

FISH AND WILDLIFE SPECIAL PURPOSE ACCOUNT ANNUAL REPORTS

FISCAL YEARS
1999-2000 to 2008-2009

Cette publication hautement spécialisée Special Purpose Account Expenditure Report n'est disponible qu'en Anglais en vertu du Règlement 411/97 qui en exempte l'application de la Loi sur les services en français. Pour obtenir de l'aide en français, veuillez communiquer avec Melanie Clarke au ministère des Richesses naturelles au 705 755 5301.

**Fiscal year
1999-2000**

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE ON THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SPECIAL PURPOSE ACCOUNT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1999/00

BACKGROUND:

One of the most significant developments in fish and wildlife conservation in Ontario has been the dedication of fish and wildlife revenues to management programs of the Ministry of Natural Resources. This revenue, including all licence fees, royalties and fines paid under the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* and its regulations, flows into the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account (SPA). The Fish and Wildlife SPA was established in April 1996 as a result of legislative amendments. The money held in this account can only be spent on:

- The management, perpetuation, or rehabilitation of wildlife or fish populations or the ecosystems of which these populations are a part; and,
- matters related to the activities of people as they interact with or affect fish and wildlife populations, including any matter related to user or public safety.

Revenues flowing to the SPA averaged about \$47 million annually over the three fiscal years 1997/98 to 1999/00. The actual amount varies because of a three-year cycle in Outdoors Card and licence renewals. Funds not spent at the end of the fiscal year are retained in the account and are available for future years.

PROGRAM STATUS AND ACHIEVEMENTS:

The flow of funding through the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account and the advice provided by the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Board have promoted positive change and progress within the Fish and Wildlife Program. Highlights from fiscal year 1999/00 are provided below.

- Recreational opportunities have been expanded. For example, effective January 2000, more than 140 put-grow-and-take stocked brook trout lakes in northeastern Ontario were opened to year-round angling. Deer seasons were expanded in four central Ontario Wildlife Management Units in the fall of 1999. The province's wild turkey restoration program continued to expand into new areas and new hunting seasons were opened in the spring of 1999 in five Wildlife Management Units and sub-units where wild turkeys have become well established.
- We are making it easier for the public to get fish and wildlife information through improved customer service, including greater use of electronic service delivery (ESD) and streamlined licensing forms and procedures. We are encouraging more people to get involved in outdoor recreation, including youth outreach initiatives such as the Family Fishing Weekend and Take a Kid Fishing Week. Working closely with the tourism and outdoor industries, MNR continues to have a high profile at outdoor shows in Ontario and the United States.

- Significant improvements have been made to the annual hunting and fishing regulation summaries. Both publications now include a clearer explanation of Outdoors Card and licencing processes, MNR contacts and phone numbers. The fishing regulations summary is in a new, easier to use format that shows seasons, creel limits and size restrictions for a given Fishing Division on the same page; new regulations are highlighted in red print. The hunting regulations summary provides step-by-step instructions for applying to wildlife validation tag draws.
- In September 1999, MNR received approval from Management Board to increase fees for resident angling and hunting licences, effective January 1, 2000. These fee increases will increase revenues an average of \$6.93 million annually over the 3 year SPA revenue cycle. This is in addition to the increase in revenue of over \$2.37 million annually resulting from fee increases for non-resident angling and hunting licences which came into effect January 1, 1999. These increased revenues will help to address many of the long-standing financial concerns regarding the fish and wildlife program.
- MNR is developing more partnerships and positive working relationships with community groups, organizations and businesses, such as angling and hunting organizations and resource industries. These organizations have taken on a greater role in sustainable management of our natural resources and are helping expand and improve our fish and wildlife management programs.
- Funding for the Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program (CFWIP) exceeded \$1 million in 1999-2000, with 507 projects completed.
- In 1999, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ontario Baitfish Association implemented a new business relationship which allows for greater industry input to policies, increased revenue from licence fees, and greater reporting responsibilities.
- The elk reintroduction program continues to be a success. Through the efforts of twelve participating organizations, including MNR, a further 170 elk were transferred from Elk Island National Park to Ontario in January 2000. Of the 170 elk, 70 were released near Bancroft, 60 near Cameron Lake in northwestern Ontario, and 40 in the area southwest of Sudbury. These transfers add to the 109 elk released in Ontario in the winters of 1998 and 1999. Ontario's elk population is now well over 300, as compared to fewer than 60 before the restoration project began.
- Implementation of the Grand River Fisheries Management Plan began in 1999. This initiative involves numerous stakeholders interested in producing some of the finest fly fishing for brown trout in eastern North America. In the fall of 1999, MNR staff involved with implementing the plan were recognized through the presentation of an Amethyst Award.

Fish and Wildlife Program Funding

On an annual basis, the revenues flowing to the SPA represent two-thirds of the total

Fish and Wildlife Program budget. The remaining funds are provided as an allocation from the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF).

Revenues flowing to the SPA come almost exclusively from anglers, hunters and commercial users of fish and wildlife resources.

Angling and hunting licences and permits provide over 90 per cent of SPA revenues. Of this, approximately two-thirds is associated with recreational fishing and one-third with hunting. About 60 per cent of recreational licence revenues are derived from Ontario residents and about 40 per cent from non-residents.

In Fiscal Year 1999-2000, an estimated 1.1 million licensed Ontario anglers and over 400,000 licensed Ontario hunters actively participated in recreational fishing and hunting in the province. In addition, over 560,000 non-resident angling licences and 26,000 non-resident hunting licences were sold in Fiscal Year 1999-2000.

Revenues to the Fish and Wildlife SPA

Source of Revenue	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00
Ontario Resident Angling and Hunting Licences & Permits	\$17,440,612 ¹	36,405,362	22,487,505
Non-Resident Angling and Hunting Licences & Permits	15,583,161	15,916,673	19,154,438
Commercial Fish Licences and Royalties	895,550	991,776	1,546,229
Bait Fish Licences	112,534	37,564 ²	444,650
Fur Licences and Royalties	559,354	538,044	429,661
Fines and Penalties	526,751	549,032	734,426
Other Revenue	1,559,211	732,994	1,554,757 ³
Interest	541,430	752,844	780,202
Total Revenue	\$37,218,603	\$55,924,309	\$47,131,868

1. Sales of resident Outdoors Cards and three-year fishing and small game hunting licences have a three-year cycle. Fiscal year 1997/98 was the low year for licence sales and renewals.
2. Most revenues from the sale of 1999 baitfish licences were not realized until fiscal year 1999/00. Collection of licence fees was deferred until after March 31, 1999 pending implementation of the new partnership with the baitfish industry.
3. Includes \$800,000 allocated from the Consolidated Revenue Fund to replace licence revenues lost as a result of cancellation of the spring bear hunt.

Fish and Wildlife SPA – Revenues and Expenditures

Item	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00
Year Start Balance	9,339,582	1,129,785	8,623,794
Revenue	37,218,603	55,924,309	47,131,868
Expenditures	(45,428,400)	(48,430,300)	(50,427,400)
Year End Balance	1,129,785	8,623,794	5,328,262

Funding from the Special Purpose Account is directed primarily to support field operations, Great Lakes programs, enforcement, and hatcheries. Most of the funding for the rabies program, policy development, natural heritage and Outdoors

Card/licensing comes from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. Science programs receive allocations from both the Fish and Wildlife SPA and the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

FUTURE PROGRAM DIRECTION:

- The future for fish and wildlife management in Ontario has been strengthened by the creation of the Special Purpose Account.
- A biologically sustainable resource is the basis upon which we are building and maintaining new angling and hunting opportunities.
- We continue to refine the way we monitor the state of our natural resources so that we have better information on fish and wildlife resources, to support sound management decisions.
- Our marketing and partnership efforts are more important than ever. We continue to pursue opportunities to get more people involved in outdoor recreation, conservation and resource management.
- We look forward to the continued involvement and advice of the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Board in ensuring that Fish and Wildlife Program budgets are managed in the most effective and efficient manner possible.
- Development of Hunting and Fishing Heritage legislation will recognize the long tradition of responsible resource use and the contribution of anglers and hunters to conservation efforts across the province.
- The primary task of the Fish and Wildlife Program is to ensure that Ontario's diverse fish and wildlife populations are conserved for the future. MNR staff are working with the citizens of this province to develop and implement sound programs for the conservation and rehabilitation of fish and wildlife resources, thereby contributing to the social, cultural and economic benefits these resources provide.

Fiscal year 2000-2001

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE ON THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SPECIAL PURPOSE ACCOUNT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2000-2001

BACKGROUND:

One of the most significant developments in fish and wildlife conservation in Ontario has been the dedication of fish and wildlife revenues to management programs of the Ministry of Natural Resources. This revenue, including all licence fees, royalties and fines paid under the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* and its regulations, flows into the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account (SPA). The Fish and Wildlife SPA was established in April 1996 as a result of legislative amendments. The money held in this account can only be spent on:

- The management, perpetuation, or rehabilitation of wildlife or fish populations or the ecosystems of which these populations are a part; and,
- matters related to the activities of people as they interact with or affect fish and wildlife populations, including any matter related to user or public safety.

Revenues flowing to the SPA averaged \$50 million annually over the three fiscal years 1998/99 to 2000/01. The actual amount varies because of a three-year cycle in Outdoors Card and licence renewals. Funds not spent at the end of the fiscal year are retained in the account and are available for future years.

PROGRAM STATUS AND ACHIEVEMENTS:

The flow of funding through the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account and the advice provided by the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Board have promoted positive change and progress within the Fish and Wildlife Program. Highlights from fiscal year 2000/01 are provided below.

- Recreational opportunities have been expanded, as the following examples demonstrate. Effective January 1, 2001, year-round open seasons were established for brook trout and splake in a number of lakes in northern Ontario. Grouse hunting seasons across most of northwestern Ontario from the Marathon area to the Manitoba border were extended by two weeks in 2000. New moose archery seasons were established in several Wildlife Management Units in northeastern Ontario. An annual archery moose hunt, including a special season specifically for disabled hunters, was established in the Cornwall area. The province's wild turkey restoration program continued to expand into new areas, and new hunting seasons were opened in the spring of 2000 in nine Wildlife Management Units and sub-units where wild turkeys have become well established. Additional hunting opportunities were also provided through a pilot program in several Wildlife Management Units in southern Ontario, in which second deer seals were offered to hunters.
- A new automatic telephone application system for controlled deer hunt draws was implemented in August 2000. The new telephone service is more convenient for deer hunters, and has proven to be very popular, with more than 30 percent of

eligible hunters using this service during the first year alone.

- MNR is developing more partnerships and positive working relationships with community groups, organizations and businesses, such as angling and hunting organizations and resource industries. These organizations have taken on a greater role in sustainable management of our natural resources and are helping to expand and improve our fish and wildlife management programs.
- \$1 million in funding was provided to the Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program (CFWIP) 2000-01. This money was used to support 624 projects that involved 19,000 volunteers and more than 12,000 days of volunteer work.
- The elk reintroduction program, which began in 1998, continues to be a success. Through the efforts of twelve participating organizations, including MNR, a further 50 elk were transferred from Elk Island National Park to a site near the north shore of Lake Huron in December 2000. Ontario's elk population is now close to 400, as compared to fewer than 60 before the restoration project began.
- In August 2000, Ontario hosted the Premier's Symposium on North America's Hunting Heritage. This was the sixth such symposium, the first to be held outside of the United States, and one of the best attended to date with more than 600 registrants. The Symposium celebrated our hunting heritage, promoted safe and ethical hunting and built on our conservation traditions.
- Fish production and stocking from MNR's ten fish hatcheries have increased to more than eight million fish per year, and the increased use of aircraft has allowed the stocking of remote waters.
- Through the work of a committee led by MNR and comprised of major stakeholders, muskellunge size limit regulations were streamlined and rationalized based on new science. These new regulations are easier to understand, provide a diversity of different angling opportunities and ensure the muskellunge resource is managed on a sustainable basis. The approach taken will serve as a model for new regulation streamlining initiatives.
- MNR continued to use innovative methods to provide information on hunting and angling to users. The "Hunt Ontario" publication was produced for the first time in 2000, and has been used to actively promote hunting opportunities at numerous venues, including outdoors shows in Canada and the United States. The "Let's Fish Ontario!" website debuted in 2000, and allowed users to access information on a wide variety of topics, including how to get a licence, planning a fishing trip, fish facts and current fishing regulations.
- Fiscal Year 2000/01 represented the first time that users were allowed to renew Outdoors Cards, 3 year fishing licences and 3 year small game licences through the Internet.

Fish and Wildlife Program Funding

On an annual basis, the revenues flowing to the SPA represent approximately two-

thirds of the total Fish and Wildlife Program budget. The remaining funds are provided as an allocation from the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF).

Revenues flowing to the SPA come almost exclusively from anglers, hunters and commercial users of fish and wildlife resources.

Angling and hunting licences and permits provide close to 90 percent of SPA revenues. Of this, approximately two-thirds is associated with recreational fishing and one-third with hunting. About 60 per cent of recreational licence revenues are derived from Ontario residents and about 40 per cent from non-residents.

Approximately 1.4 million Ontarians participate in fishing, and 423,000 in hunting each year. In addition, approximately 570,000 non-residents take part in fishing, and 26,000 in hunting in Ontario annually.

Revenues to the Fish and Wildlife SPA

Source of Revenue	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01
Ontario Resident Angling and Hunting Licences & Permits	36,405,362 ¹	22,487,505	23,509,980
Non-Resident Angling and Hunting Licences & Permits	15,916,673	19,154,438	18,921,933
Commercial Fish Licences and Royalties	991,776	1,546,229	1,409,993
Bait Fish Licences	37,564 ²	444,650	485,619
Fur Licences and Royalties	538,044	429,661	291,699
Fines and Penalties	549,032	734,426	841,598
Other Revenue	732,994	1,554,757 ³	1,382,075 ³
Interest	752,844	780,202	1,001,832
Total Revenue	\$55,924,309	\$47,131,868	\$47,844,729

1. Sales of resident Outdoors Cards and three-year fishing and small game hunting licences have a three-year cycle. Fiscal year 1998/99 was the high year for licence sales and renewals.
2. Most revenues from the sale of 1999 baitfish licences were not realized until fiscal year 1999/00. Collection of licence fees was deferred until after March 31, 1999 pending implementation of the new partnership with the baitfish industry.
3. Includes \$708,000 allocated from the Consolidated Revenue Fund to replace licence revenues lost as a result of cancellation of the spring bear hunt.

