

Creating Healthy, Natural Habitats for Freshwater Fish

THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTHY HABITAT

- There are over 155 species of freshwater fish in Ontario. Freshwater fish are globally valued but threatened everywhere.
- Native fish populations are facing increasing threats from invasive species, pollution (sedimentation, light, increased nutrients, pesticides, salinity, etc.), over-exploitation, habitat alteration/degradation/loss, and climate change.
- Throughout various lifecycles, up to 90% of fish and wildlife species depend on a healthy shoreland for their survival. They utilize this area for shelter, food, migration, breeding, and rearing their young.
 - This includes having a healthy littoral zone, shoreline, riparian zone, and upland zone.
- Different fish species have different habitat needs which also depend on the life stage of the fish (spawning, nursery, or adult).



Addition of in-water brush bundles

STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL FISH ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

1. Gather fisheries information
2. Consult key stakeholders
3. Determine your objective
4. Choose your project site
5. Plan your project
6. Obtain official permits
7. Fund your project
8. Communicate your project

TAKING ACTION FOR YOUR LOCAL FISH POPULATIONS

- Download the free [Fish Habitat Enhancement Toolkit](#) to get step-by-step protocols to lead cold water creek enhancements, add in-water brush bundles, or restore walleye spawning beds.
- Access free [resource and care guides](#), including the Shoreline Habitat Creation Manual, Native Plant Care Guide, Wildflower Garden Guide, and Guide to Building Resilient Shorelines.
- Learn about the Science of Vegetated Buffers and how to prepare a Shoreline Naturalization Planting Action Plan by downloading [these free documents](#).
- Restore on-land fish habitat by participating in the [Natural Edge shoreline re-naturalization program](#) and using the free Canada-wide [Native Plant Database](#).

Join the free Freshwater Stewardship Community!
watersheds.ca/freshwater-stewardship

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