

## WHAT ARE LAKE ONTARIO'S KEY ISSUES?

In 1987, Toronto and Region was identified as one of 43 Areas of Concern (AOC)—areas where local environmental conditions may be causing harm to the Great Lakes. The Toronto and Region AOC extends along the north shore of Lake Ontario from Etobicoke Creek in the west to the Rouge River in the east.

### Key issues in the Toronto and Region AOC:

- Protecting wildlife habitats and wetlands
- Ensuring swimmable beaches
- Improving nearshore water quality
- Enhancing stormwater and sewage infrastructure
- Improving fish community

### What local actions have been taken?

Together, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, City of Toronto, and TRCA are focused on restoring the waterfront through the *Toronto and Region Remedial Action Plan* (RAP).

### Progress from 2008 to 2015

- Beach closings have declined thanks to a substantial reduction in *E. coli* bacteria loadings to the waterfront. Eight of Toronto's 11 waterfront beaches are now Blue Flag beaches.
- Levels of contaminants in fish continue to decline and there are no longer restrictions on consumption for many resident fish.
- Creation and restoration of habitats along streams and the waterfront have increased diversity of fish and wildlife species.
- Phosphorus levels along the waterfront now meet the target set for the RAP; however, continued work on critical wet weather flow infrastructure projects is needed.

## HOW CAN WE ENHANCE THE LAKE ONTARIO SHORELINE?



### What are we doing?

TRCA and our partners are working together to:

- Monitor various aquatic indicators to assess the ecological condition of the Lake Ontario waterfront including fish and fish habitat surveys, water quality monitoring, and benthos and sediment surveys.
- Enhance fishing opportunities and support the creation of quality public access sites for recreational anglers to enjoy through the *Urban Recreational Fisheries Strategy*.
- Since 2000, over 30 ha of coastals wetland have been created or restored along the waterfront providing habitat for birds, turtles, amphibians, and vegetation.
- The Toronto and Region RAP is working to restore the health of Toronto's waters, fish, wildlife and habitats to have Toronto delisted as an Area of Concern.

### What can you do?

- Visit one of our Lake Ontario waterfront parks to participate in a variety of recreational opportunities including: fishing, walking, cycling, boating, canoeing and kayaking, swimming, bird watching, nature viewing.
- When walking or cycling along the Waterfront Trail always be a responsible trail user: dispose of any garbage properly and share the trail with other users.
- Participate in a shoreline cleanup in your community. Visit [shorelinecleanup.ca](http://shorelinecleanup.ca) to join or lead a cleanup in your area.

trca.ca/waterfront  Lake Ontario Waterfront TRCA  @WaterfrontTRCA

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To learn about The Living City Foundation: [thelivingcity.org](http://thelivingcity.org)

## Lake Ontario WATERFRONT Report Card 2018

## WHERE ARE WE?



### What is a watershed?

A watershed is an area of land, drained by a creek or stream into a river, which drains into a body of water such as a lake. Everything in a watershed is connected. Our actions upstream affect conditions downstream.

### What is a watershed report card?

Ontario's Conservation Authorities have developed watershed report cards that are prepared every five years. This waterfront report card measures the progress made in the Lake Ontario waterfront in the Toronto Region between 2013 and 2017.

### Why measure?

Measuring helps us better understand our watershed. We can focus our work where it is needed and track progress. We measured:



Biodiversity



Recreation



Water Quality

### Progress Indicators



Better



No change



Worse



Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) has prepared this report as a summary of the state of the environment for the Lake Ontario shoreline in TRCA's jurisdiction.



## ABOUT THE WATERFRONT

Toronto and Region Conservation has jurisdiction over 72 linear kilometres of Lake Ontario waterfront. TRCA's area of jurisdiction on the waterfront extends from the City of Toronto/City of Mississauga border in the west to the Town of Ajax in the east.

TRCA works to maintain shoreline protection and restore terrestrial and aquatic habitat for plants and animals along the shoreline, while providing recreational opportunities through the design and construction of waterfront parks.

***Our goal is to achieve a waterfront that is clean, green, accessible, diverse, and attractive.***



### LAND COVER



### Significant Features



Biodiversity is assessed through surveys that collect data on a set of mammal, bird, amphibian, reptile and fish species across the waterfront. Between 2008 to 2017, TRCA recorded over 120 species: 94 birds, 18 mammals, 6 turtles, 4 snakes, 5 frogs/toads, and 1 salamander. Annual fish community monitoring in 2016 identified 51 fish species along the waterfront.



#### BIRD

Several areas on the waterfront are used regularly for nesting Barn Swallows, a threatened species in Ontario.



#### FISH

Stocking and conservation programs have increased the number of Atlantic Salmon in Lake Ontario.



#### REPTILE

Midland Painted Turtles and Snapping Turtles are found in wetlands across the waterfront.



#### AMPHIBIAN

American Toads, Northern Leopard Frogs, and Green Frogs are the species observed most frequently along the waterfront.



#### MAMMAL

River Otter sightings have increased across the waterfront. In 2017, there were 2 observations reported at Tommy Thompson Park.



An objective of the TRCA Strategic Plan 2013–2022 is to improve the water quality and aquatic ecosystem health of TRCA rivers and shorelines, making them more fishable, hikeable, canoeable and swimmable. The waterfront provides ample opportunity for recreational activities, both water based and land based, throughout our jurisdiction.



#### RECREATION NODES

A total of 6 recreation nodes can be found on the waterfront. These areas provide safe access to the waterfront for urban anglers and non-motorized watercraft (canoes, kayaks).



#### TRAILS

There are 87 km of Waterfront Trail along the shoreline.



#### GREENSPACE

There have been 17 ha more of TRCA owned greenspace added to the waterfront, bringing the total to 1,243 ha.



#### BIRD WATCHING

Bird watching is a popular recreational activity along the waterfront. There are a few “hotspots” along the waterfront where birders have viewed 200+ species.



#### BOAT LAUNCHES

There are 5 public boat launches across the waterfront.



#### PUBLIC SWIMMING BEACHES

There are 14 public swimming beaches across the waterfront and 8 are Blue Flag beaches.



Improved stormwater management and better beach maintenance have improved nearshore water quality and reduced the number of beach closures along the waterfront. During the 2012–2016 swimming seasons waterfront beaches were considered safe for swimming 85% of time.

Water quality at waterfront beaches is monitored by the Region of Durham (3 waterfront beaches) and the City of Toronto (11 waterfront beaches) using *E.coli* (bacteria from human and animal waste) as an indicator to measure whether recreational waters are safe for swimming. Eight of the 14 waterfront beaches are Blue Flag certified—a world-renowned eco-certification for beaches and marinas. For more information about the Blue Flag program visit [blueflag.ca](http://blueflag.ca).

### PERCENTAGE OF BEACH CLOSURES 2012 – 2016

