

Only a Short Ferry Ride  
 Away to Some of the Finest  
 Shore Fishing Opportunities  
 in Southern Ontario

"In memory of Rick Amsbury"



www.toronto.ca/parks  
 416-397-BOAT (2628)  
 Toronto Island activities call  
 For information on all  
 Parks & Recreation  

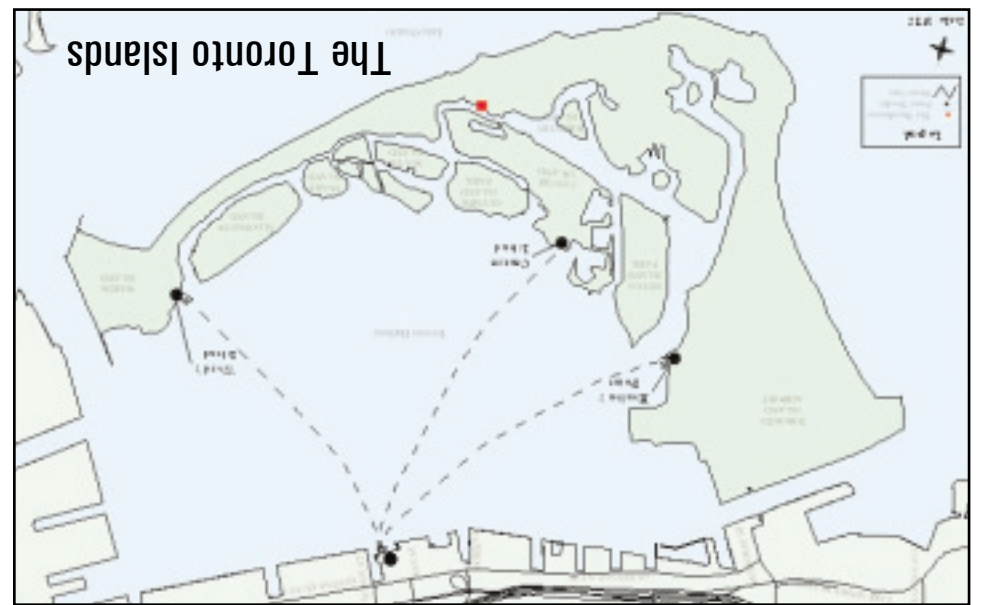

# COME FISH THE TORONTO ISLANDS



Image Credit: Curtis Atwater

- Visit the Boathouse:
- Rent a Canoe!
  - Buy Bait!
  - Borrow a Rod & Reel!

Record your catch & get a postcard!



## A message from Toronto Mayor David Miller



"As Mayor of Toronto, I am proud to invite you to get involved with some fishy business happening right in the heart of our city. In partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Ontario Tourism, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, we're working to get the message out about the premier angling opportunities available on our very own Toronto Islands. Whether you are a resident of Toronto or just visiting, take a little time to discover the fabulous fishing Toronto has to offer. I have every confidence that our waterways will soon have you hooked on The Toronto Islands."



## Why Fish on the Toronto Islands?

- The series of waterways at The Islands are connected to Lake Ontario and offer several kilometres of great public shore fishing open to you and your family.
- Because these waterways are directly connected to Lake Ontario, a variety of fish species are continually moving in or out, constantly replenishing the population.
- You can catch 10 kinds of fish at The Islands.
- Not only are there plenty of pan-sized fish available for kids of all ages but there are world-class trophy carp, (some say the Ontario record may be broken here), bragging size northern pike and some HAWGS that would make any largemouth bass angler proud!
- Easy to get to ... Take the five minute Ferry Ride at the foot of Bay Street just west of Yonge Street on the Lake Ontario waterfront in Downtown Toronto - and you're there! During peak summer months the Centre Island Ferry leaves every 15 minutes.
- Everything you need is available at The Boathouse - Worms, Fishing Licences, How-to Information and even Boat Rentals if you'd rather paddle to the fish instead of walk to them.

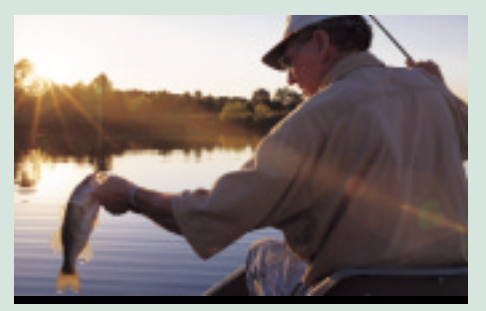
And, thanks to the Ontario Federation of Anglers & Hunters (OFAH) Tackle Share program, you can even borrow a rod and reel with basic tackle if you don't have your own with you!