Fish and Wildlife SPA – Revenues and Expenditures

Item	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01
Year Start Balance	1,129,785	8,623,794	5,328,262
Revenue	55,924,309	47,131,868	47,844,729
Expenditures	(48,430,300)	(50,427,400)	(52,164,100)
Year End Balance	8,623,794	5,328,262	1,008,891

Funding from the Special Purpose Account is directed primarily to support field operations, Great Lakes programs, enforcement, and hatcheries. Most of the funding for the rabies program, policy development, natural heritage and Outdoors Card/licensing comes from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. Science programs receive allocations from both the Fish and Wildlife SPA and the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

FUTURE PROGRAM DIRECTION:

- The future for fish and wildlife management in Ontario has been strengthened by the creation of the Special Purpose Account.
- A biologically sustainable resource is the basis upon which we are building and maintaining new angling and hunting opportunities.
- We continue to refine the way we monitor the state of our natural resources so that we have better information on fish and wildlife resources, to support sound management decisions.
- Our marketing and partnership efforts are more important than ever. We continue to pursue opportunities to get more people involved in outdoor recreation, conservation and resource management.
- Development of the Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act will recognize the long tradition of responsible resource use and the contribution of anglers and hunters to conservation efforts across the province.
- A project has been initiated to streamline and simplify Ontario's fishing regulations, to better serve the needs of present and future anglers.
- MNR is continuing to work on improving customer service, particularly through Electronic Service Delivery initiatives (e.g. internet and automated telephone systems) to provide information and allow for fast and easy user transactions from home.
- The primary task of the Fish and Wildlife Program is to ensure that Ontario's diverse fish and wildlife populations are conserved for the future. MNR staff are working with the citizens of this province to develop and implement sound programs for the conservation and rehabilitation of fish and wildlife resources, thereby contributing to the social, cultural and economic benefits these resources provide.
- We look forward to the continued involvement and advice of the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Board in ensuring that Fish and Wildlife Program budgets are managed in the most effective and efficient manner possible.

Fiscal year 2001-2002

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE ON THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SPECIAL PURPOSE ACCOUNT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2001-2002

BACKGROUND:

One of the most significant developments in fish and wildlife conservation in Ontario has been the dedication of fish and wildlife revenues to management programs of the Ministry of Natural Resources. This revenue, including all licence fees, royalties and fines paid under the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* and its regulations, flows into the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account (SPA). The Fish and Wildlife SPA was established in April 1996 as a result of legislative amendments. The money held in this account can only be spent on:

- the management, perpetuation, or rehabilitation of wildlife or fish populations or the ecosystems of which these populations are a part; and,
- matters related to the activities of people as they interact with or affect fish and wildlife populations, including any matter related to user or public safety.

Revenues flowing to the SPA averaged \$54 million annually over the three fiscal years 1999/00 to 2001/02. The actual amount varies because of a three-year cycle in Outdoors Card and licence renewals. Funds not spent at the end of the fiscal year are retained in the account and are available for future years.

PROGRAM STATUS AND ACHIEVEMENTS:

The flow of funding through the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account and the advice provided by the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Board have promoted positive change and progress within the Fish and Wildlife Program. Highlights from fiscal year 2001/02 are provided below.

- Recreational opportunities have been expanded, as the following examples demonstrate. The province's wild turkey restoration program continues to expand into new areas, with new seasons opened in the spring of 2001 in five Wildlife Management Units and sub-units where wild turkeys have become well established. In the fall of 2001, a major expansion in deer hunting opportunities was announced for many Wildlife Management Units in south-central Ontario; this was achieved through both the addition of new seasons, and allowing for the purchase of a second deer seal in many areas. A number of additional fishing opportunities were announced in January 2001, including: opening a further five brook trout lakes to year-round angling; allowing recreational fishing on fourteen lakes previously classified as sanctuaries; and permitting the use of two lines for anglers on Lake Huron.
- Continuing a tradition of providing special opportunities to disabled hunters and anglers, MNR implemented a regulatory change in the fall of 2001 that allows a disabled moose hunter taking part in the special hunt in WMU 65 to be accompanied by an able-bodied hunter, to assist the disabled hunter, and help provide for a high quality hunting experience.
- In the spring of 2001, MNR made a number of improvements to its trapping regulations. Weather conditions previously made it difficult for trappers to safely access their traplines for marten and fisher until near the end of the open season; the season was therefore

extended by 15 days. In order to address concerns regarding increasing raccoon populations, and public health and agricultural operations related to the threat of raccoon rabies, the raccoon season has been extended by 15 days in much of the province.

- MNR is developing more partnerships and positive working relationships with community groups, organizations and businesses, such as angling and hunting organizations and resource industries. These organizations have taken on a greater role in sustainable management of our natural resources and are helping to expand and improve our fish and wildlife management programs.
- \$1.0 million in funding was provided to the Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program (CFWIP) 2001-02. This money was used to support 582 projects that involved 19,000 volunteers and more than 19,000 days of volunteer work.
- Fish production and stocking from MNR's ten fish hatcheries totaled 8.4 million in 2001; in addition, approximately 500,000 eyed eggs were transferred to partners.
- In December 2001, MNR implemented measures to help ensure the sustainability of wolves in and around Algonquin Provincial Park. Following two and a half years of public consultation and study, a regulation was passed to establish a ban on the hunting and trapping of wolves in three townships, and a moratorium on these activities in an additional 39 townships, in the Algonquin Park area. There has been significant public support for these measures.
- A wide variety of enforcement initiatives continued to be funded by the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account in Fiscal Year 2001/02. The quality of commercial fish harvest data was improved through increased monitoring and enforcement by MNR Conservation Officers. Targeted enforcement efforts were carried out in situations involving sport fisheries (primarily lake trout and walleye) where sustainability concerns had been identified. These programs contributed to compliance rates above 90% in all fish and wildlife areas.

Fish and Wildlife Program Funding

On an annual basis, the average revenues flowing to the SPA represent approximately two-thirds of the total Fish and Wildlife Program budget. The remaining funds are provided as an allocation from the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF).

Revenues flowing to the SPA come almost exclusively from anglers, hunters and commercial users of fish and wildlife resources.

Angling and hunting licences and permits provide close to 90 percent of SPA revenues. Of this, approximately two-thirds is associated with recreational fishing and one-third with hunting. About 60 per cent of recreational licence revenues are derived from Ontario residents and about 40 per cent from non-residents.

Approximately 1.4 million Ontarians participate in fishing, and 423,000 in hunting each year. In addition, approximately 570,000 non-residents take part in fishing, and 26,000 in hunting in Ontario annually.

Revenues to the Fish and Wildlife SPA

Source of Revenue	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02
Ontario Resident Angling and Hunting Licences &	22,487,505	23,509,980	44,077,629 ¹
Non-Resident Angling and Hunting Licences & Permits	19,154,438	18,921,933	18,925,208
Commercial Fish Licences and Royalties	1,546,229	1,409,993	1,317,871
Bait Fish Licences	444,650	485,619	375,145
Fur Licences and Royalties	429,661	291,699	327,867
Fines and Penalties	734,426	841,598	630,729
Other Revenue	1,554,757 ²	1,382,075 ²	583,274
Interest	780,202	1,001,832	656,169
Total Revenue	\$47,131,868	\$47,844,72	\$66,893,89

1. Sales of resident Outdoors Cards and three-year fishing and small game hunting licences have a three-year cycle. Fiscal year 2001/02 was the high year for licence sales and renewals.
2. Includes \$708,000 allocated from the Consolidated Revenue Fund to replace licence revenues lost as a result of cancellation of the spring bear hunt.

Fish and Wildlife SPA – Revenues and Expenditures (\$)

Item	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02
Year Start Balance	8,623,794	5,328,262	1,008,891
Revenue	47,131,868	47,844,729	66,893,892
Expenditures	(50,427,400)	(52,164,100)	(52,600,000)
Year End Balance	5,328,262	1,008,891	15,302,783

Funding from the Special Purpose Account is directed primarily to support field operations, Great Lakes programs, enforcement, and hatcheries. Most of the funding for the rabies program, policy development, natural heritage and Outdoors Card/licensing comes from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. Science programs receive allocations from both the Fish and Wildlife SPA and the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

FUTURE PROGRAM DIRECTION:

- The future for fish and wildlife management in Ontario has been strengthened by the creation of the Special Purpose Account.
- A biologically sustainable resource is the basis upon which we are building and maintaining new angling and hunting opportunities.
- We continue to refine the way we monitor the state of our natural resources so that we have better information on fish and wildlife resources, to support sound management decisions.
- Our marketing and partnership efforts are more important than ever. We continue to pursue opportunities to get more people involved in outdoor recreation, conservation and

resource management.

- A project is underway to streamline and simplify Ontario's fishing regulations, to better serve the needs of present and future anglers. MNR is currently working toward establishing new, simplified fishing regulations for muskellunge and splake.
- MNR is continuing to work on improving customer service, particularly through Electronic Service Delivery initiatives (e.g. internet and automated telephone systems) to provide information and allow for fast and easy user transactions from home. In 2002/03, MNR will be adding two new items (Outdoor Card renewal and address change) to the list of transactions that can be completed on Public Access Terminals.
- The primary task of the Fish and Wildlife Program is to ensure that Ontario's diverse fish and wildlife populations are conserved for the future. MNR staff are working with the citizens of this province to develop and implement sound programs for the conservation and rehabilitation of fish and wildlife resources, thereby contributing to the social, cultural and economic benefits these resources provide.
- We look forward to the continued involvement and advice of the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Board and its successor, the Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission, in ensuring that Fish and Wildlife Program budgets are managed in the most effective and efficient manner possible.

Fiscal year 2002-2003

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE ON THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SPECIAL PURPOSE ACCOUNT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2002-2003

BACKGROUND:

One of the most significant developments in fish and wildlife conservation in Ontario has been the dedication of fish and wildlife revenues to management programs of the Ministry of Natural Resources. This revenue, including all licence fees, royalties and fines paid under the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* and its regulations, flows into the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account (SPA). The Fish and Wildlife SPA was established in April 1996 as a result of legislative amendments. The money held in this account can only be spent on:

- the management, perpetuation, or rehabilitation of wildlife or fish populations or the ecosystems of which these populations are a part; and,
- matters related to the activities of people as they interact with or affect fish and wildlife populations, including any matter related to user or public safety.

PROGRAM STATUS AND ACHIEVEMENTS:

Throughout 2002/03, the Fish and Wildlife Program focused on its goal of providing leadership and direction in sustaining healthy ecosystems, managing the Province's fish and wildlife resources and in maintaining or enhancing social, economic and cultural benefits derived from these resources. Highlights of the work accomplished are set out below for the Program objectives as identified in the 2002/03 Business Plan.

Protect healthy fish and wildlife populations and the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems on which they rely.

- Completed over 135 habitat, 300 population and 50 harvest inventory, monitoring and assessment projects to monitor resource use and changes;
- Developed approximately 42 resource management plans and reviewed/commented on 65 other plans impacting on FW resources;
- Issued over 7,000 FW instruments (licences, permits, authorizations) to control/authorize use, protect resources;
- Signed 199 agreements (4,774 hectares) with private land owners to protect/enhance significant wetlands/wildlife habitat under Eastern Habitat Joint Venture Program;
- Acquired over 2,800 hectares of high value habitat for protection, in cooperation with other partners under the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture Program;
- Resource allocations determined and allocated to resource users for a variety of resources including commercial fish and fur, moose, deer and bear to ensure sustainability of populations;
- Operated 8 Provincial Fisheries Assessment Units to assess fisheries changes;
- Implemented approximately 94 regulation submissions to enhance protection of FW resources;

- Completed/made significant progress conducting research on 46 areas of Program priority and published 50 scientific papers/articles and over 100 internal technical reports (e.g. Black Bass: Ecology, Conservation and Management –Book with 7 MNR papers) ;
- Implemented/maintained over 40 collaborative research agreements with partners;
- Achieved a compliance rate of 94% on the Great Lakes. Over 19,600 users were contacted and 505 charges laid by enforcement staff; and
- Completed/made significant progress on 35 policies and procedures to provide consistency in approach and direction.

Rehabilitate degraded populations and habitats.

- Stocked 4.1M fish stocked for rehabilitation of degraded fisheries;
- Completed 14 rehabilitation/enhancement projects;
- Developed over 40 recovery plans for species at risk, fisheries, etc.; and
- Completed approximately 58 species introductions/transfers to expand recreational/social benefits in expanded areas.

Provide and promote diverse fishing, hunting and viewing opportunities as well as other social, economic and cultural benefits based on Ontario fish and wildlife populations.

- Implemented over 240 OLL projects to increase opportunities and access to FW resources;
- Stocked 4.1M fish to provide recreational opportunities;
- Stocked 800 water bodies to increase opportunities and/or rehabilitate degraded populations;
- Submitted over 10 regulation changes to expand opportunities; and
- Implemented 11 projects focused on increasing nonconsumptive opportunities.

Reduce threats to human health from wildlife populations including delivery of the rabies control program.

- Distributed 500K rabies baits in the core fox rabies range across S. Ont. to ensure continued containment of fox rabies at low levels;
- Distributed 300K rabies baits in NE Ontario to control/eradicate a fox rabies outbreak in the Sudbury/North Bay area;
- Distributed 600K raccoon rabies baits and implemented 4 new point infection controls in Eastern Ontario to continue efforts to eliminate raccoon rabies from Ontario;
- Carried out a pilot field testing program for monitoring Chronic Wasting Disease in wild deer populations; and
- Supported intra Ministry efforts in the areas of West Nile virus and Chronic Wasting disease control/prevention.

Increase awareness, understanding and involvement of stakeholders.

- Implemented 588 CFWIP projects and 235 stewardship projects to enhance stakeholder awareness and involvement in fish and wildlife management work and leverage additional resources with partners;
- Nuisance bear management - provided additional funding to Districts/partners to enhance Municipal nuisance bear management capabilities. Updated and reprinted communications/education materials (technical note, brochure, etc.);
- Provided technical expertise/support to the Nuisance Bear Review;

- Implemented 70 education projects;
- Completed 35 EBR postings and 16 Class EA processes completed to advise the public/solicit input on Ministry planned initiatives;
- Supported the operation of the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Board;
- Supported passage of the Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act and development of new Commission;
- Supported over 100 international, federal and provincial boards, over 250 local/regional committees, boards and 48 stewardship councils; and
- Initiated an Outreach project (23 organizations contacted) to improve our understanding of the vision, goals and objectives that a range of non-government organizations have for fish and wildlife in Ontario, and to further enhance working relationships.

Promote organizational excellence and commitment to quality service.

- Maintained/updated 5 Province wide business relationships in the areas of commercial fish, baitfish, fur, hunter safety and wild turkey seminar delivery;
- Developed and managed over 160 partnerships to enhance program delivery capability;
- Provided over 100 updates to the FW Bulletin Board to keep program delivery/customer service staff aware of recent changes;
- Provided over 500 Briefing notes and 762 draft Minister's letters in a timely fashion to support senior management decision making and the Minister's office;
- Provided licencing services (Outdoor card administration, licencing, communications) to 1.7M clients and over 1,900 private licence issuers;
- Produced and distributed 1.4M fishing and hunting summaries on schedule; and
- Provided Fish and Wildlife information to clients in a timely matter.

Meet revenue projections.

- Exceeded year-start SPA revenue target by 3.3%
- Implemented 2 new customer service access improvement projects;
- Supported 7 provincial trade shows; and
- Implemented 8 new Marketing initiatives.

Additional Not-Planned Achievements:

A number of areas were addressed in-year that were not planned for as part of the Business Planning process. These included:

- NER fox rabies outbreak-ongoing fox rabies cases in the Sudbury/North Bay areas required implementation of an aerial baiting program throughout this area.
- Raccoon rabies containment (Eastern Ontario)-Management Board funding was less than requested to maintain the level of effort necessary to continue eradication efforts. The program provided supplementary funding to continue this Program at the required level of effort.
- Nuisance Bear Management -the Program allocated additional new funding to the 3 field regions and FW Branch to continue with Divestment efforts. As well, funding was provided for start-up and technical support for the Nuisance Bear Review Committee.
- Great Lakes enforcement/issue management-supplementary funding was provided to manage growing issues related to aboriginal issues/resource allocation on several areas of the Great Lakes.

