

Elosta Monthly Membership Meeting

Wednesday October 18, 2006

Minutes

(Also available at www.elosta.org)

- President Charlie Ames called the eight and final monthly meeting of 2006 to order at 7:10 PM in the meeting room at DEC's Altmar Fish Hatchery. Treasurer Tom Lott and Vice President Doug Fuegel were unable to attend. Twenty eight members/guests were present and Mac MacKenzie acted in his capacity as Secretary.
- A motion by Charlie to accept the minutes of the September 20th meeting as they appeared in the Newsletter was seconded and unanimously carried.
- Charlie noted that Tom Lott was away on business and dispensed with the reading of the Treasurer's Report for the period Sept. 21 – Oct. 17.
- As Chair of the Elections Committee Charlie expressed concern that none of the members had expressed an interest in holding office in 2007. He called for nominations from the floor and upon hearing none made a motion to accept the current slate. That motion was quickly seconded and unanimously approved. Charlie will continue as President, Doug Fuegel as VP, Tom Lott as Treasurer, and Mac MacKenzie as Secretary. We are still in need of a Membership Secretary.
- Charlie then thanked all those who have contributed to the Newsletter throughout the year.
- At the September meeting a motion from the floor for an Elosta contribution to support the efforts of the NYS Conservation Council was tabled pending consideration by the Board of Directors. The Board unanimously agreed with a proposal to contribute \$350 or - one dollar per member. Charlie's motion to that effect was seconded and the member's response was unanimous.
- Dan Bishop, DEC's Region 7 Fisheries Manager, summarized the egg taking process at Altmar to date. DEC is finished with the Chinook but, the data sheet is not yet available. On the bright side the Kings were bigger this year taking into account a loss of weight during the migration up river. On the down side there were very few jacks. Coho enter the river a little later and they generally move up very fast.

All of the Chinook eggs were immediately disinfected to combat VHS. The treatment has no side effects and it is 100% effective on this species. There are many different strains of VHS and DEC is desperately looking for a treatment that is also effective on other species such as walleye and muskies. No Altmar derived fish products, i.e. Brown Trout, will be shipped to be reared in other State hatcheries. VHS was also found in Coho but it is not symptomatic. Of greater concern is the VHS found in Emerald Shiners. DEC is considering regulations for the taking and transporting of bait fish from Lakes Ontario and Erie.

VHS is not present in Oneida Lake at this time. But, consider the consequences. The Oneida hatchery currently represents the whole States stocking supply. The introduction of VHS

would make this a one lake hatchery. If you find any questionable fish keep them cool but, do not freeze. Call the Department at 315-654-2147.

- Andy Grulich, Altmar hatchery manager, apologized for being late. He had to track down and attend to a late afternoon deer he had taken with the bow. He said the newly acquired hatchery personnel caught on quickly and the egg taking process was completed smoothly in eight days. They took three million Chinook eggs from 3,000 fish and 1.5 million Coho eggs from 3,500 fish. The eggs had to be immediately disinfected before they became water hardened. Some additional coho eggs were taken as a cushion. In general, the raceways were full of fish ... “like the good old days”.

During early October the hatchery suffered two severe power outages that were attributed to an earlier lightning strike. Three expensive fuses had to be replaced. During the interim two ground water pumps had to be operated on single phase current. Unfortunately, both pumps burned out.

He is not pleased with the production of the new drilled wells completed this past summer. As a supplemental supply they are working with two old shallow wells recently returned to production. They also dug two new shallow wells that produce 75 – 90 gph each. The hatchery is also experimenting with idea of recycling water with swimming pool sand filters and UV treatment.

In response to a question from the floor concerning the removal of spent fish from the raceways Andy explained that the fish had to be removed from the river and transported to a land fill site. Allowing them to remain and deteriorate in the river was not a desirable alternative.

- Fran Verdoliva said fishing is good in the Salmon River and mentioned that he was taking egg samples from Steelhead reds. This is a labor intensive job and it is much easier to take the eggs from the fish if necessary.

- Mitch Franz reported that this has been an outstanding year for bass and brown trout fishing on the St Lawrence River. Walleye fishing in Henderson was way off this year and anglers had to go way out in the shipping lanes to find good salmon fishing. Not much pressure on lake trout. Walleye fishing was also poor on the Oswego River. This was attributed to a season long abundance of second year alewife. The walleye were feeding deep – perhaps after gobies. Bass are also taking gobies being offered as bait.

The Lake Ontario Fishing Coalition stocked 126,000 walleye fingerlings this past spring from the nine hatchery ponds reclaimed in the Cape Vincent area. In response to a request from the Chaumont Fish and Game Club the Coalition has agreed, pending DEC approval, to relinquish one of the ponds next spring to rear northern pike fingerlings. Pike, like walleye, are cannibalistic and cannot remain in a confined pond for long periods.

- Jay Levy supported most of the contentions regarding the overall productivity of the fishery this past season. It was on and off from spring to fall and in his opinion the poorest return in the last two or three years. Windy weather and numerous cold water upwellings distributed the fish over wide areas. The salmon found warm water way out and didn't come in.

- Joe Wilcznski added a bit of information concerning the St Lawrence River. Overall, fishing has been good but the NP are on the small side. Divers went down and reported that there are literally thousands of gobies all over the bottom. They observed that the bass, walleye, and northern pike are suspended just above the gobies – a good point to remember. However, local

anglers are concerned that the bass will die from eating the VHS infected gobies. Dan Bishop said they are not sure if the goby strain will affect the bass.

- Bill Lefancheck advised the members that his next Oswego County Federation meeting will be his last for the year – he is going south. Topics at his last meeting included: an ongoing bobcat survey, chain saw use classes, and Soil and Water Conservation conducted youth classes. The District is in need of presenters and support to help out and, the Federation voted to contribute \$300 for the coming year’s effort. Proposals currently on the table include free boat launching at State launch sites and a ban against the sale of fish taken with a recreation license. There is nothing to report on the legislative front at this time.

- Mac MacKenzie advised the members present that the US Coast Guard (Homeland Security) will be conducting a meeting on October 31 in Rochester to hear public comment concerning a proposal to establish three “Safety Zones” in Lake Ontario. The use of the term Safety Zone rather than target ranges is nothing more than a slick way to avoid compliance with applicable environmental considerations.

The area of greatest significance to ELOSTA is a 5 X 10 mile site located five miles off-shore between Nine Mile Point and Galloo Island. There is an additional 2 mile wide exclusion perimeter. The purpose of the areas is to train personnel in the use of 7.62 boat mounted machine guns. Boaters will be warned by radio when they must avoid the area. Other than that the CG has provided very little information concerning their long range intentions or the impact of this noisy activity on wildlife, coastal residents, or boaters. The whole write-up is available on www.elosta.org.

In general it was concluded that ELOSTA would not become involved or prepare a response.

- Charlie’s motion to close the meeting at 8:30 PM was seconded and carried. The next monthly meeting (State of the Lake) will be held on March 21st 2007 at a location to be determined.*Mac MacKenzie*