- Besides being a great place to fish, The Toronto Islands are a favorite place to bike, boat, blade, run, walk, swim, picnic, play tennis, volleyball or even Frisbee Golf.

## Who would be interested in the great fishing at *The Islands*?

Residents of The Islands; school groups, service clubs; people visiting Toronto for a day or two on business; tourists vacationing in Toronto; families on a picnic; kids, teenagers; seniors or any GTA resident looking for somewhere close to fish.

Before you fish The Islands for the first time we recommend you visit The Boathouse conveniently located on Centre Island. Here the friendly staff can point out some of the areas where you can fish. The Boathouse will also become your one stop shopping centre for fishing The Islands and will carry: fishing licences, worms and fishing literature. There are even rods and reels to borrow if you don't have one. Canoe and paddle boat rentals are also available here.



## Basic Fishing Regulations - What you should know before you fish *The Islands*

- You can fish on The Islands with only one rod and reel at a time - no nets or other devices may be used to catch gamefish here. You cannot snag fish.
- Your possession limit of fish cannot exceed your daily catch limit. Plan what to do if you catch a fish, we encourage catch and release.



A typical carp that can be caught from The Islands

## How to get a Fishing Licence

If you are between 18 and 64 years of age you will need a fishing licence to fish The Islands. This provincial licence will also allow you to fish public waters in the rest of the Ontario. Here are some details below about the type of licences available for sale at The Boathouse on Centre Island for both Canadian residents and nonresidents: (Please note - 2005 prices below subject to increase.)

## Residents of Canada

One-day fishing licence = \$10.00

One-year sport fishing licence and Outdoors Card = \$28.50

One-year conservation fishing licence and Outdoors Card = \$ 19.25

One-year sport fishing licence tag (for holders of a valid Outdoors Card) = \$22.50

One-year conservation licence tag (for holders of a valid Outdoors card) = \$13.25

## Nonresidents

One-day fishing licence = \$ 16.50

One-year sportfishing licence = \$62.50

One-year conservation fishing licence = \$38.00

Seven-day sport fishing licence = \$40.00

Seven-day conservation fishing licence = \$23.30



## Explanation of Fishing Licences

- A sport fishing licence allows you to keep up to the allowable full catch of each species. A conservation licence reduces the number of fish you may keep.
- A Resident's Outdoors Card is a plastic card that holds a fishing licence sticker.
- The temporary paper licence you receive at The Boathouse is valid until your plastic card arrives in the mail. You must carry your fishing licence with you when fishing.
- Other than the one-day or seven-day licences, each licence is valid for the full calendar year. The one-day is valid only for the day you are fishing and the seven day licence is for seven consecutive days.
- Fishing licence revenues go directly into a Special Purpose Account for fish and wildlife management programs across Ontario.

## Can you eat the fish from *The Islands*?

The general answer for most species, especially for the smaller fish, is yes ... however some fish here do have certain eating restrictions. Please refer to The Guide to Eating Ontario Sportfish for more details or call the Ministry of the Environment's Sport Fishing Contaminant Monitoring Program at: 1-800-820-2716

- If you do decide you want to take some fish from The Islands home to eat, make sure that the fish is "in season". The last species to open up for fishing around The Islands is bass - so after the last Saturday in June all species are open. (Check the Recreational Fishing Regulations Summary for specific opening and closing season dates.)
- There are no fish cleaning facilities on The Islands so please wait until you get home to clean your fish. Ideally, place your catch in a cooler with ice so that it remains cool and clean.
- For a more detailed description of the rules and regulations please pick up your free copy of the Recreational Fishing Regulations Summary available at The Boathouse.

## Conservation

You don't have to keep it! Catch and release and selective harvest are two key principles that today's modern angler uses to help make his/her contribution to the future of a fishery. Here are some basic tips to help you release your catch in good condition so that some day someone else may enjoy catching that fish too.

- Do not take the fish out of the water for longer than is necessary to remove the hook or quickly take a photo.
- Minimize handling of the fish so that you do not remove its protective slime coat.
- Don't allow the fish to lay around on the grass or rocks if you plan to release it.
- Never grab a fish in the gills or eyes.
- To release the fish hold it in the water facing into the current, moving it forwards and gently backwards until the fish swims off.

## Selective Harvest

- To practice selective harvest means you only take a certain size or species of fish. For instance, you may wish to release a big bass over two or three pounds because these are usually the females which are so important to the future of fishing. Keeping a couple of small one pound bass for the table might be a wiser use of the resource.
- Thank you for respecting this great resource and we hope you enjoy your angling experience on The Islands. Remember: the future of fishing is in your hands ...