- Contributed to Government direction related to Electronic Service Delivery Initiative.
- Implementation of a number of priorities requested by the Minister related to Fish and Wildlife delivery (licence fee freeze for selected licences, earlier production of the hunting summaries, moose tag communications).

Major Events, not planned for in BP resulting in program adjustments

The Program Leadership Team relied on a number of special funding circumstances, which provided in-year funding for unplanned items and emerging issues as identified above. These included:

- Use of year-start Labour dispute SPA savings to address Program emerging issues.
- Use of special funding received as part of the BP process (spring bear hunt revenue loss offset funds, federal fines recovery) to address unplanned for events rather than diverting this funding to ongoing operational programs.

Two areas within the Program were impacted due to the diversion of funds to cover in-year unplanned items. These were:

- The majority of planned commercial fish buyout funding was re-aligned to in-year pressures resulting in reduced capabilities in-year to address allocation issues.
- Approximately 1/3 of the Program's information management fund was re-allocated to program in-year funding issues.

Fish and Wildlife Program Funding

On an annual basis, the average revenues flowing to the SPA represent approximately two-thirds of the total Fish and Wildlife Program budget. The remaining funds are provided as an allocation from the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF).

Revenues flowing to the SPA come almost exclusively from anglers, hunters and commercial users of fish and wildlife resources.

FISH AND WILDLIFE SPA REVENUES

Source of Revenue	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
Ontario Resident Angling and Hunting Licences & Permits	\$23,509.9	\$44,077.6	\$27,315.4
Non-Resident Angling and Hunting Licences & Permits	\$18,921.9	\$18,925.2	\$19,564.7
Commercial Fish Licences and Royalties	\$1,409.9	\$1,317.8	\$1,532.8
Bait Fish Licences	\$485.6	\$375.1	\$342.1
Fur Licences and Royalties	\$291.7	\$327.9	\$498.3
Fines and Penalties	\$841.6	\$630.7	\$646.9
Interest	\$1,001.8	\$656.1	\$844.3
Other Revenue	\$1,382.1	\$583.2	\$2,419.2

Total Revenue	\$47,844.7	\$66,893.8	\$53,163.7
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Summary of recoveries, revenues and year-end account balances (\$000).

Item	2000/01	2001/02	2002/2003
Year Start SPA Balance	\$5,328.2	\$1,008.8	\$15,302.7
Revenues	\$47,844.7	\$66,893.8	\$53,163.7
Recoveries/ Expenditures	(\$52,164.1)	(\$52,600)	(\$53,301.9)
Year End SPA Balance	\$1,008.8	\$15,302.7	\$15,164.5

Fiscal year 2003-2004

ATTACHMENT 1 TO FISH AND WILDLIFE ACTIVITY NOTE

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE ON THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SPECIAL PURPOSE ACCOUNT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2003/04

BACKGROUND

The *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* requires that revenues collected under that Act flow into the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account (SPA). This includes all licence fees, royalties and fines paid under the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* (FWCA) and its regulations. Money held in this account can only be spent on:

- the conservation or management of wildlife or fish populations or the ecosystems of which those populations are a part;
- matters related to the activities of people as they interact with or affect wildlife or fish wildlife populations, including any matter related to safety; or
- a refund of all or part of a fee or royalty.

The combined funds received from the SPA and the Consolidated Revenue Fund provide for delivery of an effective and diverse program including resource management activities such as enforcement, resource monitoring, policy and program development, resource allocation and licencing, partnership and volunteer programs, research, and fish stocking.

FISH AND WILDLIFE SPA REVENUES

Revenues deposited into the FW SPA largely come from anglers, hunters and commercial users of fish and wildlife resources. Of the total SPA revenues, more than 90 per cent comes from angling and hunting licences and permits. Of this 90 per cent, approximately two-thirds is associated with recreational fishing and one-third with hunting. About two-thirds of recreational licence revenues are derived from Ontario residents and about one-third from non-residents. Over the past three fiscal years, total annual licence sales have averaged about 1,000,000 resident fishing licences; 625,000 resident hunting licences; 535,000 non-resident fishing licences, and 25,000 non-resident hunting licences. Other revenue sources include fines collected under the FWCA, interest paid on the SPA account and other miscellaneous sources such as product sales, advertising, and donations.

Revenues (000s) to the Fish and Wildlife SPA-past 3 fiscal years

Source of Revenue	2001/02*	2002/03	2003/04
Ontario Resident Angling and Hunting Licences & Permits	\$44,139.9	\$27,315.4	\$24,796.0
Non-Resident Angling and Hunting Licences & Permits	\$18,571.9	\$19,564.7	\$18,928.5

Commercial Fish Licences and Royalties	\$1,323.8	\$1,532.8	\$1,042.9
Bait Fish Licences	\$375.2	\$342.1	\$373.5
Fur Licences and Royalties	\$305.6	\$498.3	\$281.4
Fines and Penalties	\$630.7	\$646.9	\$799.3
Interest	\$656.2	\$844.3	\$815.1
Other Revenue	\$890.5	\$2,419.2	\$1,344.0
Total Revenue	\$66,893.8	\$53,163.7	\$48,380.7

**Sales of resident Outdoors Cards and three-year fishing and small game hunting licences have a three-year cycle. Fiscal year 2001/02 was a peak year for licence sales and revenues.*

Annual recoveries from the SPA are planned based on a 3 year rolling average of expected revenues, due to significant annual fluctuations resulting from the Outdoor card 3-year purchasing cycle. Management Board of Cabinet approves the SPA recovery level as part of the Ministry's annual Results Based Plan submission.

Recovery/expenditure levels, revenues and the resulting SPA account balance are reviewed annually as part of the program business planning cycle and planned recoveries are adjusted as required. The program business plans to maintain a minimum year-end SPA balance in the low year of the purchasing cycle of approximately 10% of annual planned expenditures to allow for unexpected changes in revenue. The table below shows revenues and recoveries from the SPA and resulting year-end SPA balances for the past 3 fiscal years.

Summary of recoveries, revenues and year-end account balances (\$000).

Item	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004
Year Start SPA Balance	\$1,008.9	\$15,302.7	\$15,164.5
Revenues	\$66,893.8	\$53,163.7	\$48,380.7
Recoveries/ Expenditures	(\$52,600.0)	(\$53,301.9)	(\$56,503.8)
Year End SPA Balance	\$15,302.7	\$15,164.5	\$7,041.4

Operating expenditures for the Fish and Wildlife Program from all sources amounted to \$70.47 million in fiscal year 2003/2004. Approximately 80 per cent of these expenditures (\$56.50M) were supported by recoveries from the Fish and Wildlife SPA. The remaining \$13.95 million in program expenditures were supported by funding from the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF).

ACHIEVEMENTS

Throughout 2003/04, the Fish and Wildlife Program focused on its goal of providing leadership and direction in sustaining healthy ecosystems, managing the province's fish and wildlife resources and in maintaining or enhancing social, economic and cultural benefits derived from these resources. Highlights of the work accomplished are set out below.

Protect healthy fish and wildlife populations and the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems on which they rely.

- Issued 11 new policies/procedures/guidelines (Wildlife Management Environmental Assessment directive, Fish Habitat Compliance Protocol, a new definition of party hunting for big game, Algonquin wolf protection, licence issuer manual, end-of-spring trap netting standards, tool kits with guidelines to managers concerning sport fishing for brown trout, crappie, muskellunge, splake and yellow perch).
- Initiated or continued work on over 40 additional policy initiatives (aquaculture policies, wildlife management manual, wildlife rehabilitation guidelines, etc.) to provide provincial consistency in approach and direction.
- Provided policy direction to MNR in several areas including the stocking of fathead minnows to help control West Nile Virus, multiple deer seals for situations where the deer herd is under harvested, the roll out of the Fish Stocking Information System, and improved modeling for moose populations.
- Contributed to other program areas in the development of several initiatives, including nuisance bear review and subsequent program development, water management planning guidelines for waterpower, forest management guide for the protection of fish habitat, forest management planning manual, forest roads and water crossings initiative, and northern boreal initiative.
- Implemented approximately 42 regulation submissions to enhance protection of fish and wildlife resources (new fish sanctuaries, season reductions, party hunting changes, new moose calf lotteries).
- Represented Ontario in 2 national Committee of the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) meetings for the purpose of assessing the status of wildlife in Canada.
- Maintained provincial trend inventory and monitoring programs, including completion of 24 Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) moose inventories, 4 deer yard assessments, monitoring of 95 black bear population index lines and 28 provincial snow stations, mapping of F&W values to support input into 12 Forest Management Plans, 2 provincial mail surveys, 8 coastal waterfowl surveys and aging of up to 2000 bear teeth and 30,000 fish tissues.
- Completed over 100 habitat, 277 population and 83 harvest inventory, monitoring and assessment projects within the 3 field regions, science units and Great Lakes Management units to monitor resource use, population and habitat changes and effectiveness of current management programs.
- Operated 8 provincial Fisheries Assessment Units (3 in the Northwest Region, 5 in the Southern Region) to assess long term fisheries changes, assess the impacts of management actions, and test and develop fisheries sampling programs.

- Developed approximately 85 internal resource management plans (e.g. moose harvest plans, local fisheries plans, access plans) and reviewed/commented on 77 other plans (e.g. forest management plans, water management plans) impacting on fish and wildlife resources.
- Continued implementation of the Northeast Region lake trout enhancement project, including 4 aerial inventories and 38 index netting surveys to evaluate the current status of Northeast Region lake trout populations.
- Determined and delivered resource allocations to resource users for a variety of resources including commercial fish and fur, moose, deer and bear to ensure sustainability of populations.
- Issued approximately 7000 instruments (licences, permits, authorizations) to control/authorize fish and wildlife use, and protect resources.
- acquired 7 properties under the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (EHJV) program through fee simple acquisition or donation. A total of 176 ha (436 acres) of land was secured through acquisition with a leveraged land value of \$912,727.
- Signed 134 landowner agreements securing 4,738 hectares (11,708 acres) under conservation agreements. Types of projects included wetland enhancement and restoration, land retirement, buffer zones, and instalment of nesting structures.
- Development of "Landbird Planning in Ontario" in cooperation with Canadian Wildlife Service and a multi partner upland bird stewardship initiative to improve/secure upland bird habitat for species on private lands.
- Conducted research work in over 50 areas of program priority across the province to provide new science. Examples of research completed, or ongoing, include studying the impacts of increasing cormorant populations and round goby invasions on Great Lakes fisheries, Algonquin wolves biology and movements, the elk restoration program, forestry impacts on songbirds, moose and aquatic resources, and State of Resource reporting.
- Published approximately 57 scientific papers/articles and over 75 internal technical reports to document findings and transfer information to Ministry managers, partners and stakeholders.
- Implemented/maintained over 50 collaborative research agreements with partners, including polar bear research, DNA cluster project, rabies control, lower lake-wide trophic monitoring, northern lakes recovery studies from acidification, and angler/road access impacts on fishing quality. Partners included other government agencies, universities, and stakeholder groups.
- Addressed two fisheries over-allocation issues in the Upper Great Lakes Management Unit (eastern Lake Superior, Georgian Bay/Lake Huron) through the acquisition of 5 commercial fishing licence quotas.
- Achieved an enforcement compliance rate of 90% on the Great Lakes. Over 18,000 enforcement contacts were made, 937 charges laid and 809 warnings issued. An additional 2,300 non-enforcement contacts were made as well.

Rehabilitate degraded populations and habitats.

- Stocked 5.9 million fish in over 100 water bodies to assist in the rehabilitation of degraded fisheries.
- Completed approximately 137 rehabilitation/enhancement projects (e.g. spawning bed rehabilitation, wildlife/waterfowl habitat enhancement, nesting structures, and shoreline naturalization) to restore degraded habitats and populations. Restoration efforts on 30 acid damaged lake trout lakes in the Northeast Region were continued.
- Developed and/or implemented over 50 recovery and/or management plans for species at risk and selected fisheries, including the Sydenham River Recovery Strategy which enhances protection of 14 nationally listed COSEWIC species.
- Supported numerous rehabilitation projects through implementation of the Canada Ontario Agreement respecting Great Lakes Basin Ecosystems (COA) including rehabilitation of Black Bay walleye populations and coaster brook trout on Lake Superior, Atlantic salmon on Lake Ontario, and rehabilitation of and securing coastal habitats such as the Parrot Bay wetland near Kingston on Lake Ontario.

Provide and promote diverse fishing, hunting and viewing opportunities as well as other social, economic and cultural benefits based on Ontario fish and wildlife populations.

- Implemented 175 Ontario's Living Legacy (OLL) projects and 119 COA projects to enhance protection and management programs, increase social benefits and provide access where appropriate.
- Stocked 4.4 million fish in over 300 water bodies to provide additional recreational opportunities and associated economic benefits.
- Operated 3 provincial draws for moose, deer and controlled hunts to distribute validation tags.
- Completed approximately 75 species introductions/transfers (e.g. walleye, wild turkeys, peregrine falcons, Aurora trout and pheasant) to expand recreational/social benefits.
- Supported development of a pilot urban fishing program in Aurora district.
- Implemented 25 regulation changes to expand opportunities (e.g. new and expanded gun seasons, additional archery seasons, and removal of unnecessary fish sanctuaries).
- Implemented 54 projects focused on increasing non-consumptive opportunities (e.g. viewing days and festivals, nest structure construction, communication and interpretive materials, and viewing facilities).
- Participated with First Nations and federal government representatives to enhance economic opportunities for First Nation communities through continued implementation of the Canada Ontario Resource Development Agreement (CORDA).

Reduce threats to human populations from fish and wildlife populations.

- Distributed 500K rabies baits in the core fox rabies range across southern Ontario to ensure continued containment of fox rabies at low levels.

- Distributed 600K raccoon rabies baits and implemented 4 new point infection controls in eastern Ontario to continue efforts to eliminate raccoon rabies from Ontario.
- Continued a field testing program for monitoring chronic wasting disease in wild deer populations.
- Supported intra-Ministry and intra-government disease control/prevention efforts in such areas as West Nile virus, chronic wasting disease, rabies, and botulism on Lake Erie.
- Participated in the development of the National Wildlife Disease Strategy and expanded financial support for the Canadian Wildlife Co-operative Centre to enhance provincial disease/virus monitoring capability.
- Continued to support development of the Ontario Food Safety Strategy.

Increase stakeholder/partner awareness, understanding and involvement.

- Supported over 200 international, federal and provincial boards, over 300 local/regional committees and boards, and 43 stewardship councils.
- Implemented over 500 CFWIP projects and 100 stewardship projects to enhance stakeholder awareness and involvement in fish and wildlife management work, and leverage additional resources with partners.
- Implemented nearly 200 education projects (e.g. Envirothon support, school programs, workshops, and communications materials) and organized over 60 open houses/public meetings.
- Developed and managed over 250 partnerships to enhance program delivery capability and increase involvement of partners/stakeholders in resource management programs.
- Organized and/or delivered over 200 training and transfer workshops varying from local/provincial training sessions (e.g. quota setting, water crossings, watershed planning, nuisance bear, and population modeling) for staff/partners to international conferences (e.g. invasive species, coaster brook trout, eels, and lake restoration).
- Coordinated and supported delivery of the Ontario Family Fishing Weekend.
- Completed an initiative in the Northeast Region involving nearly 130 stakeholders and 11 meetings to identify priority wildlife management needs to be included in the development of a Regional Wildlife Management Plan.
- Initiated development of interim trapping agreements with 3 Provincial Treaty organizations (Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Union of Ontario Indians and Treaty 3) to harmonize administration of trapping and furbearer management within their respective Treaty areas.
- Nuisance bear management – continued to provide technical expertise and support to the Nuisance Bear review. Provided additional funding to enhance nuisance bear management capability, including establishment of nuisance bear agreements, authorization of bear agents, updating and reprinting communications and technical materials, and development of the “Bear Wise” program.
- Initiated approximately 30 EBR postings and 30 Class Environmental Assessment processes to advise the public/solicit input on Ministry planned initiatives and continued support for provincial delivery and coordination of these programs.

