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# Archived - Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account annual report 2009–2010

The 2009-2010 annual report on the Ministry of Natural Resources' Special Purpose Account. This account houses all the licensing fees, royalties and fines collected under the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act*.

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Report to the legislature on the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account for fiscal year 2009/10

2011/12 Results-based plan annual report to the legislature on the Fish and Wildlife Special Purpose Account for fiscal year 2009/10

## 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 2009/10 and reviewed and/or provided input into the Fish Culture Business Plan, Youth Turkey Hunting

Day and revenues to the SPA. Ministry staff in Biodiversity Branch and the Fish and Wildlife Services Branch provide administrative support and liaison services to the Commission.

The Commission made the following formal recommendations to the Minister in 2009/10.

## **FWHC recommendation**

### **Fish culture business plan**

1. Clarify role
2. Reinforce role
3. State-of-art scientific practices and equipment
4. Develop capability to measure return on investment
5. Support partnerships
6. Explore innovative options for revenue generation
7. Develop an asset management plan
8. Establish partnerships with colleges/universities

### **Ministry response**

- MNR will consider the Commission's recommendations as they move forward on finalizing the Fish Culture Business Plan.

## **FWHC recommendation**

### **Turkey hunting**

- Mentored Youth Turkey Hunting Day that immediately precedes the regular spring turkey season by one day.
- The regular Turkey Spring Season be opened on the third Sunday of April.

### **Ministry response**

- MNR made a presentation to the Commission to discuss potential options, and staff are researching potential policy and regulatory changes and consultation that would be required to implement such a program.

## **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	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
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<b>Source of Revenue</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
Ontario Resident Angling and Hunting Licences & Permits	\$48,944.9	\$36,781.1	\$38,558.0
Non-Resident Angling and Hunting Licences & Permits	\$18,216.1	\$16,818.4	\$15,601.7
Commercial Fish Licences and Royalties	\$1,253.0	\$969.9	\$922.9
Bait Fish Licences	\$304.8	\$342.4	\$314.1
Fur Licences and Royalties	\$808.4	\$895.0	\$766.8
Fines and Penalties	\$814.4	\$459.0	\$696.1
Interest	\$1,375.2	\$658.9	\$56.8
Other Revenue	\$306.4	\$566.5	\$545.8
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$72,023.2</b>	<b>\$57,491.2</b>	<b>\$57,461.6</b>

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 2010/11 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)

<b>Item</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11 (Projected)</b>
Year Start SPA Balance	\$17,169.8	\$12,366.8	\$25,940.0	\$21,790.1	\$15,046.6
Revenues	\$53,851.0	\$72,023.2	\$57,491.2	\$57,461.6	\$74,744.0
Recoveries/ Expenditures	(\$58,654.0)	(\$58,450.0)	(\$61,641.2)	(\$64,205.0)	(\$65,683.2)
<b>Year End SPA Balance</b>	<b>\$12,366.8</b>	<b>\$25,940.0</b>	<b>\$21,790.0</b>	<b>\$15,046.6</b>	<b>\$24,107.4</b>

Operating expenditures for the Fish and Wildlife Program, including enforcement, amounted to \$99 million in fiscal year 2009/10. Approximately 64% percent of these expenditures (\$64.2 million) were supported by recoveries from the Fish and Wildlife SPA. The remaining \$34.8 million in program expenditures were supported by funding from the CRF.

## Achievements

Throughout 2009/10, 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 2009/10 include the following.

- Province-wide Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) planning training for commercial bait harvesters to reduce the risk of the spread of invasive species (e.g., round goby, spiny waterflea etc.) was completed in 2009. A total of 763 harvesters have now completed the training sessions.
- Fisheries Management Zone (FMZ) Councils and Planning:
  - Zone wide Fisheries Management Plans completed with council support and new regulations implemented in FMZs 6, 17 and 10 (lake trout only). New regulations provided additional angling opportunities as well as additional protection for vulnerable species.
  - Fisheries Management Zone Councils established for all Great Lakes Zones.
  - Improved reporting to the public through 14 fact sheets on status of Ecological Framework for Fisheries Management (monitoring, regulations, and councils) - released over the last 2 years
  - Fisheries Management Zone council process initiated (including development of background materials) in FMZs 4, 5, 11, 12. Project plans have been initiated for FMZs 8 and 15
  - Completed Fisheries Background Reports for FMZs 8 & 11 and Fisheries assessment of Specially Designated waters in FMZ 10 – French River and FMZ 11 – Lake Nipissing.
- New regulations included in the 2010 fishing regulations summary were developed to protect the sustainability of fish populations, protect the quality of valuable fisheries and to provide additional angling opportunities where they are sustainable. Some of these regulations include:
  - Longer lake trout seasons, streamlined bass and pike limits in FMZ 6
  - New lake trout regulations in FMZ 10
  - New size-based regulation for walleye in FMZ 17 and new year-round angling opportunities for sunfish, crappie, perch and northern pike
- Approximately 7.1 million fish were stocked by MNR in 2009/10 to support programs aimed at both rehabilitation of native fish stocks (4.6 million, which includes 2.9 million lake trout in the Great Lakes) and put-grow-and-take fisheries (2.5 million).
- Support of lake sturgeon recovery as part of the Huron – Erie corridor initiative (Detroit River, St. Clair River and Lake St. Clair).
- Reached / supported commercial fishing arrangements with seven First Nations communities; on-going discussions with several other communities regarding fisheries interests including negotiations of new commercial fishing agreements.
- Support Great Lakes Policy in developing and updating commercial fisheries policies.
- 378 lakes monitored over last 2 years & additional 216 lakes in 2010 via Broad-scale Monitoring program; ongoing intensive monitoring of Great Lakes, Specially Designated Waters and Fisheries Assessment Unit lakes.
- Support to United States Fish and Wildlife Service assisting in the prevention of Asian carp into the Great Lakes via the Chicago Shipping Channel.
- Fisheries Monitoring:
  - 378 lakes monitored over last 2 years & additional 216 lakes in 2010 via Broad-scale Monitoring program; ongoing intensive monitoring of Great Lakes, Specially Designated Waters and Fisheries Assessment Unit lakes.
    - Fish were collected from 200 lakes and were monitored to describe the fish community, estimate abundance and describe such characteristics as length and weight as well as contaminants.
    - Information was collected about water temperatures, oxygen levels, and clarity from about 200 lakes, and water samples were sent to the Ministry of the Environment for analysis.
    - 175 lakes were sampled for invasive species such as spiny waterflea and rock bass. Estimates of fishing pressure were carried out on 250 lakes.
    - Data has been entered and a preliminary analysis completed. Standardized methods for recording data have been developed so that information can be compared among zones, waterbodies, and between sample years.
- Continued restoration of native species including American eel, lake trout, Atlantic salmon and deep water cisco. Atlantic salmon partnerships are progressing - 758,000 Atlantic salmon were stocked into Lake Ontario in 2009 in support of the restoration program (includes spring fingerlings, fall fingerlings, spring yearlings and small number of surplus adults), and the 2 millionth stocking event was celebrated in June 2009.

