

Proposed Changes to Cisco (Lake Herring) Fishing Regulations in Lake Simcoe



Cisco (Lake Herring) *Coregonus artedii*

The Ministry of Natural Resources, with the support of the Lake Simcoe Fisheries Stakeholder Committee, is inviting the public to provide input on proposed changes to fishing regulations for Cisco (Lake Herring) in Lake Simcoe.

Have Your Say

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), with the support of the Lake Simcoe Fisheries Stakeholder Committee, is inviting the public to provide input on proposed changes to fishing regulations for cisco (lake herring) in Lake Simcoe.

The cisco population within Lake Simcoe has shown positive trends in recent years. The ministry is considering re-introducing limited harvest opportunities for anglers to support sustainable resource management and promote recreational angling opportunities.

Lake Simcoe's cisco population once provided a major food source for several species of sport fish, as well as a significant recreational fishery. However, in 2001, the fishery was closed following several years of population decline due to a lack of natural reproduction. The decline was largely associated with habitat degradation in the form of low dissolved oxygen content within the deep, coldwater habitat of the lake. Habitat conditions have since improved, and recent population monitoring by MNR has suggested a positive trend as the population continues its recovery. Increased cisco numbers have resulted in cautious optimism by fishery managers and anglers alike.



The waters of Lake Simcoe include Lake Simcoe, Lake Couchiching, the Green River, and their tributaries, the Trent Canal System and its tributaries – downstream from Lake Couchiching to lock 42, the Trent Canal System in Brock and Ramara Twps., and the Severn River and its tributaries (excluding the Black River) downstream from Lake Couchiching to Wasdell Falls, all within the Regional Municipalities of York, Durham and Simcoe County and the District of Muskoka

Lake Simcoe is located about one hour north of Toronto within Fisheries Management Zone (FMZ) 16. Lake Simcoe is the most southerly inland lake in Ontario that supports lake trout and lake whitefish fisheries.

ontario.ca/zonecouncils

Proposed Regulation Options for Cisco

Limits

Option #1: Sport Fishing Licence: 2, Conservation Licence: 1

Option #2: Sport Fishing Licence: 2 (Aggregate Limit with Lake Whitefish),
Conservation Licence: 1 (Aggregate Limit with Lake Whitefish)

Proposed Season

January 1st to March 15th and 2nd Saturday in May to September 30th



Rationale

Recent monitoring data suggest positive trends, including a total of nine year classes present in the population with two strong year classes since 2008. This has supported an increase in relative abundance over the past three years. A very strong year class was also evident in 2004; however, many of these cisco have since died due to natural causes.

The proposed regulatory options are not anticipated to negatively impact the cisco population or other fish species in Lake Simcoe.

Based on the positive monitoring information, MNR supports a limited cisco fishery that encourages sustainable harvest opportunities. This support recognizes the irrevocable changes in the aquatic ecosystem of Lake Simcoe (such as invasive species) and that the lake will likely not support historical population levels of cisco again. The proposed regulation changes align with the Lake Simcoe Fisheries Community Objectives which aim to manage cisco as a forage base for lake trout, and when sustainable, to re-open a cisco fishery, for harvest opportunities. These proposed changes are endorsed by the Lake Simcoe Fisheries Stakeholder Committee and MNR's Lake Simcoe Fisheries Management Committee.

Other Considerations

The proposed regulatory options are not anticipated to increase the number of anglers on Lake Simcoe. However, they could increase the total number of angler hours on Lake Simcoe annually by providing additional recreational opportunities to existing fisheries. Angler reports of incidental catches of cisco have increased in recent years.

Provide Your Comments

The Ministry of Natural Resources and the Lake Simcoe Fisheries Stakeholder Committee welcome your input on these proposed changes and all feedback received will inform the decision-making process.

You can provide your feedback through email at fishaurora@ontario.ca. For more information, you can contact the Aurora District office at 905-713-7398.



ontario.ca/zonecouncils