- Supported the operation of the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Board and the establishment of the new Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission.

Promote organizational excellence and commitment to quality service.

- Maintained/updated 5 Province-wide business relationships in the areas of commercial fish, baitfish, fur, hunter safety and wild turkey seminar delivery.
- Completed Phase 1 of the FW Program Information Management and Information Technology Strategy.
- Updated the provincial hunter education instructor manual and student manual to strengthen delivery of the program.
- Provided training and development opportunities for 26 staff.
- Provided licencing services (Outdoor card administration, licencing, communications) to 1.45 million clients and over 1,900 private licence issuers.
- Produced and distributed 1.4 million fishing and hunting summaries on schedule.
- Maintained the Fish and Wildlife Bulletin Board to keep program delivery/customer service staff aware of recent changes (over 12 updates provided each year).
- Provided approximately 700 briefing notes and 1000 draft Minister's letters in a timely fashion to support senior management decision-making and the Minister's Office.
- Provided Fish and Wildlife information to clients in a timely matter across a variety of field offices, government information centres and the Outdoor Card Centre.

Meet SPA revenue projections.

- Year end SPA revenues were within 1% of those forecasted.
- Implemented 2 new customer service access improvement projects and 3 revenue generating initiatives.
- Supported 6 provincial and US trade shows to promote fishing, hunting and viewing opportunities.
- Implemented 12 Marketing initiatives (e.g. cultural outreach, new advertising programs, and the Fish and Wildlife calendar).

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Until June 2003, the advisory group tasked with providing advice to the MNR Minister regarding the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account was the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Board. That group met only twice in 2003/04; the last meeting of the group was in June 2003. The following recommendation was the only one provided to the Minister by the Board in 2003/04:

The Ontario Fish and Wildlife Advisory Board support the proposed North America's Hunting Heritage Accord in principle and encourage the Minister to support it.

In 2004/05, the task of providing advice to the Minister regarding the SPA was taken over by the Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission.

Fiscal year 2004-2005

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE ON THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SPECIAL PURPOSE ACCOUNT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004/05

BACKGROUND

The *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* requires that revenues collected under that Act flow into the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account (SPA). This includes all licence fees, royalties and fines paid under the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* (FWCA) and its regulations. Money held in this account can only be spent on:

- the conservation or management of wildlife or fish populations or the ecosystems of which those populations are a part;
- matters related to the activities of people as they interact with or affect wildlife or fish populations, including any matter related to safety; or
- a refund of all or part of a fee or royalty.

The combined funds received from the SPA and the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) provide for delivery of an effective and diverse program, including resource management activities such as enforcement, resource monitoring, policy and program development, resource allocation and licencing, partnership and volunteer programs, research, and fish stocking.

FISH AND WILDLIFE SPA REVENUES

Revenues deposited into the SPA largely come from anglers, hunters and commercial users of fish and wildlife resources. Of the total SPA revenues, more than 80 per cent comes from angling and hunting licences and permits. Of this 80 per cent, approximately two-thirds is associated with recreational fishing and one-third with hunting. About two-thirds of recreational licence revenues are derived from Ontario residents and about one-third from non-residents. Over the past three fiscal years, total annual licence sales have averaged about 850,000 resident fishing licences; 450,000 resident hunting licences; 450,000 non-resident fishing licences, and 25,000 non-resident hunting licences. Other revenue sources include fines collected under the FWCA, interest paid on the SPA account and other miscellaneous sources such as product sales, advertising, and donations.

Revenues (000s) to the Fish and Wildlife SPA-past 3 fiscal years

Source of Revenue	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05*
Ontario Resident Angling and Hunting Licences & Permits	\$27,315.4	\$24,796.0	\$45,655.0
Non-Resident Angling and Hunting Licences & Permits	\$19,564.7	\$18,928.5	\$19,655.3
Commercial Fish Licences and Royalties	\$1,532.8	\$1,042.9	\$1,070.5

Bait Fish Licences	\$342.1	\$373.5	\$358.9
Fur Licences and Royalties	\$498.3	\$281.4	\$599.4
Fines and Penalties	\$646.9	\$799.3	\$794.4
Interest	\$844.3	\$815.1	\$675.5
Other Revenue	\$2,419.2	\$1,344.0	\$2,022.0
Total Revenue	\$53,163.7	\$48,380.7	\$70,831.0

**Sales of resident Outdoors Cards and three-year fishing and small game hunting licences have a three-year cycle. Fiscal year 2004/05 was a peak year for licence sales and revenues.*

Annual recoveries from the SPA are planned based on a 3 year rolling average of expected revenues, due to significant annual fluctuations resulting from the Outdoors Card 3-year purchasing cycle. Treasury Board approves the SPA recovery level as part of the Ministry's annual Results Based Plan submission.

Recovery/expenditure levels, revenues and the resulting SPA account balance are reviewed annually as part of the program business planning cycle and planned recoveries are adjusted as required. The program plans to maintain a minimum year-end SPA balance in the low year of the purchasing cycle of approximately 10% of annual planned expenditures, to allow for unexpected changes in revenue. The table below shows revenues and recoveries from the SPA and resulting year-end SPA balances for the past three fiscal years.

Summary of recoveries, revenues and year-end account balances (\$000).

Item	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/05
Year Start SPA Balance	\$15,302.7	\$15,164.5	\$7,041.4
Revenues	\$53,163.7	\$48,380.7	\$70,830.9
Recoveries/ Expenditures	(\$53,301.9)	(\$56,503.8)	(\$58,994.9)
Year End SPA Balance	\$15,164.5	\$7,041.4	\$18,877.4

Operating expenditures for the Fish and Wildlife Program, including enforcement, amounted to \$82.2 million in fiscal year 2004/2005. Approximately 72 per cent of these expenditures (\$59.0 million) were supported by recoveries from the Fish and Wildlife SPA. The remaining \$23.2 million in program expenditures were supported by funding from the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF).

ACHIEVEMENTS

Throughout 2004/05, the Fish and Wildlife Program continued to focus on its goal of providing leadership and direction in sustaining healthy ecosystems, managing the province's fish and wildlife resources and in maintaining or enhancing social, economic and cultural benefits derived from these resources.

Program SPA and CRF funds are integrated to deliver a variety of work as indicated below. The achievements reflect work accomplished using both funding sources.

Program accomplishments and activities are summarized below by the seven program objectives, as identified in the *2004-05 Fish and Wildlife Program Plan*. The program objectives closely align with the Ministry's goal statements of *Our Sustainable Future* and therefore the accomplishments directly support Ministry priorities as well.

1) Protect healthy fish and wildlife populations and the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems on which they rely

Accomplishments and activities are summarized below by four major areas of program activity:

a) Policy and Program development/support (including legislation) and resource allocation:

Major policy development and regulation changes were completed/initiated in the following areas:

- development and consultation related to a new provincial wolf management strategy and supporting regulation changes (season closures, mandatory reporting, wolf seals);
- consultation on and development of a new provincial biodiversity strategy;
- development and approval of a new Ecological Framework for Recreational Fisheries Management;
- ongoing development of new fisheries management zones and new "tool kits" for whitefish and non-angling methods;
- release of a provincial Wildlife Manager's Manual;
- modernization of the hunter education program (new program standards and course content, and instructor and student manuals);
- development and consultation related to the Northern Resident Moose Validation Tag Draw;
- ongoing policy and science support to address emerging cormorant impacts issues and concerns;
- implementation of a new Deer Removal Authorization/associated landowner workshops and initiation of work to develop a provincial nuisance wildlife strategy and a Southern Ontario deer review Initiative;
- new fisheries and wildlife regulation changes to enhance protection of resources (commercial American eel fishery closure on Lake Ontario, brook trout season and limit changes in Lake Superior/Lake Nipigon, mandatory reporting for black bear,, muskellunge size limit changes, sale of angler caught yellow perch, invasive carp sale restrictions, etc.); and
- other Ministry program area support, including staff input/support to the Wind Power Advisory Committee and Atlas, Forests Environmental Assessment (EA), Oak Ridge Moraine Restoration Committee, Provincial Parks Legislative Review, Provincial

Parks Class EA, Ontario Parks Monitoring Framework, various Species At Risk recovery teams.

Major plan development and/or input occurred in the following areas:

- development of watershed based fisheries management planning guidelines;
- development of a provincial Fish Habitat Compliance Protocol with seven other agencies;
- coordination of MNR response to a request under the Ministry of Environment (MOE) Environmental Assessment Act to review the ministry's deer management program.
- Lake Ontario salmon and trout management review;
- development of Lake St. Francis and Bay of Quinte fisheries management plans;
- Bay of Quinte walleye slot limit review;
- completion of a 5 year Lake Erie Walleye Management Plan;
- completion of a 5 year rehabilitation strategy for eastern Lake Erie and public consultation;
- continued implementation of the lake trout rehabilitation plan for Lake Huron;
- completion and release of the Lake Superior lakewide management plan;
- North West Region (NWR): a non-resident deer review discussion paper with recommendations was completed; fisheries planning initiated/updated for Quetico Provincial Park, Lake Nipigon and Red Lake; input into seven forest management plans and three water management plans;
- North East Region (NER): input into 13 forest management plans and 10 water management plans;
- ongoing implementation of the NWR and NER wildlife action plans;
- Southern Region (SR): updating of the Lake Simcoe and Credit River fisheries management plans; program input into water management and forest management plans; background work completed on a regional walleye initiative (internal state of the walleye resource report, preparation of communications products).

Resource allocation:

- provincial moose validation tag, deer antlerless tag, and deer controlled hunt draws were planned and administered based on Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) quota recommendations from field offices;
- over 6000 fish and wildlife instruments were issued (licences, permits, authorizations) to control use and harvests and collect resource information;
- Great Lakes commercial fish quotas were set for several species/stocks to ensure ongoing resource sustainability and economic benefits based on fisheries assessment information and science;
- NWR: a number of fisheries allocation/capacity studies completed for boat caches, outpost camps, land use permits, and several large waterbodies (Lake of Woods, Lake Nipigon, etc.); and
- moose and deer tag quotas, bear second seals and fur quotas for selected fur species were updated across the field districts to ensure ongoing sustainability of resources.

b) Inventory, monitoring and assessment and reporting:

Seven provincial fisheries assessment unit (FAU) programs were maintained on selected groups of representative fisheries across the province. Programs carried out within the FAUs included a number of local creel and aquatic sampling programs to monitor long term fisheries community changes and evaluate impacts of various stressors, regulation changes and other management activities to address local and provincial information requirements.

Under the Provincial Trend Inventory program (PTI) coordinated by Science and Information Branch (SIB) a number of initiatives were completed including:

- aerial moose inventories on 20 Wildlife Management Units to monitor population trends;.
- three postcard surveys (moose, black bear, white-tailed deer) to provide provincial harvest information;
- ongoing operation of 37 snow stations across the province to monitor winter severity
- operation of 106 bait lines to provide information for development of an index to monitor provincial black bear population changes in support of the enhanced bear management program and aging of approximately 2000 black bear teeth to provide age information on the black bear harvest;
- seven waterfowl surveys on the Hudson's Bay lowlands to monitor waterfowl populations;.
- fish and wildlife values mapping to identify critical and sensitive habitat on 15 forest harvest units scheduled for renewal of forest management plans; and
- four fisheries projects to support development of more effective inventory methods related to walleye, lake trout, lake sturgeon and large river fisheries sampling.

Over 60 projects were completed by the three Great Lakes Management Units as part of their ongoing assessment and inventory work to monitor fisheries population and habitat changes and harvest levels by commercial and sport users.

State of Resource reporting was enhanced through a number of initiatives:

- a General Status of Wildlife in Ontario Report was completed and submitted as part of provincial obligations to meet the National Accord for Protection of Species at Risk in Canada;
- continued planning and development of an Ecological Framework for Ontario Fisheries to provide a landscape approach to fisheries management;
- state of the lake reporting for all Great Lakes;
- initiation of moose status reports for all WMUs in the NWR; and
- a number of projects to enhance Natural Resource Values and Information System mapping (fish culture station facility mapping, WMU and new fisheries zones boundaries, fish sanctuaries, etc.) were completed by Science and Information Branch.

A variety of inventory, monitoring, and assessment projects were completed across the three field regions (habitat sensitive features mapping, lake inventories, index netting programs, creel surveys, stocking assessment, aerial moose and caribou surveys), etc. to provide input into forest management planning, assess changes in fish and wildlife populations, assess harvest, etc. Some examples are:

- NWR: over 1000 water crossings and 13 development proposals had fish habitat assessments completed; monitoring of 20 radio collared elk in the Cameron Lake mine area is ongoing.
- NER: 19 index netting projects were completed as part of the regional lake trout project a variety of fur management projects on lynx, marten, and fisher; fish stocking assessment on several lakes;
- SR: field assessment of winter deer habitat stand covers to assist in developing prescriptions for protection of thermal cover in forest management plans; monitoring of introduced pheasant populations to determine survival and disbursement; ongoing monitoring of regional lake trout populations.

c) Development, management and transfer of new information and knowledge:

Applied Research and Development Branch (ARDB), in conjunction with academic partners and other government agencies, conducted research work in over 30 wildlife and aquatic areas to advance and support a science-based approach to fish and wildlife and ecosystem management.

- Wildlife research activities included work on a variety of species including moose, elk, black bear and polar bear, wolves, wolverines, fisher and southern flying squirrels. Projects included research studies to enhance rehabilitation of pits and quarries using native species, moose density changes related to environmental and landscape factors, wetlands restoration, predictive modelling of songbird occurrence and abundance, elk population restoration, polar bear and black bear genetics, implementation of a DNA hair trap program to assist in developing a provincial bear population estimate methodology, Algonquin Provincial Park wolf densities, reproduction and emigration studies, and development and testing of a provincial wolf inventory technique, Hudson Bay lowlands vegetation changes in relation to goose populations, and ongoing development of a new, more effective rabies vaccine.
- Aquatic research work focused on studies to determine the impacts of variety of stressors impacting fisheries populations and/or their habitats, including climate change and introductions of exotics such as round gobies and zebra mussels on Great Lakes and inland fisheries, Southern Ontario land use pattern changes on streams, water level management and changes, cormorants on near shore Great Lakes fish populations, and over exploitation. Other research work looked at feed utilization studies for cultured salmonids, estimating cage culture waste production, hydroacoustic assessment as a means to determine estimates of abundance of fish populations, genetics and DNA extraction work, and modelling of fish growth as a means of estimating maximum sustainable exploitation rates.