- A total of 141 adult whitefish were transferred from Lake of Bays and reintroduced in Mary Lake.
- Research was conducted on the following areas with fish and wildlife reserves in mind:
  - Developed standardized methods and a manual for sampling fish in flowing waters. These methods are required to assess fish stocks in Ontario's rivers and streams.
  - Made improvements to models for managing yellow perch and walleye stocks on Lake Erie.
  - Used ecological genetics approaches to determine the evolutionary history of Ontario's lake sturgeon stocks.
  - Wolf research continued in the Kawartha Highlands Signature Site and a new rural coyote project was initiated in Prince Edward County.
  - Concluded a 5-year Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council funded study on moose populations in S. Ontario
  - Completed final year of a 3 year study on the impact of climate change on polar bears in Ontario, and completed an evaluation report on the Southern Hudson Bay population of polar bears in partnership with the US Geological Service.
  - Initiated a 3 year study with the University of Guelph on the predator/prey relationship between wolves and caribou, and completed the second year of a survey of the tundra caribou ecotype documenting a significant eastward shift in their distribution.
- Chronic Wasting Disease surveillance monitoring was completed in three zones in north western and southern Ontario. A total of 757 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. We continue enhanced surveillance in areas adjacent to outbreaks in New York and worked with Quebec on their raccoon rabies control program. As the result of our control efforts, terrestrial rabies in other species in Ontario continues to decline to the lowest level in 40 years.
- Wildlife hunter surveys for deer and moose went on-line November 9, 2009 on MNR's website where, for the first time, hunters can access, complete and submit their survey on-line and directly to MNR.
- White Nose Syndrome has been confirmed in several areas in Ontario, including Kirkland Lake and Pembroke – monitoring will continue in 2010/11.
- Delivered a new Framework for Enhanced Bear Management to increase transparency and collaboration in setting local objectives.
- Furthered training, partner/stakeholder engagement by:
  - Worked with key stakeholders on the Human-Wildlife Conflict Advisory Group to discuss issues and develop prevention and management approaches.
  - Partnered with the Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre for surveillance of bat hibernacula resulting in White Nose Syndrome being positively identified in bats at seven sites in Ontario. Continuing to work with partner agencies and other jurisdictions in developing surveillance and response plans.
  - Consulted on regulations aimed at preventing Chronic Wasting Disease from entering the province
  - Supported review of the *Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) Act* and subsequent implementation in March 2009.
- MNR, in collaboration with the Ontario Fur Managers Federation (OFMF), Quebec Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune, and the Fur Institute of Canada's Trap Research and Development Committee, provided funding support to allow field testing and data analysis in support of new traps intended to humanely trap raccoons in urban settings, part of Ontario's ongoing implementation of the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards.
- Provincial and WMMU-specific black bear resource report communication products were developed and mailed to stakeholders in 2009/10. Implementation of the framework is occurring in 2010/11 and includes: black bear ecological zones with a new manual for objectives and harvest planning; raising awareness and soliciting input from aboriginal communities and stakeholders into black bear management objectives.
  - Wildlife Monitoring:
    - Implemented the second year of a moose pregnancy rate study (in the Northeast Region) to assess pregnancy rates relative to observed low moose calf recruitment across the region.
    - Draft progress report was completed summarizing results from winter 2009.

- Four Moose Aerial Inventories were completed in Northwest Region, two in Northeast Region and five in Southern Region.
- Deer, moose, bear and wolf questionnaire and hunter surveys conducted and caribou surveys conducted.
- Enforcement Branch made 332,009 public contacts, gave 11,065 warnings and laid 8,147 charges. 125 High Visibility Enforcement Vehicles were upfitted with a mobile office.

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