

Information Update #2
Lake Simcoe Fish Die-Off
July 17, 2008

- The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) has been monitoring the fish die-offs that have occurred over the past few weeks in Lake Simcoe and some connected rivers. Other areas that have experienced similar die-offs are: Dalrymple Lake, Lake Couchiching, Lake Katchewanooka, Lake Seymour, Lake St. John, Otonabee River, Rice Lake, Sparrow Lake, Young Lake, Trent River (Peterborough area) and Severn River. The vast majority of dead fish reported and collected have been carp. Small numbers of other species have been reported, although not in any unusual quantities.
- Within Lake Simcoe it appears the die-off has peaked and is now subsiding. MNR has received no new reports of dead fish in recent days. Municipalities are reporting a significant decrease in the numbers of dead fish picked up for disposal. MNR staff have been searching for sick and dying fish to collect for testing but have been unable to find any over the past week.
- We have received partial test results from fish submitted for disease testing from across the area affected by die-offs - a total of 27 fish (26 carp + 1 brown bullhead). Test results revealed the presence of Koi Herpesvirus (KHV) which does not affect humans. KHV is an invasive fish virus and is an infectious disease of carp, koi and goldfish.
- Test results also revealed elevated levels of various types of bacteria which are found naturally occurring in fresh waters as well as on or in healthy fish. To date, the three bacteria identified are: *Aeromonas hydrophila*, *Enterococcus* and *Acinetobacter*.
- It is believed that a combination of factors has resulted in the death of the carp including stress from spawning, stress from environmental conditions, such as water temperatures and disease.
- The bacteria identified are found naturally in fresh waters as well as in or on healthy fish. The test results have been shared with health units around the lake. The health units indicate these bacteria pose very little risk to healthy people and remind people that surface waters always contain bacteria that could infect people who have open wounds or suppressed immune systems. The health units also remind the public that they do not consume or inhale surface waters and should not let wounds be contaminated by water.

- Specific questions about human health effects should be directed to local health units (See contact information below)
- More information about the fish die-offs is available on the Ministry of Natural Resources website by following the linking below:

<http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/LetsFish/2ColumnSubPage/239472.html>

- For more information about fish health and Koi Herpesvirus please see:

www.Ontario.ca/fishhealth

- MNR will continue to collect and test fish for disease if there are any new die-offs. We will also share any new findings that should become available.
- The following contact numbers are provided for inquiries related to the fish die-offs. **Please call the most appropriate number related to your inquiry and geographical area:**
 - To report fish die-offs:
 - Ministry of Natural Resources – 1-866-929-0994
 - For more information on fish health see www.ontario.ca/fishhealth
 - For public health inquiries, please contact your Local Health Unit:
 - Durham Region: Environmental Help Line – 905-723-3818 (x2188) or 1-888-777-9613 (x2188)
 - York: 1-800-361-5653
 - Simcoe Muskoka: 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520
 - For disposal of fish carcasses:
 - Contact your area municipality
 - For specific inquiries about a fish die-off:
 - Contact your local Ministry of Natural Resources Office:
 - Aurora District (Regional Municipality of York, Regional Municipality of Durham) – 905-713-7385 or 905-713-7730
 - Midhurst District (Simcoe County, Barrie, Orillia) - 705-725-7500
 - For collection of dead fish:
 - Contact the Town of Georgina Engineering and Public Works Department 905-476-4301 or 705-437-2210 Ext. 232