Internal and external training and transfer of information was provided through a variety of formal training sessions, committees, workshops, meetings and conferences. Some examples are:

- internal training for staff including a wildlife research workshop and two fisheries life history workshops, wetlands inventory training, invasive species management, prediction of salmonine habitat in streams, fish handling/spawning techniques, data sensitivity training, moose and deer quota setting workshops, forest management planning workshops, etc.
- external training/transfer for clients/partners (e.g. 18 sessions were held on baitfish management with over 300 participants, training was provided to over 300 hunter education instructors on program changes, invasive species management, numerous stewardship council workshops for landowners);
- various internal technical committees to ensure input and transfer of information across the program and Ministry; and,
- participation in a wide variety of national and international committees and forums (e.g. Flyway Councils, Great Lakes Fisheries Commission, International Joint Commission, International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, etc.)

Science and Information Branch provided ongoing support and emergency maintenance services of current applications and development of new ones related to storage, analysis and retrieval of fisheries and wildlife resource information, Outdoors Card information and operation, fish and wildlife licensing, provincial draws, bear incident reporting, etc.) to ensure efficient retrieval of information and analytical capacity.

d) Compliance with fish and wildlife legislation:

Conservation officers enforced a number of Acts and supporting regulations (e.g. Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, Migratory Birds Convention Act (Canada), Fisheries Act (Canada), Endangered Species Act) to ensure protection of provincial fish and wildlife resources across 25 field districts and four Great Lakes. These activities resulted in:

- an enforcement compliance rate of 93%;
- over 218,000 resource users being contacted; and
- issuance of 8,496 warnings and laying of 7,541 charges.

2) *Rehabilitate degraded populations and habitats*

Approximately 4.4 million fish were cultured and stocked to assist in ongoing rehabilitation of approximately 50 fish stocks. Much of this effort was concentrated on fish stocks rehabilitation in the Great Lakes.

Under the auspices of the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture, accomplishments with provincial partners to secure wetlands and associated uplands included:

- Wildlife Habitat Canada -185 private land stewardship projects resulting in the securing of 840 hectares under 10 year Conservation Agreements;

- Ducks Unlimited Canada - 34 landowner agreements/easements securing 341 hectares and development of six agricultural demonstration projects: and,
- Nature Conservancy of Canada - acquisition of 358 hectares.

Other areas of work included:

- Lake Superior rehabilitation plans for coaster brook trout, walleye and lake sturgeon;
- development of fisheries management plans for Hamilton harbour, and the Rouge River within the Lake Ontario watershed;
- Lake herring (cisco) restoration and American eel rehabilitation plans under development for Lake Ontario;
- stocking of 18 acid damaged lake trout and completion of 11 habitat rehabilitation projects in NER; and,.
- ongoing monitoring of recovering NWR peregrine falcon and bald eagle populations.

3) *Provide and promote diverse fishing, hunting and viewing opportunities as well as other social, economic and cultural benefits based on Ontario's fish and wildlife resources.*

Progress to enhance opportunities and associated benefits occurred in a number of areas:

- approximately 4.4 million fish were cultured and stocked to enhance fishing opportunities across the province including approximately 1.1 million fish provided to partners for rearing and stocking and 6500 catchable size rainbow trout to support the urban fishing initiative;
- extended 13 deer seasons, one new pheasant season, NER bear seasons, three new moose archery seasons,] and extended hunting hours to "all day" wild turkey hunting in all open WMUs;
- increased deer antlerless tag availability by 12%, doubled the number of additional deer seals to 35,000 and made 1,401 second bear seals available;
- fisheries regulation changes resulted in expanded opportunities on 53 waterbodies (extended seasons, removal of sanctuaries, etc.);
- partnered in the Ontario Family Fishing Weekend that resulted in over 80 family-oriented fishing events that attracted over 10,000 participants;
- operated 17 youth fishing events with over 6,500 participants under the urban fishing initiative;
- a number of wildlife viewing/education enhancement projects were completed across the three regions (viewing platforms, interpretive trails); and,
- improved fishing access at a number of sites across the province and development of an interactive website on access in the Ottawa/Carleton and the Greater Toronto Area.

Enhanced marketing of opportunities included:

- development of a *National Strategic Marketing Plan* for recreational fisheries in partnership with the Canadian Fisheries Council;

- promotion of youth and urban angling opportunities on the Fish'n Canada Show, Bob Izumi's Real Fishing Show and the Canadian Sportfishing Show;
- promotion of hunting and fishing opportunities in Ontario at 10 outdoors shows in the United States, in partnership with the Ontario Tourism marketing partnership;
- promotion of angling opportunities, focused on urban and youth angling, at the Spring Fishing Show and the Toronto Sportsmen's Show;
- development of pilot programs to encourage harvest of low use commercial fish species such as sheepshead and burbot on the Great Lakes;
- quota administration changes on Lake Ontario to maximize use of quotas;
- production and distribution of the fisheries and hunting summaries; and,
- production and distribution of the Fish and Wildlife Calendar which provides information on the fish and wildlife program and key dates of interest to anglers and hunters.

4) Reduce threats to human health from fish and wildlife populations

The program contributed to this government priority of enhancing community safety in five major areas:

a) Implementation of the Bear Wise program and its four cornerstones (reporting, response, prevention and education & awareness)

- a "24/7" toll-free call centre was established receiving over 14,000 calls with trained staff responding to over 9,400 of these calls;
- a protocol setting out a working relationship was signed with police agencies resulting in 31 signed or verbal agreements with the approximately 42 municipal police agencies who police in 23 of our Districts, in addition to the Ontario Provincial Police;
- more than 50 technical support staff were hired for the bear season, and equipment and training was provided;
- approximately 40 signed and verbal agreements were reached with communities about providing bear services; over 30 agreements were signed with service providers;
- a number of communication products - fact sheets, posters, displays, fridge magnets, etc., were developed to help people become bear wise and these have been made available on our new bear web site;
- educational materials for school children were developed and placed on the ministry web site;
- hazard assessments have or are being completed in many communities; and
- more than 165 projects involving prevention, education & awareness and hazard assessment were funded (over \$900,000) to assist communities to help reduce bear problems in their communities.

b) Fox rabies control

- over 500,000 rabies baits were dropped across southwestern Ontario to control the fox rabies virus strain;

- the number of fox rabies incidents continued to be low (54 documented cases in 2004) compared to historical levels and were restricted to a small geographic area.; and
- ongoing work continued with a private partner to develop a new vaccine that works on all forms of rabies in all vector species (fox, skunk, racoon). Field testing is planned for 2006-07.

c) Raccoon rabies control/eradication (Eastern Ontario outbreak)

- approximately 400,000 baits were dropped in southeastern Ontario to address the current Ontario outbreak and one Point Infection Control program was implemented to continue efforts to eradicate raccoon rabies from Ontario. Documented cases have been reduced (one since September 2004); and
- trap-vaccinate-release programs to minimize the risk of new Ontario outbreaks were maintained in the Niagara region and along the St Lawrence River to vaccinate skunk and raccoon populations in these areas in close proximity to the United States (US) border. In partnership with US authorities, over two million baits were distributed along the United States/Ontario border region in bordering states to reduce the current distribution of raccoon rabies and reduce the risk of further introductions into Ontario.

d) Implementation of interim Food Safety Strategy/Haines Report recommendations:

- Food Safety Strategy: Implemented an interim food fish safety program under the authority of the current Fish Inspection Act (FIA) legislation - standards of compliance developed, 51 facilities inspected, background studies were completed to establish current baseline information, 27 detailed audits of higher risk facilities, identification of required corrective actions and follow-up to ensure changes were made;
- Haines Report: initiated actions in response to four of the recommendations that related to handling and consumption of fish and wildlife. These included policy revisions for donations and serving of wild game, enhanced training/educational information inserts related to field dressing and handling in the hunting summary, trapper education and hunter safety course materials, input into changes in regulatory controls for wild game meat in provincial abattoirs, implementation of an interim food fish safety program as described above.

e) Other related program activities

- over 350 samples of hunter killed deer and over 50 road killed deer were collected from the Greater Toronto Area and sampled for presence of chronic wasting disease (CWD) and tuberculosis as part of an ongoing provincial monitoring program. All samples collected to date have been negative;
- a provincial CWD response plan was developed and input provided into a national plan;
- financial support was provided to the Canadian Co-operative Wildlife Health Centre to provide provincial wildlife/fish disease and virus surveillance capability; and,
- Great Lakes - participation on a working group looking at fish contaminant issues across the basin, localized botulism studies, and fish contaminant sampling.

5) Increase the awareness, understanding and involvement of stakeholders

The program contributed to this government priority to enhance involvement in and understanding of resource management activities in a number of areas:

- over 31,000 volunteers participated in more than 600 local resource management projects across 25 districts under the Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program (CFWIP), resulting in enhanced management programs, better understanding of fish and wildlife management and closer working relationships with local conservation groups, educational groups and individuals;
- stewardship coordinators supported the operation of 40 local community based stewardship councils. Over 500 stewardship projects engaged over 16,000 volunteers to complete a variety of local resource projects. In addition, a large number of workshops and meetings were organized and facilitated by the coordinators and their councils to enhance local landowner knowledge and resource stewardship on their property and within the local community;
- the new Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission was established and became operational;
- numerous stakeholder meetings across the program at all levels of the organization to seek public input on fish and wildlife plans, regulatory changes and local issues;
- NWR provided training to 21 groups on roads and water crossings inventory procedures and held over 200 stakeholder meets on a variety of resource issues;
- various other provincial committees (Ontario Moose-Bear Allocation Advisory Committee, Big Game Management Advisory Committee, Rabies Advisory Committee) were maintained;
- an outreach initiative was completed with five major environmental organizations, with a focus on changes associated with an increased emphasis on biodiversity protection and solicitation of their perspectives on accessing funding from the non-consumptive side of user spectrum.
- ongoing programs with a number of universities, organizations and other agencies at a national and international level were maintained or enhanced to access external funding sources, support Masters and doctorate programs and work collaboratively with other experts in their field;
- continuation of the Kid's Fish Art contest aimed at getting school-aged children more involved with fishing and fisheries management; and,
- new communication products and initiatives continue to be maintained/developed to enhance transfer of information internally and externally (e.g. ARDB 2005-06 *Annual Highlights Report on Research Activities*, Natural Heritage Information Centre newsletter, fish and wildlife electronic bulletin board, Bear Wise brochures and videos, new field guides for baitfish management, district stocking lists, NER moose hunter resource reports, etc.).

Enhanced aboriginal relations/partnerships

- nine commercial fishing licences (Winnipeg River - one, Lake Huron - six and Lake Superior – two) were retired to address commercial fish allocation issues as part of ongoing efforts to support existing agreements and facilitate achieving new agreements with First Nations;
- new trapping agreements were negotiated and signed with three Provincial Treaty Organizations to enhance their resource management capacity;
- NWR continued negotiations with six First Nations to resolve Lake of the Woods fisheries management issues;
- NER enhanced First Nation involvement in forest management and water power planning, initiation of a native Environmental Research Centre, trap standards workshops and other trapping initiatives;
- Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte First Nation discussions regarding the Bay of Quinte fisheries management, and
- continued program support for the Canada-Ontario Agreement for Resource Development

6) *Promote organizational excellence and commitment to quality service*

Several of the initiatives in this area enhance organizational excellence and/or position the Ministry to better deliver on its program objectives:

- a new Great Lakes Branch, and Biodiversity Section within Fish and Wildlife Branch, were developed and implemented as of April 1, 2005 to better position the Ministry to deliver corporate and program priorities in these business areas;
- four new program performance measures were developed and submitted as part of the 2005-06 Results Based Plan;
- five new program measures were developed as part of the ministry's Quality Improvement Plan;
- Phase 1 of the *Fish and Wildlife Program Information & Information Technology Plan* was completed in June, 2005 to enhance the program's management and investments in this area. Phase 2 is in progress.
- year end program spending was within 1% of planned expenditures for operating and capital;
- an independent program review of the Lake Ontario Management Unit was completed;
- four provincial New Business Relationships (commercial fish, fur, hunter education, wild turkey hunter education) and one Memorandum of Understanding (baitfish) were maintained;
- new fur auction house draft agreements were developed in cooperation with controllership staff from Corporate Management Division; and,
- internal and external training programs and staff developmental assignments were implemented in all Branches and the three field regions to enhance staff resource management skills and knowledge.

Other initiatives in this area to enhance service to ministry clients, included:

- development of a new electronic licence function for the ministry internet site that allows anglers and hunters to print an electronic licence that is valid immediately, when they renew their Outdoors Card and purchase licences on the internet site;
- participation with Ministry of Transportation and Ministry of Health and Long-term Care to develop an integrated address change that allows clients to change addresses for driver's licences, Health Cards and Outdoors Card in one transaction as part of the Service Ontario initiative; and,
- working with Service Ontario to develop a training program for Service Ontario counter staff to help Service Ontario to be able to offer a wider range of fishing and hunting licences at their counters.

7) Meet FW SPA revenue projections

A number of activities supported this objective:

- fee increases for sport fishing and hunting licences were increased at a rate of approximately 2% as per the multi year ministry Result Based Planning (RBP) submission approval;
- a full cost pricing review was completed based on Ministry of Finance criteria and guidelines for the Program. A second phase is planned for 2005-06;
- expansion of commercial advertising in the Recreational Fishing and Hunting Regulations Summaries and the commercial mailing partners program;
- first time issuance of additional deer seals in the NWR resulted in over 6,700 additional seals being issued and over \$200,000 in additional revenue;
- preliminary work on the feasibility of increasing commercial fish royalty rates; and,
- SPA revenue projections have been reviewed and revised as necessary to provide current information on appropriate recovery levels from the SPA account.

Fiscal year 2005-2006

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE ON THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SPECIAL PURPOSE ACCOUNT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2005-2006

BACKGROUND

The *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* requires that revenues collected under that Act flow into the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account (SPA). This includes all licence fees, royalties and fines paid under the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* (FWCA) and its regulations. Money held in this account can only be spent on:

- the conservation or management of wildlife or fish populations or the ecosystems of which those populations are a part;
- matters related to the activities of people as they interact with or affect wildlife or fish populations, including any matter related to safety; or
- a refund of all or part of a fee or royalty

The combined funds received from the SPA and the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) provide for delivery of an effective and diverse program, including resource management activities such as enforcement, resource monitoring, policy and program development, resource allocation and licencing, partnership and volunteer programs, research, and fish stocking.

FISH AND WILDLIFE HERITAGE COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission, established under the provisions of the Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act, provides recommendations on matters referred to it by the Minister. During fiscal 2005/06, recommendations were provided on the following matters:

Commission Recommendation	MNR Response
<i>Sunday Hunting:</i> To proceed with regulatory changes that would permit Sunday hunting in southern Ontario.	While this item was not specifically addressed in the Minister's response, the Ministry has proceeded with this initiative
<i>Trapper Apprentice Program:</i> The Commission endorsed the Trapper Apprentice Program for the Minister's consideration.	The Minister communicated that he does not support the need for a Trapper Apprentice Program.
<i>Outdoor Heritage Proposal:</i> that the Minister consider implementing an "Outdoor Heritage" proposal for Ontario, including such components as an Outdoor Heritage Day, a Hunter Recognition Program and a Winter Family Fishing Weekend.	The Minister supports the Commission working with Ministry staff to develop this proposal further.

Ministry staff in Fish and Wildlife Branch provide administrative support and liaison services to the Commission.

