consolidation of the channel is necessary to facilitate fish passage to the hatchery.

He noted that Cornell is unable to keep up with the large numbers of dead fish that they have received as a result of recent fish kills in Ontario, Erie, and some of the Finger Lakes. The problem has been attributed to Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia – another import. The dead gulls that have been found died of Avian Botulism - often called “Limber Neck”.

He also emphasized that the numbers of age 2+ alewife are at an all time low.

- Fran Verdoliva reported that Salmon River Reservoir had been lowered to facilitate repairs to the face of the dam. This would have been an ideal time to complete repairs to the Redfield boat launch and the channel weir in the Salmon

River. However frequent heavy rains have complicated matters and it is taking longer than anticipated.

- In general it was agreed that brown trout fishing was picking up in Mexico Bay – look for 60 degree water. Kings are further out in deeper water and fishing is slow. Charlie called attention to our annual picnic on August 5th and motioned to dismiss the meeting at 9:00 PM. The motion was seconded and carried. Our next meeting will be at Gander Mnt. on August 16. *Mac MacKenzie*