FOR MORE  
INFORMATION  
VISIT:

[www.toronto.ca](http://www.toronto.ca)

[www.mnr.gov.on.ca](http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca)

[www.tackleshare.com](http://www.tackleshare.com)



## 1) Carp



Carp prefer slow moving, shallow waters where they can pick up food from the bottom. The habitat around The Islands is ideal for this species that can range from one to 25+ pounds. Carp are 'suckers' for a single kernel of canned corn, a worm or 'dough ball' on a small hook presented on bottom. Carp have a year round open season and no catch limits are in place. Best fishing usually occurs from May to September.

## 2) Pike



Pike are voracious predators that feed primarily on smaller fish so using worms for them is not your top choice. Instead, try minnow-imitating lures like spinnerbaits, big crankbaits or suspending jerkbaits. They can range in size here from one pound to over 20 pounds. Pike season around The Islands is open from the first Saturday in May to December 31st and January 1st to March 31st.

## 3) Yellow Perch



Yellow perch around The Islands will range from 6-12 inches and once you catch one you may catch more because they often travel in schools. Perch usually feed near bottom so presenting your worm or small lure there only makes sense. Perch, like other panfish here have a year round open season and are favoured for their fine taste.

## 4) Largemouth Bass



Largemouth bass can be easily distinguished from their smallmouth cousins because their upper jaw extends beyond the eye whereas a smallmouth's does not. Largemouth prefer soft bottoms, weedy areas or next to some type of structure like docks or fallen trees. Weedless lures such as Texas rigged plastic worms or flipping jigs are great. Both types of bass range from 1/2 pound to 5 pounds.

## 5) Smallmouth Bass



Smallmouth prefer harder bottoms than largemouth and enjoy hanging out near rocks. Both bass can only be fished here during the open season - last Saturday in June until November 30th. Smallmouth have been described as, pound for pound, the hardest fighting fish in fresh water - and their acrobatic leaps are legendary. Nothing beats catching a 'smallie' on a top water lure but they will also go for jigs, crankbaits and spinnerbaits. Live bait also works for both bass.

## 6) Bluegill Sunfish



Along with its cousin the pumpkinseed sunfish, the bluegill travels in tight schools and can be caught with small lures, artificial flies or poppers, and live bait such as worms, grasshoppers or crickets. These tasty little fish average 5-8 inches but may hit the magic one pound mark here. Panfish like sunfish, perch and rock bass are great filleted, coated in batter or bread crumb/flour/spices and deep fried or sautéed in butter.

## 7) Pumpkinseed Sunfish



Perhaps the prettiest little fish that swims in fresh water, the pumpkinseed is a favorite among kids of all ages because of its willingness to feed on a variety of small baits. Both species of sunfish have a year round open season on The Islands but best fishing usually occurs in the summer.

## 8) Rock Bass



Another favorite with the kids, the rock bass is actually a true bass - not a member of the sunfish family like the largemouth and smallmouth bass. This 'red-eyed' panfish also travels in schools and eats most of the same baits as perch and sunfish. It too has a year round open season. Panfish and bass are best held by inserting your thumb and forefinger directly in the mouth and holding firmly.

## 9) Black Crappie



A very structure oriented species that relates to docks, fallen trees, bridge pylons and sunken brush piles. Crappie are not 'crappie tasting' at all, and offer a great battle for their relatively small size. They average 5 to 12 inches and are open for fishing here year round. Unlike many other species crappie always look up to feed so present your bait (minnows, grubs or small brightly colored tube jigs) suspended below a float. Early mornings or evenings are best bets for this and many other fish species on The Islands.

## 10) Brown Bullhead Catfish



Brown bullhead - or just plain catfish, average from 6 to 14 inches on The Islands and are fun and easy to catch. They almost always feed on or near bottom and one of their favorite foods are good old earth worms. Catfish here do not have a closed season but the best fishing is usually during the warmer summer months. Careful when you handle these slippery fish because they have sharp spines just behind the gills.

## Bonus Species

Take your pick because occasionally you may also find Coho or Chinook salmon, rainbow trout, lake trout, brown trout, bowfin, white perch, gizzard shad, or white suckers. To identify and learn more about these species, pick up your free copy of the Fishing Regulations Summary at The Boathouse.

Fish Images: Curtis Atwater  
[atwaterfinearts@sympatico.ca](mailto:atwaterfinearts@sympatico.ca)