FISH AND WILDLIFE SPA REVENUES

Revenues deposited into the SPA largely come from anglers, hunters and commercial users of fish and wildlife resources. Of the total SPA revenues, more than 90 percent comes from angling and hunting licences and permits. Of this, approximately two-thirds are associated with recreational fishing and one-third with hunting. About two-thirds of recreational licence revenues are derived from Ontario residents and about one-third from non-residents. Over the

past three fiscal years, total annual licence sales have averaged about 850,000 resident fishing licences; 450,000 resident hunting licences; 450,000 non-resident fishing licences, and 25,000 non-resident hunting licences. Other revenue sources include fines collected under the FWCA, interest paid on the SPA account and other miscellaneous sources such as product sales, advertising, and donations.

Revenues (\$000's) to the Fish and Wildlife SPA over the past 3 fiscal years

Source of Revenue	2003/04	2004/05*	2005/06
Ontario Resident Angling and Hunting Licences & Permits	\$24,796.0	\$45,655.0	\$32,874.4
Non-Resident Angling and Hunting Licences & Permits	\$18,928.5	\$19,655.3	\$19,437.3
Commercial Fish Licences and Royalties	\$1,042.9	\$1,070.5	\$1,094.8
Bait Fish Licences	\$373.5	\$358.9	\$354.2
Fur Licences and Royalties	\$281.4	\$599.4	\$912.0
Fines and Penalties	\$799.3	\$794.4	\$538.1
Interest	\$815.1	\$675.5	\$1,052.3
Other Revenue	\$1,344.0	\$2,021.9	\$302.6
Total Revenue	\$48,380.7	\$70,830.9	\$56,565.7

**Sales of resident Outdoors Cards and three-year fishing and small game hunting licences have a three-year cycle. Fiscal year 2004/05 was a peak year for licence sales and revenues.*

Annual recoveries from the SPA are planned based on a 3 year rolling average of expected revenues, due to significant annual fluctuations resulting from the Outdoors Card 3-year purchasing cycle. Treasury Board approves the SPA recovery level as part of the Ministry's annual Results Based Plan submission.

Recovery/expenditure levels, revenues and the resulting SPA account balance are reviewed annually as part of the program business planning cycle and planned recoveries are adjusted as required. The program plans to maintain a minimum year-end SPA balance in the low year of the purchasing cycle of approximately 10% of annual planned expenditures, to allow for unexpected changes in revenue. The table below shows revenues and recoveries from the SPA and resulting year-end SPA balances for the past three fiscal years.

Summary of recoveries, revenues and year-end account balances (\$000)

Item	2003/2004	2004/05	2005/06
Year Start SPA Balance	\$15,164.5	\$7,041.4	\$18,877.4
Revenues	\$48,380.7	\$70,830.9	\$56,565.7
Recoveries/ Expenditures	(\$56,503.8)	(\$58,994.9)	(\$58,273.3)
Year End SPA Balance	\$7,041.4	\$18,877.4	\$17,169.8

Operating expenditures for the Fish and Wildlife Program, including enforcement, amounted to \$73.7 million in fiscal year 2005/2006. Approximately 79 percent of these expenditures (\$58.3 million) were supported by recoveries from the Fish and Wildlife SPA. The remaining \$15.4 million in program expenditures were supported by funding from the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF).

ACHIEVEMENTS

Throughout 2005/06, the Fish and Wildlife Program continued to focus on its goal of providing leadership and direction in sustaining healthy ecosystems, managing the province's fish and wildlife resources and in maintaining or enhancing social, economic and cultural benefits derived from these resources.

Program SPA and CRF funds are integrated to deliver a variety of work as indicated below. The achievements for 2005/06 include the following, and were accomplished using both funding sources.

- The Bear Wise program, through which the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) supports efforts to prevent nuisance problems, continued to focus in 2005-06 on its four cornerstones of reporting, response, prevention and education and awareness; it has been identified as a leading program in North America in dealing with human-bear conflicts.
 - In 2005/06, more than \$900,000 in Bear Wise funding was provided to support 97 projects in 76 communities to assist in prevention initiatives, education and awareness; a number of communities have expressed enthusiasm about the Bear Wise program.
 - Two additional education tools were developed in 2005/06: an electronic book aimed at school children; and school curriculum material for grades 2, 4 and 7.
- Approximately 9.3 million fish were stocked by MNR in 2005, thereby supporting programs aimed at both rehabilitation of fish stocks and put-grow-and-take fisheries. In addition, the Ministry transferred approximately 87,000 fish and 880,000 eggs to partners in 2005.
- In June 2005, Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy was released. The strategy was developed with a broad spectrum of contributors, including environmental and conservation organizations, industry, government agencies and members of the public. The strategy is being used to guide efforts to conserve Ontario's rich natural heritage of plants, animals and ecosystems.
- To better support implementation of Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy, MNR created a new Biodiversity Section within the Fish and Wildlife Branch in 2005/06. The section has policy and program responsibilities for biodiversity, species at risk, invasive species, wetlands, the Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program and activities of the Natural Heritage Information Centre. Key components of the new Section, along with their funding and resources, were transferred into the Branch from other areas within MNR.
- MNR and the Nature Conservancy of Canada released the Great Lakes Conservation Blueprint in November 2005. The Blueprint provides guidance for the assembly, mapping and analysis of data on ecosystems and special biodiversity features across the Canadian side of the Great Lakes region. It identifies high-quality terrestrial and aquatic natural areas in the Great Lakes region that if protected, will sustain biodiversity across the region.
- Work to further the protection of species at risk continued in 2005/06. Based on the success of efforts to recover peregrine falcon and bald eagle populations, MNR announced plans in June 2005 to remove the peregrine falcon from the list of endangered species, and to reduce the area of the province in which the bald eagle is considered endangered. Further, in December 2005, three new plants were regulated under the Endangered Species Act.

- The Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program (CFWIP) continues to be MNR's largest public engagement program, supporting nearly 35,000 volunteers in over 550 projects throughout the province in 2005/06. The number of CFWIP volunteers has continued to grow - up from 15,000 in 1999.
- Efforts to implement the Ecological Framework for Recreational Fisheries, focusing on new Fisheries Management Zones, managing and monitoring at the landscape scale, and enhanced stewardship, continued in 2005/06.
 - Twenty new Fisheries Management Zones have been created, based on ecological and social criteria.
 - Proposed regulations were posted on the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry, and MNR offices consulted widely with stakeholders, to support the development of the new Ontario Fishery Regulations.
 - Work was conducted to develop fisheries management councils, which will be the primary means used to deliver enhanced stewardship at the Fisheries Management Zone level. Planning also was underway during 2005/06 for a new fisheries monitoring program to support state of the resource reporting.
- In response to stakeholder concerns about a perceived increasing trend in human-wildlife conflicts, MNR worked with approximately 20 stakeholder organizations and 3 other ministries to draft strategies to address such conflicts. Consultation and finalizing of the initiative is anticipated in 2006/07.
- A number of new hunting opportunities were created in 2005/06, including expanding the number of Wildlife Management Units with wild turkey hunts, a range of additional deer hunting opportunities in southern and central Ontario, and the expansion of Sunday gun hunting throughout much of southern Ontario.
- Creation of a new Great Lakes Branch composed of the Great Lake Management Units, Fish Culture Section, and the Canada-Ontario Agreement Coordination Unit. The Branch will bring a policy and operational focus to MNR's management of aquatic resources in the Great Lakes.
- Ontario's rabies program made significant progress in 2005/06 in the effort to control and eradicate rabies in the province:
 - There were only 96 confirmed cases of rabies in Ontario during 2005; of these, approximately two thirds were bat strain, and one third were fox strain, with only two cases of raccoon strain rabies.
 - The reduced number of cases of raccoon strain rabies resulted in the high risk area for this strain in Ontario being reduced by approximately two-thirds. Trap-vaccinate-release work continued in order to create a buffer of vaccinated animals and prevent the further spread of raccoon rabies.
 - Final testing and preparations were made for the summer 2006 field trial release of a new oral rabies vaccine targeting skunks.

Fiscal year 2006-2007

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE ON THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SPECIAL PURPOSE ACCOUNT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006-2007

BACKGROUND

The *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* (FWCA) requires that revenues collected under that Act flow into the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account (SPA). This includes all licence fees, royalties and fines paid under the FWCA and its regulations. Money held in this account can only be spent on:

- the conservation or management of wildlife or fish populations or the ecosystems of which those populations are a part;
- matters related to the activities of people as they interact with or affect wildlife or fish populations, including any matter related to safety; or
- a refund of all or part of a fee or royalty

The combined funds received from the SPA and the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) provide for delivery of an effective and diverse program, including resource management activities such as enforcement, resource monitoring, policy and program development, resource allocation and licensing, partnership and volunteer programs, research, and fish stocking.

FISH AND WILDLIFE HERITAGE COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission, established under the *Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act*, provides recommendations on matters referred to it by the Minister. Fish and Wildlife Branch staff provide administrative support and liaison services to the Commission. During fiscal year 2006/07, the Commission provided recommendations on the following matters:

Commission Recommendation	MNR Response
<i>Outdoor Heritage Day:</i> Declare the last Saturday in September as Outdoor Heritage Day	The Minister supported the recommendation, and a Private Members Bill was introduced in the legislature. However, the Bill did not reach second reading prior to the dissolution of the government
<i>Deer Hunting - general:</i> Implement changes to deer management, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a second seal system for specific firearms • Streamline/standardize archery season dates • Create a reporting system that includes all hunters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of WMUs with second seals available was increased for the 2007 hunting season. • Archery season dates were standardized for the 2007 hunting season. • Opportunities to expand the hunter reporting system are being evaluated.
<i>Deer Hunting - Aylmer:</i> Do not proceed with implementation of a shotgun hunting season in Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) 92, and undertake broad consultation prior	The Commission's recommendations will be considered when responding to inquiries related to this matter.

to considering any significant changes regarding deer hunting in WMU 92.	
Outdoors Cards: Implement a number of recommendations, including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the cost of an Outdoors Card • Implement a non-resident Outdoors Card • Re-examine the current exemption under which seniors are allowed to fish without purchasing a licence 	MNR is currently working toward implementation of selected components of the recommendations

FISH AND WILDLIFE SPA REVENUES

Revenues deposited into the SPA largely come from anglers, hunters and commercial users of fish and wildlife resources. Of the total SPA revenues, more than 90 percent comes from angling and hunting licences and permits. Of this, approximately two-thirds are associated with recreational fishing and one-third with hunting. About two-thirds of recreational licence revenues are derived from Ontario residents and about one-third from non-residents. Over the past three fiscal years, total annual licence sales have averaged about 940,000 resident fishing licences; 500,000 resident hunting licences; 500,000 non-resident fishing licences, and 25,000 non-resident hunting licences. Other revenue sources include fines collected under the FWCA, interest paid on the SPA account and other miscellaneous sources such as product sales, advertising, and donations.

Revenues (\$000's) to the Fish and Wildlife SPA over the past 3 fiscal years

Source of Revenue	2004/05*	2005/06	2006/07
Ontario Resident Angling and Hunting Licences & Permits	\$45,655.0	\$32,874.4	\$29,682.4
Non-Resident Angling and Hunting Licences & Permits	\$19,655.3	\$19,437.3	\$18,214.6
Commercial Fish Licences and Royalties	\$1,070.5	\$1,094.8	\$1,246.6
Bait Fish Licences	\$358.9	\$354.2	\$332.7
Fur Licences and Royalties	\$599.4	\$912.0	\$1,214.3
Fines and Penalties	\$794.4	\$538.1	\$901.4
Interest	\$675.5	\$1,052.3	\$1,434.2
Other Revenue	\$2,021.9	\$302.6	\$824.8
Total Revenue	\$70,830.9	\$56,565.7	\$53,851.0

**Sales of resident Outdoors Cards and three-year fishing and small game hunting licences have a three-year cycle. Fiscal year 2004/05 was a peak year for licence sales and revenues.*

Annual recoveries from the SPA are planned based on a 3 year rolling average of expected revenues, due to significant annual fluctuations resulting from the Outdoors Card 3-year purchasing cycle. Treasury Board approves the SPA recovery level as part of the Ministry's annual Results Based Plan submission.

Recovery/expenditure levels, revenues and the resulting SPA account balance are reviewed annually as part of the program business planning cycle and planned recoveries are adjusted as required. The program maintains a minimum year-end SPA balance in the low year of the purchasing cycle of approximately 10% of annual planned expenditures, to allow for unexpected changes in revenue. The table below shows revenues and recoveries from the SPA and resulting year-end SPA balances for the past three fiscal years.

Summary of SPA recoveries, revenues and year-end account balances (\$000)

Item	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Year Start SPA Balance	\$7,041.4	\$18,877.4	\$17,169.8
Revenues	\$70,830.9	\$56,565.7	\$53,851.0
Recoveries/ Expenditures	(\$58,994.9)	(\$58,273.3)	(\$58,654.0)
Year End SPA Balance	\$18,877.4	\$17,169.8	\$12,366.8

Operating expenditures for the Fish and Wildlife Program, including enforcement, amounted to \$71.0 million in fiscal year 2006/2007. Approximately 83 percent of these expenditures (\$58.7 million) were supported by recoveries from the Fish and Wildlife SPA. The remaining \$12.3 million in program expenditures were supported by funding from the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF).

ACHIEVEMENTS

Throughout 2006/07, the Fish and Wildlife Program continued to focus on its goal of providing leadership and direction in sustaining healthy ecosystems, managing the province's fish and wildlife resources and maintaining or enhancing social, economic and cultural benefits derived from these resources.

Program SPA and CRF funds are integrated to deliver a variety of work as indicated below. The achievements for 2006/07 include the following, and were accomplished using both funding sources.

- The Bear Wise program, through which MNR supports efforts to prevent nuisance bear problems, was first implemented in 2004-05. In 2006-07, the program continued to focus on its four cornerstones of reporting, response, prevention and education and awareness; it has been identified as a leading program in North America in dealing with human-bear conflicts.
 - In 2006/07, more than \$900,000 in Bear Wise funding was provided to support more than 117 projects in more than 70 communities to assist in prevention initiatives and education and awareness. Many communities continue to build on successes from previous years, including installing bear-proofing at landfills, at dumpsters and around playgrounds.
 - Natural foods across the province were at or near normal levels in 2006-07, and human-bear conflicts approached what could be defined as "normal" levels.
- Approximately 8.1 million fish were stocked by MNR in 2006 (excluding 1 million walleye stocked as fry), thereby supporting programs aimed at both rehabilitation of fish stocks and put-grow-and-take fisheries. In addition, the Ministry transferred approximately 43,000 fish and 1.1 million eggs to partners in 2006.

