

Bayfield Institute

Fish Habitat Management

The Fish Habitat Management program of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) administers the fish habitat provisions of the *Fisheries Act*, in particular those that are aimed at preventing the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat. This is done to conserve, restore and develop the productive capacity of habitats for recreational, commercial and subsistence fisheries both in the freshwater and marine environments.

Fish habitat can be defined as locations in our lakes, streams and rivers, wetlands, estuaries and oceans on which fish depend, either directly or indirectly, to carry out their life processes. Spawning grounds, nursery and rearing areas, areas of food supply and migration routes are all examples of fish habitat.

Fish Habitat Management ensures that there is no net loss of fish habitat through its Policy for the Management of Fish Habitat. The objective of the Fish Habitat Management program is to produce a net gain of the natural productive capacity of fish habitats for the nation's fisheries resources for the benefit of present and future generations of Canadians. This is accomplished through three goals: conservation, restoration, and development of fish habitat.



K.Holland

It is the responsibility of Fish Habitat Management to **conserve** the current productive capacity of fish habitat of Canada's fisheries resources such that fish suitable for human consumption may be produced. This is done through the systematic review of development proposals that could have adverse effects on fish habitat.

The second goal, fish **habitat restoration**, is achieved through the rehabilitation of the productive capacity of fish habitats. This is often undertaken in cooperation with community groups and resource use organizations and other government agencies.



The third goal is that of fish **habitat development**, which is accomplished by developing new habitat or by improving existing habitat where the productive capacity can be increased. As with the second goal, habitat development is often carried out in partnership with concerned citizens, resource use organizations and other government agencies.

Current issues in Central and Arctic Region that require attention by the Fish Habitat Management Program include oil and gas exploration in the Arctic, irrigation channels in the Prairies and waterway dredging in Ontario.

For more information about the Fish Habitat Management program in Ontario, contact the Bayfield Institute at 867 Lakeshore Rd., Burlington, ON, L7R 4A6, or by phone at (905) 336-4595. Alternatively, visit our regional website at: www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/regions/CENTRAL/home-accueil_e.htm

