



LAKEHEAD REGION
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

FANTASTIC FISH



HAZELWOOD LAKE CONSERVATION AREA



We all know a fish when we see one but what exactly are the characteristics that make a fish a fish?

For starters, fish as we know, are permanent residents of water, which means they are **aquatic animals**. Their overall body shape is **streamlined** to help it move more efficiently through the water.

Fish are what are called **cold-blooded or ectotherms**, which means the body temperature is not internally regulated like humans, but instead the body has the same temperature as the surrounding environment.

Fish, which are **vertebrates** and have a back bone have 2 specialized body parts for aquatic life. All fish have **fins** which propel them forward in the water and also help steer and stay upright. **Gills** are how fish breathe underwater. Other animals like tadpoles and some salamanders also have gills but eventually grow and develop lungs as an adult. As water flows across the blood-rich gills the oxygen from the water is absorbed.



Many species of fish inhabit the Lakehead watershed. From spring-fed lakes to the mighty Lake Superior, quiet streams to crashing waterfalls, fish can be found in almost every waterbody. **Lake trout prefer the deep waters of Lake Superior and some inland lakes. Perch, Bass and Pike favour warmer water. Rainbow trout travel up and spawn many streams that flow to Lake Superior.**



Fish need **food** to survive. What a fish eats varies on species but include other animals such as damselflies, dragonfly nymphs, mayflies, stoneflies, smaller fish or minnows, frogs, crayfish, and even small waterfowl.

The **near-shore zone is vital to fish**. Shallow water areas harbor weedy beds and rock piles that shelter smaller fish, are used to help camouflage their bodies while hunting, and are used for spawning. Trees shade and cool the water, while their roots keep soil from washing away.

Try your luck fishing in the numerous lakes and rivers. Practicing **catch and release**, as well as limiting what you keep can help to conserve fish populations and ensure good fishing for years to come. **Regulations** are placed on fishing to ensure fish populations for future generations. Regulations can include anything from slot size, bait restriction, possession limits and sanctuaries so be sure to check these annual provincial regulations before you head to a lake to fish.



Fish that are commonly found in Hazelwood Lake are Walleye, Pike and Yellow Perch.

Walleye are identifiable by sharp teeth, white tip on tail, pronounced dorsal fin and no obvious bands as an adult. Walleye prefer large shallow lakes. Walleye's large eyes make them more photosensitive than other species and these fish are generally more active in low light periods.

Yellow Perch are identifiable by its yellowish colour and the six to eight black bars that run from their back to just past their lateral line. Yellow perch have several fine teeth. They prefer to live in calm water and often are hiding amongst vegetation. Perch tend to be tolerant of oxygen deficient waters during freeze up in the winter. They often feed in deeper darker waters and then are more active near the surface at dusk and dawn. Generally perch live to about seven years old and sometimes slightly longer in its more northern range.



Northern Pike are one of the most predatory fish you will find. Their elongated body aids in a fast attack of their prey, and because they are at the top of the aquatic food chains, the defense of spiny fins is not existent. In lake environments, pike prefer weedy bays. As far as fish are concerned, the pike gains weight at a huge rate, one pound per year minimum. Pike tend to eat their own young or young that have hatched at the same time. Generally a pike's diet will consist of fish, but a young muskrat, duckling or frog is not unheard of as a meal for the predatory pike.

You can help protect fish habitat:

- Properly dispose of all litter, fuel and chemicals,
- Leave the shoreline natural,
- Reduce your boat wake when near shore,
- Wash and clean all your boating and fishing equipment before and after entering new waters to avoid accidentally transporting invasive species,
- Read and follow fishing regulations,
- Never dump or leave live bait, and do not use invasive species as bait (such as the Rusty Crayfish),
- Contact the Conservation Authority before starting any construction or shoreline work by water.