- In 2006/07, implementation of Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy (OBS) continued with significant progress related to the Ontario Biodiversity Council. The Council brings together a broad spectrum of interests including nature and conservation organisations, industry, agriculture and others to work toward implementation of, and reporting on, the OBS. In November 2006, Jon K. Grant was announced as the Chair of the Ontario Biodiversity Council, and in January 2007, Dr. Tattersall Smith was announced as Chair of the Biodiversity Science Forum. The Council endorsed the Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network and the Stewardship Network of Ontario as groups fulfilling key actions in the OBS related to education and awareness and biodiversity stewardship.
- As part of the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture, a draft five-year implementation plan (2006-2010) was developed; the plan established new priorities and objectives, programs and conservation actions. Throughout the term of the plan, it is estimated that the MNR will contribute approximately \$12.2 million (including both direct funds and in-kind/complementary services) to waterfowl, wetland and wetland-associated habitat conservation efforts in the province.
- Aquatic research scientists are making progress in using electronic tags implanted in fish to identify the hydro-acoustic signature of certain species and sizes of fish. Information obtained through this work will be used to assess the abundance and status of exploited populations, and provide a better basis for future management decisions.
- MNR as a signatory to the Strategic Plan for the Management of Great Lakes Fisheries, along with the eight U.S. states managed Great Lakes fisheries in a sustainable manner that provided recreational fishing opportunities, a wholesome fish product harvest and sold by the Ontario commercial fishery. Management decision-making was made based on sound fisheries monitoring and research, and input from clients. In addition, MNR maintained fishing agreements with several Aboriginal communities along the Great Lakes.
- MNR contributed to the conservation of Great Lakes biodiversity through efforts to protect or rehabilitate species such as Atlantic salmon, lake trout, walleye, lake sturgeon, coaster brook trout and American eel.
- Aerial surveys were conducted to assess the status of the reintroduced Cameron Falls elk population; in addition, a partnership agreement was developed with local stakeholders and Lakehead University to support future work.
- An angler access and demand computer model was developed to assist understanding of angler behavior in relation to changing access and fisheries regulations.
- A polar bear climate change project was initiated which included work on permafrost distribution and body condition of breeding polar bears.
- No cases of raccoon rabies were reported in Ontario in 2006/07; this was the first full fiscal year in which no cases of the disease were reported since the disease was first detected in the province in 1999. Experimental field testing in 2006/07 of a new oral rabies vaccine produced promising results.
- An Ontario wolf survey was completed in 2006/07, providing the first provincial population estimate for this species.

- Progress on implementation of the Ecological Framework for Recreational Fisheries Management continued in 2006/07:
 - Revised Ontario Fishery Regulations for the 20 new Fisheries Management Zones were finalized and submitted to the federal government for approval
 - Fisheries Management Councils were established in 3 Fisheries Management Zones to enhance public involvement in fisheries planning and management.
 - Planning for a new provincial fisheries monitoring program to support state of resource reporting continued.
- MNR made significant progress in increasing protection for Ontario's inland lake trout populations during 2006/07:
 - In May 2006, a Decision Notice was posted on the Environmental Registry; the notice provided clear policy direction for municipalities and MNR field staff on the use of a uniform dissolved oxygen criterion for determining lakeshore development capacity on lake trout lakes.
 - Regulatory guidelines for managing lake trout recreational fisheries were posted on the Environmental Registry for public comment in November 2006, and a Decision Notice was published in February 2007.
- To help ensure the conservation, protection and restoration of fish and fish habitat during provincial transportation undertakings in Ontario, a joint (Ministries of Transportation and Natural Resources; federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans) Protocol for Protecting Fish and Fish Habitat on Provincial Transportation Undertakings was finalized and implemented in October 2006.
- The invading species awareness program, in partnership with the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, provides information to the public about how to prevent the spread of invasive species, monitor distribution and undertake control programs where possible. SPA funding provided the support required to increase the scope of this long term program and determine what resources are currently available related to terrestrial invasive species and what role the program can play in enhancing existing initiatives.

Fiscal year 2007-2008

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE ON THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SPECIAL PURPOSE ACCOUNT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007-2008

BACKGROUND

The *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* requires that revenues collected under that Act flow into the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account (SPA). This includes all licence fees, royalties and fines paid under the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* (FWCA) and its regulations. Money held in this account can only be spent on:

- the conservation or management of wildlife or fish populations or the ecosystems of which those populations are a part;
- matters related to the activities of people as they interact with or affect wildlife or fish populations, including any matter related to safety; or
- a refund of all or part of a fee or royalty

The combined funds received from the SPA and the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) provide for delivery of an effective and diverse program, including resource management activities such as enforcement, resource monitoring, policy and program development, resource allocation and licensing, partnership and volunteer programs, research, and fish stocking.

FISH AND WILDLIFE HERITAGE COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission (FWHC), established under the provisions of the *Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act*, provides recommendations on matters referred to it by the Minister. The FWHC was active during 2007/08 and reviewed and/or provided input into a number of items including deer hunting regulations, access to fishing and hunting opportunities, youth involvement in outdoor activities, and revenues to the SPA. The FWHC also consulted with a number of local stakeholders across the province (Kenora, GTA, southern Ontario). The Commission made no formal recommendations to the Minister in 2007/08. In recent years, the FWHC made the following recommendations:

Commission Recommendation	MNR Response
<i>Outdoor Heritage Day</i> : Declare the last Saturday in September as Outdoor Heritage Day through a private members bill.	The Minister supported the recommendation. A private members bill was introduced into the legislature. However, the bill did not reach second reading prior to the dissolution of the previous government.
<i>Aylmer Stakeholder Hunting Heritage Proposal</i> : The Ministry not proceed with implementation of a shotgun hunting season in WMU 92, and undertake broad consultation should any significant changes be considered regarding deer hunting in WMU 92.	The Minister will take the Commission's recommendations under advisement when responding to inquiries related to this matter.
<i>Deer Hunting</i> : Implement changes to deer hunting management, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a second seal system for specific firearms • Streamline/standardize archery season dates • Create a reporting system that incorporates all hunters 	The Ministry has increased the number of WMU's with second seals available and archery season dates were standardized for the 2007 hunting season. Additional new seasons and second seal system is being proposed for public consultation this fall. New streamlined survey system will be

	implemented this fall.
<i>Outdoors Cards:</i> Implement a number of recommendations related to the Outdoors Card, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the cost of an Outdoors Card • Implement a non-resident Outdoors Card • Re-examine the fishing permit exemption for seniors 	The Minister requested that a proposal for Management Board approval be developed to implement the Commission's recommendations.

Ministry staff in Fish and Wildlife Branch provide administrative support and liaison services to the Commission.

FISH AND WILDLIFE SPA REVENUES

Revenues deposited into the SPA largely come from anglers, hunters and commercial users of fish and wildlife resources. Of the total SPA revenues, more than 90 percent comes from angling and hunting licences and permits. Of this, approximately two-thirds are associated with recreational fishing and one-third with hunting. About two-thirds of recreational licence revenues are derived from Ontario residents and about one-third from non-residents. Over the past three fiscal years, total annual licence sales have averaged about 940,000 resident fishing licences; 500,000 resident hunting licences; 500,000 non-resident fishing licences, and 25,000 non-resident hunting licences. Other revenue sources include fines collected under the FWCA, interest paid on the SPA account and other miscellaneous sources such as product sales, advertising, and donations.

Revenues (\$000's) to the Fish and Wildlife SPA over the past 3 fiscal years

Source of Revenue	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Ontario Resident Angling and Hunting Licences & Permits	\$32,874.4	\$29,682.4	\$48,408.5
Non-Resident Angling and Hunting Licences & Permits	\$19,437.3	\$18,214.6	\$18,013.0
Commercial Fish Licences and Royalties	\$1,094.8	\$1,246.6	\$1,256.2
Bait Fish Licences	\$354.2	\$332.7	\$307.2
Fur Licences and Royalties	\$912.0	\$1,214.3	\$1,081.1
Fines and Penalties	\$538.1	\$901.4	\$732.5
Interest	\$1,052.3	\$1,434.2	\$1,372.2
Other Revenue	\$302.6	\$824.8	\$422.2
Total Revenue	\$56,565.7	\$53,851.0	\$71,592.9

Annual recoveries from the SPA are planned based on a 3-year rolling average of expected revenues, due to significant annual fluctuations resulting from the Outdoors Card 3-year purchasing cycle. Treasury Board approves the SPA recovery level as part of the Ministry's annual Results Based Plan submission.

Recovery/expenditure levels, revenues and the resulting SPA account balance are reviewed annually as part of the program business planning cycle and planned recoveries are adjusted as required. The program plans to maintain a minimum year-end SPA balance in the low year of the purchasing cycle of approximately 10% of annual planned expenditures, to allow for unexpected changes in revenue. The table below shows revenues and recoveries from the SPA and resulting year-end SPA balances for the past three fiscal years.

Summary of recoveries, revenues and year-end account balances (\$000)

Item	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Year Start SPA Balance	\$7,041.4	\$18,877.4	\$17,169.8	\$12,366.8
Revenues	\$70,830.9	\$56,565.7	\$53,851.0	\$71,592.9
Recoveries/ Expenditures	(\$58,994.9)	(\$58,273.3)	(\$58,654.0)	(\$60,535.0)
Year End SPA Balance	\$18,877.4	\$17,169.8	\$12,366.8	\$23,424.7

Operating expenditures for the Fish and Wildlife Program, including enforcement, amounted to \$80.1 million in fiscal year 2007/2008. Approximately 76% percent of these expenditures (\$60.5 million) were supported by recoveries from the Fish and Wildlife SPA. The remaining \$19.6 million in program expenditures were supported by funding from the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF).

ACHIEVEMENTS

Throughout 2007/08, the Fish and Wildlife Program continued to focus on its goal of providing leadership and direction in sustaining healthy ecosystems, managing the province's fish and wildlife resources and in maintaining or enhancing social, economic and cultural benefits derived from these resources.

SPA and CRF funds are integrated for program delivery. Achievements for 2007/08 include the following, and were accomplished using both funding sources.

- Implementation of Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy (OBS) continued. The Ontario Biodiversity Council focused on developing the Interim Report on Ontario's Biodiversity (released May 2008). Progress was also made by the Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network (BEAN), the Stewardship Network of Ontario (SNO) and the Biodiversity Science Forum, groups created in response to specific OBS actions. BEAN's efforts included planning for a series of teachers' workshops to be held in the Summer of 2008 in association with the Ministry of Education and the Ontario Teachers' Federation. The Biodiversity Science Forum held its inaugural meeting in January 2008. The Forum will focus on biodiversity science gaps and the linkages between science and policy.
- Implementation of the Ontario Eastern Habitat Joint Venture Five-Year Implementation Plan (2006-2010) began. Throughout the term of the Plan, it is estimated that MNR will contribute approximately \$12.2 million (including both direct funds and in-kind/complimentary services) to waterfowl, wetland and wetland-associated habitat conservation efforts.
- Investments were made in researching control methods, developing standard monitoring techniques and tools and training other agencies and professionals to identify, monitor and report new or increased distribution of invasive species. MNR produced and is distributing a field guide of aquatic invasive species designed to enable specialists/professionals working in aquatic ecosystems to identify, collect, and report invaders when the species are encountered in the field.
- Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point training for bait harvesters and dealers continued during 2007/08 and focussed on operators surrounding the Great Lakes in order to slow the

spread of Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia, a serious fish disease, and reduce the risk the spread of invasive species including Round Goby, Spiny Waterflea and Bloody Red Shrimp.

- Disease management measures for baitfish, fish stocking, spawn collections, scientific collector's permits were implemented. A hot line was established for reporting fish kills.
- Approximately 6.9 million fish were stocked by MNR in 2007 to support programs aimed at both rehabilitation of native fish stocks (3.47 million) and put-grow-and-take fisheries (3.47 million), which includes 2.8 million lake trout in the Great Lakes.
- Progress on implementation of the Ecological Framework for Recreational Fisheries Management continued in 2007/08.
 - Approved Ontario Fishery Regulations (new OFR 2007 replaced OFR 1989)
 - Initiated three new fisheries management zone councils in addition to three previously established to enhance public involvement in fisheries planning and management.
 - Operational planning for a new provincial fisheries monitoring program to support state of resource reporting which was implemented in April 2008.
- To help ensure the conservation, protection of fish and fish habitat in Ontario, the Inter-Jurisdictional Compliance Protocol for Fish Habitat and Associated Water Quality was finalized and implemented in December 2007.
- MNR made significant progress in increasing protection for Ontario's inland lake trout populations. In March 2007, proposed revisions to the Public Lands Act Crown Land Disposition Policy (PL 4.02.01) were posted to the EBR Registry for public comment. The proposed revisions would allow disposition of Crown Land on lake trout lakes only in specific situations where no negative impacts are expected. Consultation continued during 2007/08.
- Fisheries Management Plans for Bay of Quinte, Hamilton Harbour and Lake Nipigon are underway, as well as the Lake Erie Lake Trout Management Plan and the Lake Huron Herring Rehabilitation Strategy. A 5-year management plan for Lake Nipissing, as a specially designated water, was also completed.
- Aquatic researchers studied the role of zebra mussels in improved water quality in the offshore zones of Lake Simcoe and in increased amounts of weed growth and algae in the near shore zone. How the Lake Simcoe environment and food webs respond to changes in phosphorus and to invasive species will be an important indicator of the health of the Lake Simcoe ecosystem.
- Aquatic researchers studied the genetics of brook trout in the Algonquin Park area and found differences in the fitness of native and stocked populations, suggesting local adaptation of native brook trout populations in Algonquin Park.
- Significant work was initiated on the assessment of sturgeon populations with the help of various partners (e.g. First Nations, DFO) on the Namakan, Winnipeg and Berens Rivers. These studies will continue for several more years.
- The Caribou Integration Initiative was officially launched to enhance coordination on caribou related issues and is the first step toward the development of a provincial caribou policy and habitat regulation.

- Phase 1 of the provincial Moose Program Review was launched and will lead to the development of an updated moose management policy intended to assist in managing moose populations sustainably.
- Chronic Wasting Disease surveillance monitoring was implemented in three zones covering 17 WMUs in northeastern and southern Ontario. A total of 881 samples from white-tailed deer were submitted for testing, with all results being negative.
- MNR consulted on several enhancements to the Ontario wild turkey management program, including an updated management plan that included criteria for the first modern fall turkey hunt in Ontario, proposed regulations for an inaugural fall turkey hunt in 14 Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) and new spring seasons in WMUs 45, 53, and 56.
- Hunting opportunities expanded for wild turkey and deer and Sunday Gun Hunting was enabled in addition areas in southern Ontario.
- MNR participated in a strategic review led by Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) of Canada's implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and provided technical support on the international trade of polar bears, otters, lynx, wild ginseng and golden seal.
- MNR entered the second phase of implementation of the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS) by passing regulations requiring the use of only trapping devices certified as achieving internationally-accepted levels of animal welfare.
- A 3-year pilot project to estimate the population of wolves in Ontario was completed in the winter of 2007-08. The data collected will provide a revised provincial population estimate and will be used to develop a monitoring program to refine this estimate and detect changes in the population.
- A 3-year study of the Southern Hudson Bay Polar Bear Population was completed in 2007-08. Most of this population of polar bears spends the ice free season on Ontario's James and Hudson Bay coasts. This collaborative research project, led by Ontario, was jointly funded by Ontario, Quebec, Nunavut, First Nations and industry. Results of the work show a 15% reduction in body weight over the past 20 years, likely the result of climate change.
- Ontario was declared raccoon rabies free in September 2007. The last case of raccoon rabies in Ontario was in September 2005. MNR continues to work with our American partners on raccoon rabies control in the United States along the Ontario border and on the eradication of fox rabies from southern Ontario.
- Enforcement Branch made 284,820 public contacts, gave 10,352 warnings and laid 6,342 charges. Four new trailers were purchased and outfitted with mobile displays to assist in enforcement outreach events.
- A number of Aboriginal Commercial Fishing Policy and Agreements were developed, including a new commercial fishing agreement and Aboriginal Communal Fishing Licences template, a partnership with North Shore Tribal Council – 2nd phase Anishinabek fisheries authority model, a formalized relationship with Walpole Island and Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point, and the ongoing management of Saugeen Ojibway Nations agreement.

