

FACT SHEET

ONTARIO POWER GENERATION ACTION PLAN FOR THE RECOVERY OF THE AMERICAN EEL* IN LAKE ONTARIO/UPPER ST. LAWRENCE RIVER 2006 TO 2011

July 8, 2009

The key components of the Ontario Power Generation Action Plan include trapping and transporting mature eels, stocking of young eels, and monitoring the effectiveness of these measures.

Transporting Mature Eels Around Generating Stations

- Ontario Power Generation, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Fisheries and Oceans Canada are conducting studies to see if mature eels can be captured in Lake Ontario and the upper St. Lawrence River and trucked downstream to the lower St. Lawrence.
- The federal government's contribution to this initiative has been and will continue to be primarily in the form of its scientific research capacity and collaboration with the various parties. Some of the work currently underway includes the compilation of fish habitat inventories to understand the current status and condition of eel habitat within its historical range.
- Transporting the eels allows them to avoid hydroelectric generating stations on the St. Lawrence.
- In 2008 and 2009, commercial fishermen captured live, large eels (over 1.1 kilograms (2.5 pounds)) using traditional fishing gear. The eels were collected, measured and tagged by the Ministry of Natural Resources.
- Ontario Power Generation trucked the eels downstream to Quebec where they were released into Lac St Pierre (near Trois Rivières) and Lac St. Louis (just upstream from Montreal) with the assistance of the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune du Québec.
- Ontario Power Generation is studying how the eels are affected by the capture and transport process, and determining if they subsequently undertake a spawning migration out of the St. Lawrence River back to the Atlantic Ocean.

Stocking Young Eels into the Upper St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario

- In addition to the above program, Ontario Power Generation is acquiring young eels, known as "glass" eels, in the Maritimes and stocking them into the upper St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario in the hope that this will accelerate the recovery of the American eel in Ontario. About 3.9 million glass eels have been stocked into the upper St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario since 2006.
- The glass eels are collected by commercial fishers in the Maritimes as they migrate from the ocean into the estuaries of Maritime rivers in the spring.

*American eel is not related to the species commonly referred to in Ontario as lamprey eel.

- The glass eels are extensively tested for pathogens and parasites at the Atlantic Veterinary College in Prince Edward Island before being authorized for shipment by truck to Ontario.
- The glass eels are being released into several areas in the St. Lawrence River and eastern Lake Ontario with good habitat for young eels.
- Ontario Power Generation, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Ministry of Natural Resources will be monitoring the success of the stocking to confirm that the glass eels survive and grow.

Media Relations, Ontario Power Generation, 1-877-592-4008 or
416-592-4008

www.opg.com

Ivan Langrish, Minister's Office, 416-314-2212
Media Desk, Communications Services Branch, 416-314-2106

ontario.ca/natural-resources-news

Kevin Hill, Communications Manager, Central and Arctic,
Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 1-204-984-8792

www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca

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