
RVCA News Release

SHORELINE WORK RESTRICTIONS FOR FISH SPAWNING

KEMPTVILLE, March 27, 2006 — Rideau Valley Conservation Authority and its environmental partners remind waterfront property landowners, cottagers and construction project managers that there are restrictions for in-water work in various waterways and lakes in our area. Many are in place now although they vary with weather, thermal conditions and types of fish that inhabit the waterways. These timing windows restrict construction activity in or near the water. The best advice is avoid the fines and penalties under the provincial and federal legislation and delay your in-water work until after the restrictions have passed.

The purpose of these timing windows is to allow an appropriate time and stress-free environment for fish to spawn and raise their young in our local lakes and streams. Fishing, including associated recreational activities, is a multi-million dollar industry in Ontario. Approximately \$1.7 billion is spent annually in the province on a range of goods and services related to recreational fishing. It provides employment for thousands of people in the commercial and recreational fishing industries as well as the related service industry supporting it. Fewer fish mean fewer jobs and degraded river health.

Here are the main timing restrictions when no in-water work may occur in areas of the Rideau Valley:

- warm water fish communities: from March 15 to June 30
- mixed fish communities: from October 1 to June 30 (e.g. Big Rideau Lake)
- cold-water fish communities: October 1 to May 31
- Ottawa River (only): work restricted from March 15 to July 15

The timing windows are researched and set annually by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources staff who have the mandate to set, enforce and allow exceptions or extensions. People wishing to report violations, ongoing in-water work or other problems are encouraged to contact their local Conservation Authority, Department of Fisheries and Oceans or Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources office.

It is also a wise idea to call the Rideau Canal National Historic Site office. The contact for information or to report illegal work on the bed of the Rideau Canal is John Simzer, Compliance Officer at (613) 283-7199, ext 225.

The LandOwner Resource Centre (LRC) in Manotick (613)692-3571 or 1-800-387-5304) can assist if you are considering shoreline work such as docks, boat slips or shoreline erosion protection measures. Staff can assist and advise you on permit requirements or restrictions. Different timing restrictions apply in some areas of warm, mixed and cold-water fish communities, so it is important to check before beginning work on projects near the water.

Construction in or close to water can affect fish by disturbing the soil and causing erosion. The release of construction runoff and soil into the water can stress fish and reduce their chances of survival in the following ways:

- reduce spawning success by smothering the eggs and preventing them from hatching
- inhibit young fish's ability to see prey and feed properly
- suffocate young and adult fish
- inhibit movement and migration of fish
- change water temperature
- reduce water quality.

For information on the shoreline work restrictions in your area, call Mark Scott, RVCA Biologist at (613) 692-3571 ext 1138 (1-800-267-3504 ext 1138) or the MNR Area Biologist (Kemptonville) at (613) 258-8204 or MNR Kingston (613) 531-5700. Make sure you know the rules. The quality of our environment is at stake.