Fiscal Year
2008-2009

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE ON THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SPECIAL PURPOSE ACCOUNT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008/09

BACKGROUND

The *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* requires that revenues collected under that Act flow into the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account (SPA). This includes all licence fees, royalties and fines paid under the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* (FWCA) and its regulations. Money held in this account can only be spent on:

- the conservation or management of wildlife or fish populations or the ecosystems of which those populations are a part;
- matters related to the activities of people as they interact with or affect wildlife or fish populations, including any matter related to safety; or
- a refund of all or part of a fee or royalty

The combined funds received from the SPA and the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) provide for delivery of an effective and diverse program, including resource management activities such as enforcement, resource monitoring, policy and program development, resource allocation and licensing, partnership and volunteer programs, research, and fish stocking.

FISH AND WILDLIFE HERITAGE COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission (FWHC), established under the provisions of the *Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act*, provides recommendations on matters referred to it by the Minister. The FWHC was active during 2008/09 and reviewed and/or provided input into a number of items including the Provincial Animal Welfare Act, Elk/Human conflict, youth involvement in outdoor activities, and revenues to the SPA. Ministry staff in Fish and Wildlife Branch provide administrative support and liaison services to the Commission.

The Commission made the following formal recommendations to the Minister in 2008/2009.

FWHC Recommendation	Ministry Response
Elk/Human Conflict in Bancroft <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Include an Elk Management Plan in Comprehensive Cervid Management Strategy for Ontario. ▪ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Efforts are underway to develop an elk management plan for the province.
Bill 50 – Provincial Animal Welfare Act, 2008 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The MNR to remain actively involved in the development of LGIC regulations associated with the exemptions under clause 11(6)(a) and clause 11(6)(c), and maintain close relationships with the other agencies involved with this legislation to ensure support of hunting and angling stakeholders interests in Bill 50. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The MNR will continue to work closely with the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services in support of a strong and effective animal welfare system in Ontario.
Youth Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The MNR proactively engage in activities to implement Environmental education in Ontario towards sustainability through 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MNR supports environmental education through a wide range of programs across the ministry. ▪ MNR staff contributed significantly to the

<p>multiple uses, including fishing and hunting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The MNR with the Ministry of Education to create opportunities that facilitate educational program related to fish and wildlife. 	<p>development of the Bondar report, <i>Shaping Our Schools, Shaping Our Future</i>, including input into environmental education policy and standards development by the Ministry of Education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MNR will work with the Commission to continue to seek opportunities where the government can provide support toward this goal.
<p>Fish and Wildlife Youth Program Coordinator Proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission recommends that the Minister support the creation of a Fish and Wildlife Youth Program Coordinator position within the MNR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposal will be assessed along with many other program needs across the ministry. In the interim, we will look for ways to use existing resources to accomplish some of the tasks identified for the Youth Program Coordinator. ▪ The MNR will look for ways to enhance the activities of the NGO partner organizations that have established youth-oriented programs in place. ▪ We remain committed to trying to make hunting, fishing and outdoor activities that link youth with nature more readily available and accessible to the public.
<p>Cormorants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Double-crested cormorant control programs which have been planned or started in Ontario should continue. These programs include Presqu'ile Provincial Park, Middle Island and East Sister Island. ▪ Subsequent to the release of the North Channel cormorant study, the MNR should be prepared to develop a cormorant control plan for the North Channel of Lake Huron and Georgian Bay. ▪ The MNR to continue to monitor distribution and concentrations of double-crested cormorants in Ontario as well as monitor for damage to habitats, other species and fisheries being caused by double-crested cormorants. Where damage is being observed the MNR should prepare cormorant management plans to mitigate that damage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The MNR continues to take a science-based approach when assessing the need to implement additional measures to control cormorant numbers. ▪ Ontario Parks has initiated consultation on possible next steps for cormorant management at Presqu'ile Provincial Park, and expect to hear more about management needs at East Sister Island in the coming year. ▪ MNR continues to collaborate with other jurisdictions on cormorants, including sharing information on research results and management actions. ▪ MNR currently have plans to continue our co-operative efforts to monitor cormorant numbers throughout the Great Lakes.

FISH AND WILDLIFE SPA REVENUES

Revenues deposited into the SPA largely come from anglers, hunters and commercial users of fish and wildlife resources. Of the total SPA revenues, more than 90 percent comes from angling and hunting licences and permits. Of this, approximately two-thirds are associated with recreational fishing and one-third with hunting. About two-thirds of recreational licence revenues are derived from Ontario residents and about one-third from non-residents. Over the past three fiscal years, total annual licence sales have averaged about 940,000 resident fishing licences; 480,000 resident hunting licences; 432,000 non-resident fishing licences, and 25,000 non-resident hunting licences. Other revenue sources include fines collected under the FWCA,

interest paid on the SPA account and other miscellaneous sources such as product sales, advertising, and donations.

Revenues (\$000's) to the Fish and Wildlife SPA over the past 3 fiscal years

Source of Revenue	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Ontario Resident Angling and Hunting Licences & Permits	\$29,826.2	\$48,944.9	\$36,781.1
Non-Resident Angling and Hunting Licences & Permits	\$18,439.3	\$18,216.1	\$16,818.4
Commercial Fish Licences and Royalties	\$1,246.6	\$1,253.0	\$969.9
Bait Fish Licences	\$332.7	\$304.8	\$342.4
Fur Licences and Royalties	\$990.0	\$808.4	\$895.0
Fines and Penalties	\$757.2	\$814.4	\$459.0
Interest	\$1,434.2	\$1,375.2	\$658.9
Other Revenue	\$824.8	\$306.4	\$566.5
Total Revenue	\$53,851.0	\$72,023.2	\$57,491.2

Annual recoveries from the SPA are planned based on a 3-year rolling average of expected revenues, due to significant annual fluctuations resulting from the Outdoors Card 3-year purchasing cycle. Treasury Board approves the SPA recovery level as part of the Ministry's annual Results Based Plan submission.

Recovery/expenditure levels, revenues and the resulting SPA account balance are reviewed annually as part of the program business planning cycle and planned recoveries are adjusted as required. The program plans to maintain a minimum year-end SPA balance in the low year of the purchasing cycle of approximately 10% of annual planned expenditures, to allow for unexpected changes in revenue. The forecasted year end balance for 2009/10 is slightly higher than the 10% minimum as a conservative forecast to account for the uncertainty of Non-Resident tourism and license sales, and the pending cost associated with the new Licensing Improvement Project. The table below shows revenues and recoveries from the SPA and resulting year-end SPA balances for the past three fiscal years and the projected balance for the current fiscal.

Summary of recoveries, revenues and year-end account balances (\$000)

Item	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10 (Projected)
Year Start SPA Balance	\$18,877.4	\$17,169.8	\$12,366.8	\$25,940.0	\$21,790.0
Revenues	\$56,565.7	\$53,851.0	\$72,023.2	\$57,491.2	\$59,230.0
Recoveries/ Expenditures	(\$58,273.3)	(\$58,654.0)	(\$58,450.0)	(\$61,641.2)	(\$65,480.0)
Year End SPA Balance	\$17,169.8	\$12,366.8	\$25,940.0	\$21,790.0	\$15, 540.0

Operating expenditures for the Fish and Wildlife Program, including enforcement, amounted to \$95.8 million in fiscal year 2008/2009. Approximately 64% percent of these expenditures (\$61.6 million) were supported by recoveries from the Fish and Wildlife SPA. The remaining \$34.2 million in program expenditures were supported by funding from the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF).

ACHIEVEMENTS

Throughout 2008/2009, the Fish and Wildlife Program continued to focus on its goal of providing leadership and direction in sustaining healthy ecosystems, managing the province's fish and wildlife resources and in maintaining or enhancing social, economic and cultural benefits derived from these resources.

SPA and CRF funds were integrated for program delivery with 64% being funded from the Fish and Wildlife SPA. The Fish and Wildlife program achievements from both funding sources for 2008/2009 include the following.

- Implementation of Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy (OBS) continued. The Ontario Biodiversity Council released the Interim Report on Ontario's Biodiversity (May 2008). Progress was also made by the Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network (BEAN), the Stewardship Network of Ontario (SNO) and the Biodiversity Science Forum, groups created in response to specific OBS actions. BEAN's efforts included holding a series of teachers' workshops during the summer of 2008 and again in 2009 in association with the Ministry of Education and the Ontario Teachers' Federation. The Biodiversity Science Forum continues to focus on biodiversity science gaps and the linkages between science and policy.
- Implementation of the Ontario Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (OEHJV) Five-Year Implementation Plan (2006-2010) continued. MNR continues to advance OEHJV objectives to conserve wetlands and other bird habitats.
- The Strategy for Preventing and Managing Human-Wildlife Conflicts in Ontario, and the Strategy for Preventing and Managing Human-Deer Conflicts in southern Ontario were released. In 2008/09, MNR formed partnerships with the Toronto Wildlife Centre and AAA Wildlife Control to develop public and staff awareness materials to communicate how to prevent wildlife conflicts. In addition, MNR formed a Human-Wildlife Conflict Advisory Group, made up of 13 stakeholders, to assist in the implementation of the conflict strategies.
- On June 1, 2008 a new five year business agreement was executed with the Ontario Fur Managers Federation to provide administrative functions associated with the issuance and renewal of trapping licenses, data-entry of trapper harvest information and delivery of Ontario's Trapper Education Program on behalf of the Crown.
- The ministry consulted the public and stakeholders on a new policy *Framework for Enhanced Black Bear Management in Ontario* that reflects a more ecologically based management approach that is more responsive to the social and economic interests of the public, and provides greater transparency and involvement in local bear management decisions.
- Enforcement Branch made 318,057 public contacts, gave 11,871 warnings and laid 7,669 charges. 30 High Visibility Enforcement Vehicles were upfitted with a mobile office
- A number of regulations were promulgated under FWCA that enhanced hunting/fishing/trapping opportunities in 2008-09, including:

- Creation of the first ever fall wild turkey hunt in Ontario with open seasons in 14 Wildlife Management Units in Southern Ontario
- 2 regulations expanding the areas where Sunday Gun Hunting is permitted to an additional 14 municipalities in Southern Ontario
- Extension of beaver seasons to provide for a spring open water trapping season by up to 30 days in two zones and 15 days in two others
- Clarification of Fishing Regulations to permit anglers to utilize portable “tent style” ice fishing huts without requirement to register
- Amendment to the Hunting regulations to provide for changes to hunting regime in KHSSP Opportunity to combine with policy/act amendment accomplishments with other bullets
- Progress on implementation of the Ecological Framework for Recreational Fisheries Management continued:
 - Updated the fishing regulations and published an updated Recreational Fishing Summary in March 2009.
 - Initiated three new fisheries management zone advisory councils in addition to six previously established to enhance public involvement in fisheries planning and management.
 - Draft Fisheries Management Plans for the Kawartha Lakes area (Zone 17) and Thunder Bay area (zone 6) were released for public comment
 - Supporting efforts in ecological framework for fisheries management by meeting with FMZ 10 council and developing streamlined regulation package.
 - Supported establishment of Fisheries Management Zone councils for all Great Lakes.(Zones 9, 13, 14, 19 and 20)
- Approximately 6.4 million fish were stocked by MNR in 2008/09 to support programs aimed at both rehabilitation of native fish stocks (3.2 million) and put-grow-and-take fisheries (3.2 million), which includes 2.7 million lake trout in the Great Lakes
- Initiated restoration of native species projects including American eels, lake trout, Atlantic Salmon, lake sturgeon, and deep water cisco. Atlantic salmon partnerships are progressing, and celebrated the 1 millionth stocking event in June 2008.
- Training in the use of the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System continued during 2008/09 – resulting in more biologists being available to evaluate wetland significance (for protection under the Planning Act).
- Delivery of the Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program (CLTIP) continued. 16,721 landowners participated under the program in 08/09.
- With input from stakeholders and the general public, the wildlife program drafted a strategic policy (*Cervid Ecological Framework*) that integrates the management of all cervid species (elk, moose, deer and caribou) across the landscape. New projects consistent with the *Cervid Ecological Framework* are:
 - A new *Moose Management Policy* for Ontario with supporting guidelines
 - new and more streamlined deer hunting seasons were implemented across the province
- Chronic Wasting Disease surveillance monitoring was implemented in three zones covering 24 WMUs in north eastern and southern Ontario. A total of 1488 samples from white-tailed deer were submitted for testing, with all results being negative.

- Ontario was declared raccoon rabies free in September 2007. The last case of raccoon rabies in Ontario was in September 2005. MNR continues to work with our American and Quebec partners on raccoon rabies control in the United States and Quebec along the Ontario border areas.
- In response to concerns over potential adverse impacts of White Nose Syndrome spreading to Ontario's bat populations, MNR formed a partnership with the Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre (University of Guelph) to conduct monitoring at 9 high-risk sites in Ontario for signs of the disease in Ontario's bat populations. White Nose Syndrome has not been confirmed in any Ontario bat – monitoring will continue in 2009/10.
- Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point training for bait harvesters and dealers continued during 2008/09 and focussed on operators in southern Ontario in order to slow the spread of Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia, a serious fish disease, and reduce the risk the spread of invasive species including Round Goby, Spiny Waterflea and Bloody Red Shrimp.
- Research was conducted on the following areas with fish and wildlife reserves in mind:
 - Wolf research continued in Algonquin Park and Timmins and was expanded to include the Kawartha Highlands Signature Site. Additional data were collected to provide a provincial population estimate and will be used to develop a monitoring program to refine this estimate and detect changes in the population.
 - The seasons for the harvesting of four endangered species – northern bobwhite, grey fox, wolverine and badger were closed
 - Aquatic researchers studied the ancestry and genetic conservation of lake trout in Ontario. Local and regional native lake trout gene pools were identified, the genetic impacts of historic supplemental stocking were analyzed, and the influences of environmental factors on lake trout genetic diversity were examined
 - Aquatic researchers have developed new models of fish growth and reproduction that explain the natural variation in the life history of species such as walleye and lake trout that are of interest to recreational fishers and resource managers. Researchers have also continued a detailed substrate/habitat mapping in Lake Erie. More robust models can better inform management decisions to ensure sustainable use of fisheries, assist in native species rehabilitation, and to evaluate appropriate development proposals for Crown Land.
- Implemented moose pregnancy study (2008-09 and continuing 2009-2010) in North Eastern Region to assess pregnancy rates relative to low moose calf productivity across the region.
- The Ministry of Natural Resources' Fish and Wildlife Program was audited and the findings were reported in the Auditor General's *2007 Annual Report*.
 - The 2007 Report identified 16 recommendations for the Ministry's consideration.
 - MNR has made significant progress on the 16 recommendations, reporting that 10 have been implemented including moose and deer management, fish stocking and recreational fisheries management, and Enforcement activity and deployment of Conservation Officers.
 - The three recommendations that were substantially implemented are Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy, Habitat Protection, and Invasive species.
 - Some progress has been made regarding the Provincial Auditor's recommendations on Species at Risk of Extinction in Ontario, commercial fisheries management, and Measuring and reporting on effectiveness.