

Important new wetland habitat created for Ontario's **wildlife**

Mississauga, April 23, 2019... A new study released today by the Ontario Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (OSSGA) demonstrates how rehabilitated pits and quarries are providing valuable wetland habitat for wildlife across Ontario.



Unicorn Clubtail (Provincially Rare) - Heber Down ...



Grey Comma - Eaton Property - July 27/18



Monarch (Special Concern) - Heber Down Conserv...



Bumble Bee - Eaton Property - July 27/18



Azure Bluet (Provincially Rare) - Heber Down Cons...



Calico Pennant - Spray Lake Watersports Park - Ju...



Rainbow Bluet - Spray Lake - Watersports Park - Ju...



Common Baskettail - Spray Lake Watersports Park ...

In 2017, OSSGA conducted a survey of new wetlands created through the rehabilitation of former pits and quarries. The study revealed a total of 293 hectares of aquatic habitat features – or the equivalent of 1,849 NHL hockey rinks – had been created through rehabilitation.

“In 2018, we wanted to study not just the *quantity* of those wetlands, but also the *quality*,” says Norm Cheesman, Executive Director of OSSGA.

“We engaged Stantec Consulting Ltd. to analyze seven of the sites within Provincial Plan areas identified in the 2017 study to better understand the ecological and cultural characteristics of aquatic habitat created by rehabilitating pits and quarries. What we found was impressive.”

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Wetland Study Results

- 291** wildlife species were either **observed** during field investigations (171) or are known to inhabit the site through background source data (120).
- 33** butterfly species were **observed** including provincially rare and/or Species at Risk – like the Monarch.
- 34** dragonfly species were **observed** including provincially rare and/or Species at Risk – like the Azure Bluet.
- 81** bird species were **observed** including provincially rare and/or Species at Risk – like the Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark.
- 7** bat species were **recorded** including three species at risk: Northern Myotis, Little Brown Myotis and the Tri-coloured Bat. Nearly 13,000 bat calls were recorded over 19 nights!
- 18** types of key wildlife habitat were **observed**, including turtle wintering and nesting areas, osprey foraging habitat, and habitat for several species of conservation concern.
- Fish** habitat was observed at all the study sites. **Observed** species included Fathead Minnow, Brown Bullhead, Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, Pumpkinseed and more.

“Wetlands are among the most productive and biologically diverse habitats in the world,” says Cheesman.

“Our study demonstrates that the rehabilitation of pits and quarries creates vibrant new wetland habitat in parts of the province that have lost over 85% of original wetlands. Our members are working hard to create value through rehabilitation. Aggregate producers are investing in innovative projects like aqua farming and creating new natural heritage features – ensuring that the wetlands they create provide an array of ecological, social and economic benefits.”

Rehabilitated aggregate sites provide a unique opportunity to carve out the future green space and wetlands of tomorrow’s urban landscapes. “Remember,” says Cheesman, “that sites including the Toronto Brick Works, Burlington’s Botanical Gardens and Brampton’s Professors Lake, are all former pits or quarries, that today serve as important urban green spaces and wetlands.”

A complete copy of the report – including photos and audio files of species is available [here](#).

OSSGA is a not-for-profit industry association representing over 280 sand, gravel, and crushed stone producers and suppliers of valuable industry products and services. Collectively, our members supply the substantial majority of the approximately 164 million tonnes of aggregate consumed annually in the province to build and maintain Ontario’s infrastructure needs. OSSGA works in partnership with government and the public to promote a safe and competitive aggregate industry contributing to the creation of strong communities in the province. Find out more about OSSGA by exploring [GravelFacts.ca](#).

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