

Cootes Paradise Fishway

Factsheet

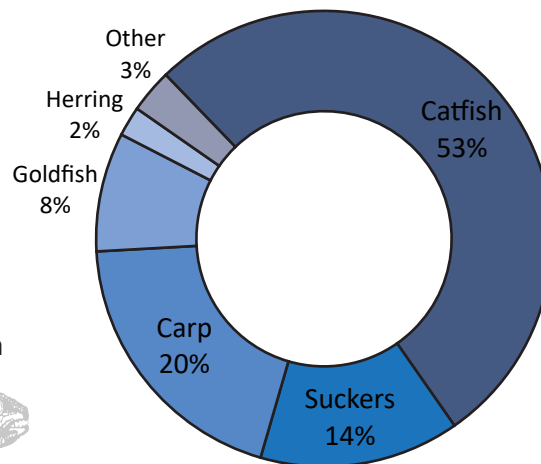
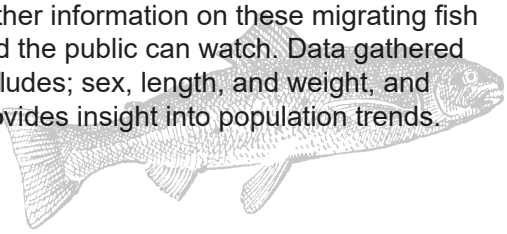


The grates are 5 cm apart to allow young and small fish to swim through freely.

The Fishway is located at the mouth of the Desjardins Canal - where Cootes Paradise Marsh flows into Hamilton Harbour. Its design keeps invasive Common Carp out of the marsh, but allows water and native fish to move between the two bodies of water.

How the Fishway Operates

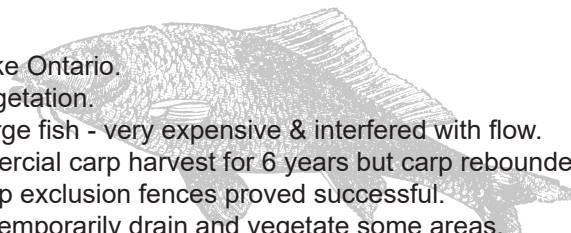
Most fish leave the shallow marsh each fall to overwinter in the deeper water of the harbour and lake. A grate system spans the canal from shore to shore, preventing direct entry of all larger fish. A series of underwater baskets traps and allows our staff to move native fish in and out of the marsh. Staff sort and gather information on these migrating fish and the public can watch. Data gathered includes; sex, length, and weight, and provides insight into population trends.



Average Inbound Fishway Catch

History of Carp Control

- 1870s** Carp accidentally introduced to Lake Ontario.
- 1949** Carp blamed for loss of aquatic vegetation.
- 1950s** Pound net is used to exclude all large fish - very expensive & interfered with flow.
- 1954** Wetland planting program & commercial carp harvest for 6 years but carp rebounded.
- 1980s** Wetland plantings protected by carp exclusion fences proved successful.
- 1994** Portable water-filled dyke used to temporarily drain and vegetate some areas.
- 1996** The Fishway, a two-way barrier, installed to protect the entire marsh & remove carp.
- 1997** First fish lifts held; carp kept in the harbour while native fish could enter the marsh.



Species

- American Eel
- Bigmouth Buffalo
- Black Bullhead
- Black Crappie
- Black X Brown Bullhead
- Black X Smallmouth Buffalo
- Bowfin
- Brown Bullhead
- Brown Trout
- Channel Catfish
- Chinook Salmon
- Common Carp
- Common Carp X Goldfish
- Freshwater Drum
- Gizzard Shad
- Golden Redhorse
- Goldfish
- Greater Redhorse
- Lake Trout
- Largemouth Bass
- Longnose Gar
- Northern Pike
- Rainbow Trout
- Rock Bass
- Rudd
- Sea Lamprey
- Shorthead Redhorse
- Silver Lamprey
- Silver Redhorse
- Smallmouth Bass
- Spotted Gar
- Striped Bass
- Walleye
- White Bass
- White Crappie
- White Perch
- White Sucker
- Yellow Perch

Quick Facts

Fishway Installed
1997

Total Fish Species Caught
39

Most Common Fish
Brown Bullhead

Average Daily Catch - 2016
312 Fish

Maximum Daily Catch - 2016
5608 Fish

Largest Fish
Common Carp (16.6 kg/36.6 lbs)

Peak Season
April



You can help us restore the marsh during our Volunteer Planting Days!

