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**LOCAL SPORTSMEN ASSIST DEC WITH EMERGENCY SALMON EGG COLLECTION  
EFFORT FOR LAKE ONTARIO SPORTFISHING**

Thanks to the assistance of local anglers and fishing groups, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is pleased to report that nearly 792,000 Chinook Salmon eggs have been collected from Eighteen Mile Creek in Niagara County. Egg collection was initiated as an emergency effort to help achieve New York's salmon stocking goals for Lake Ontario.

Located in Altmar, Oswego County, DEC's Salmon River Fish Hatchery normally collects around 3.5 million Chinook Salmon (also known as King Salmon) eggs from the Salmon River. The eggs are collected in the fall, and are hatched and reared to fingerling size at the hatchery. In spring, the fingerlings are transported from the hatchery and released into Lake Ontario's tributaries, including Eighteen Mile Creek. This stocking program is an essential component of the Lake Ontario Chinook Salmon sport fishery opportunities, drawing many thousands of anglers annually to Lake Ontario and its tributaries. Surveys indicate that Lake Ontario's sportfishing industry generates over 50 million dollars to New York State's economy annually.

This year, extremely low water levels in the Salmon River during the spawning season resulted in significantly reduced numbers of salmon moving up the river to spawn. Consequently, there were less spawning salmon from which to collect eggs, making it impossible for the Salmon River Hatchery to meet its standard egg collection goals. By late October, less than one million eggs were able to be collected.

In an urgent effort to supplement the low number of eggs collected, DEC Fisheries staff initiated egg collections from other Chinook Salmon spawning areas in addition to Salmon River, including sections of Eighteen Mile Creek. Teaming up with local anglers and sportsmen fishing groups, a week-long cooperative egg collection effort successfully yielded a total of 792,000 additional Chinook Salmon eggs to add to those initially collected from the Salmon River. As a result of this effort, the Salmon River Hatchery's total Chinook Salmon egg count is now 1.9 million.

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Participants cooperating in the egg collection effort included Region 9 DEC Fisheries Staff and Environmental Conservation Officers, Niagara County Fish Advisory Board members, the Niagara River Anglers Association, the Lake Ontario Trout and Salmon Association, the Town of Newfane, and countless local anglers who graciously gave up their catches to assist. Some assistance from anglers and staff was also provided in DEC's Region 8 along Oak Orchard Creek.

“DEC sincerely thanks the many anglers and sportsmen fishing groups who helped to make this egg collection effort successful,” said Paul McKeown, DEC Region 9 Fisheries Manager. “Thanks to their help, we are much closer to meeting Chinook Salmon stocking goals for next spring and maintaining fishing opportunities in some of Lake Ontario's most popular sport fishing tributaries.”

Each year DEC releases over one million pounds of fish into more than 1,200 public streams, rivers, lakes and ponds throughout the state. Fish are stocked to enhance recreational fishing as well as to restore native species to waters they formerly occupied. More information about fish stocking is available on DEC's website at [www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7739.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7739.html). For more information about Chinook Salmon, visit [www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7028.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7028.html). A weekly fishing report for Lake Ontario and its tributaries is available at [www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/fishhotlines.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/fishhotlines.html).

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