

# Lake Nipissing Fisheries Management Plan



## Fisheries Management Planning

Fisheries management planning is a key component of the Ecological Framework for Fisheries Management (EFFM) which provides guidelines for improving the way recreational fisheries are managed in Ontario.

Fisheries management planning is also consistent with the government's overall strategic directions and with the goals and objectives of the Ontario Biodiversity Strategy (OBS). Each plan is designed to value the diversity of the lake and to be flexible and adaptable to a wide range of future conditions.

The planning process considers the lake as a whole and proposes a range of management options that will ensure a healthy lake ecosystem. The plan helps conserve the diversity of the fish community and provides opportunities to contribute to the social and economic well-being of the surrounding area.

## The Purpose & Scope of the Plan

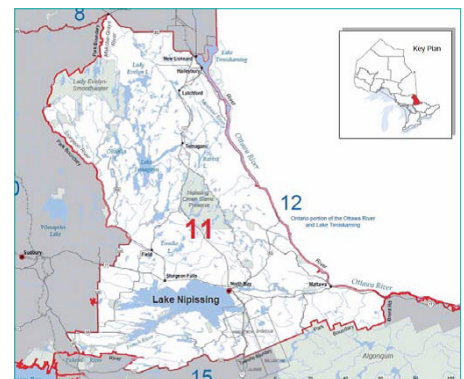
The draft Lake Nipissing Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) identifies challenges and opportunities associated with the management of Lake Nipissing's fisheries. The plan addresses these challenges and makes the most of the opportunities by identifying goals and objectives that support sustainable resource management.

The planning area lies within the legal boundaries of Lake Nipissing, a Specially Designated Water (SDW) within the broader Fisheries Management Zone (FMZ) (Figure 1). The Lake Nipissing FMP is integrated into the management plan for FMZ 11, currently under development.

The FMP proposes actions to assist the government in balancing the demands for the use of the resources with the biological capacity of the lake. This balance is based on an analysis of fisheries data and collaborative discussions with members of the public, stakeholders, First Nations and Aboriginal communities, and local governments.

Northern Pike

Figure 1: Location of Lake Nipissing, specially designated waters within Fishery Management Zone (FMZ) 11.



The plan emphasizes the importance of several components of a healthy lake and addresses the sustainability issues facing the fishery, such as the declining walleye population, while promoting the diverse angling opportunities the lake has to offer.

## How the Plan was Developed

The draft Lake Nipissing FMP was developed by the government with advice from the Lake Nipissing Fisheries Management Plan Advisory Council (LNFMPAC). It also included input from stakeholders and the public at key stages of the plan development process.

The purpose of the planning process is to gather the relevant pieces of information related to the fishery and develop a document that clearly identifies the management goals. Specific objectives, targets and timelines that will guide the management of the recreational fisheries on the lake are proposed. Some of the specific goals of the plan include:

- Managing within the natural capacities of Lake Nipissing to develop a sustainable and diverse fishery
- Managing species as part of a larger ecosystem-based approach
- Enhancing Lake Nipissing as a desirable fishing destination to provide social, recreational and economic benefits
- Increasing public understanding of fisheries management to encourage stewardship and advocacy for the resource.



Walleye

The final FMP will be a dynamic document that may be changed as circumstances require. There are internal review periods every five years to determine if the plan

objectives are still sustainable and to assess how well the targets are being met.

## Proposed Management Options

The key goal of the draft Lake Nipissing Fisheries Management Plan is to ensure the survival of a sustainable fishery. To achieve this goal, the plan needs to address the current challenges with the populations of some species and be flexible and adaptable to a wide range of possible future conditions.

The planning process considers the lake as a whole and proposes a range of management options to ensure the lake's ecosystem remains healthy. Maintaining diversity of fish species in the lake is a significant aspect of a healthy lake.

For example, with a decreasing population of young walleye that have not yet had a chance to spawn and with very few large walleye available to reproduce, the abundance of the species has declined to its lowest level in Lake Nipissing. If the situation is not addressed, the decline may continue into the future.

To support the recovery of walleye, the government and Lake Nipissing Fisheries Management Plan Advisory Council recommended changes to the

walleye fishing regulations, including examining ways to reduce the harvest.

Another management strategy designed to encourage the recovery of the walleye is to manage the population of yellow perch wisely. With new fishing regulations in place as of Jan. 1, 2014, yellow perch catch and possession limits have been increased. This action enhances the fishing opportunities on the lake and helps the young walleye survive to spawning age.

Current information gathered about smallmouth and largemouth bass populations indicates it is possible to propose new regulations for bass that will increase angling opportunities on the lake and, as with yellow perch, benefit the walleye population.

Applying different strategies and management options ensures the sustainability of diverse fish populations.

## You Can Contribute



Yellow Perch

Public input is one of the key pillars of the fisheries management planning process. The government relies on the participation of stakeholders, First Nations, anglers and the public to help develop and implement the plan.

The draft Lake Nipissing Fisheries Management Plan is available for review and comment. To achieve the objectives of the plan, your participation is essential.

### Fish Today... For Tomorrow

For more information about how you can contribute, please contact:

Eric Cobb, Management Biologist  
 Ministry of Natural Resources  
 3301 Trout Lake Road  
 North Bay, ON P1A 4L7  
 Email: lakenipmanplan@ontario.ca



Smallmouth Bass