Marsh Restoration

The Fishway is one of several Remedial Action Plan Projects in place to restore the marsh to a healthy wetland community. Our long term restoration goal is to create the conditions for ecosystem recovery by returning water quality and levels to those that reflect Lake Ontario's natural cycles.

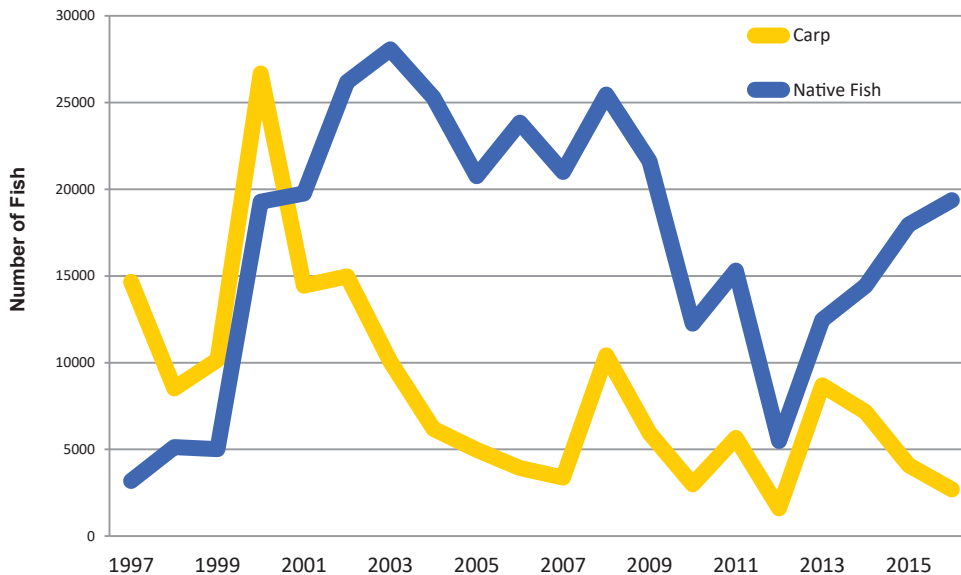
In the short term, we need to manage carp. Carp overpopulation was a big factor, if left unchecked, these fish will continue to destroy wetland habitat. Prior to 1997, Cootes Paradise had an estimated carp population of about 70,000 adults. Our ecologists believe there are now less than 1,000 adult carp and as a result, aquatic plants are on the rise.

Fish Population Trends

In 1997 most of the fish caught at the Fishway were carp. We now consistently see more native fish than non-native species. All species are still struggling to regain healthy populations but poor water quality in adjacent Hamilton Harbour limits their success. Cootes Paradise has always been an important fish nursery and the return of healthy habitat is crucial to supporting a more diverse and healthy fish community.

Fish Tracking

To help track survival rates, some individuals are microchipped and their movements monitored to and from spawning grounds. Predators like Bowfin, Largemouth Bass, Walleye and Northern Pike have very low numbers. From predatory fish to the return of the Bald Eagles, we are also increasing the number of predators that will control young carp numbers.



Trends of Fishway Fish Catch 1997 to 2016

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Phone: (905) 527-1158 ext. 229
or call 1-800-694-4769

E-mail: donations@rbg.ca

RBG at the Fishway

Please check the online schedule for Fishway operation dates.
www.rbg.ca/fishway

Educational Tours are available.
To book a school program, contact edtours@rbg.ca or call 905-527-1158 x276.

Parking is located at Princess Point
335 Longwood Rd. N.