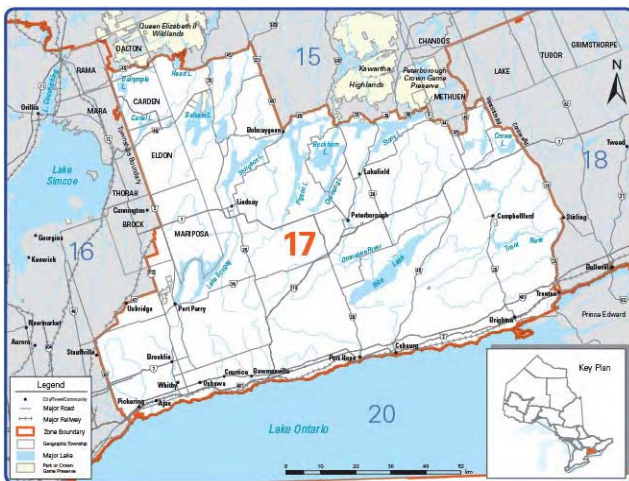


*Natural. Valued. Protected.*

## Proposed additional angling opportunities in FMZ 17

The strategies and management options for additional angling opportunities included in the draft Fisheries Management Plan for Fisheries Management Zone 17 (FMZ 17) were developed by the Ministry of Natural Resources with the help of the FMZ 17 Advisory Council. The council is a committee of volunteers who represent the public and a broad array of stakeholder groups that have an interest in the local fisheries resources. Further information and an opportunity to comment can be found at [www.ontario.ca/zonecouncils](http://www.ontario.ca/zonecouncils) or by contacting the ministry's Peterborough District Office.

### Fisheries Management Zone 17



Map of Fisheries Management Zone 17

FMZ 17 is the smallest management zone in the province, consisting of the Kawartha Lakes, Trent and Crowe River watersheds, and the rivers and streams of the eastern portion of the Oak Ridges Moraine. Due to the angling opportunities available and its proximity to the Greater Toronto Area, FMZ 17 receives higher angling effort than most other management zones.

### Additional Angling Opportunities

The Ministry of Natural Resources is interested in identifying and promoting increased fishing opportunities for anglers. As a component of the FMZ 17 Fisheries Management Plan, the ministry has identified actions to enhance the opportunities available to anglers.

#### ***Panfish (sunfish, yellow perch and black crappie)***

Fisheries Management Zone 17 (formerly Division 6) has long been one of the few areas in Ontario that does not permit winter fishing. This regulation was implemented to protect walleye populations, which are under heavy pressure during the summer months. However, a number of additional species present within the zone can support extended fishing opportunities. Black crappie and bluegill, two recent additions to the fish communities of FMZ 17, are present in high numbers. These species are targeted extensively in other fisheries management zones during the spring, late fall, and winter months. Along with yellow perch and pumpkinseed, which are native to FMZ 17, these four species of panfish can support a longer season and provide additional fishing opportunities to anglers.



Photo: MNR

## Lake Whitefish

Lake whitefish are a sought after sport fish in many areas of Ontario and support strong winter fisheries. Lake whitefish are present in some waters of FMZ 17 and any extension of the panfish season would also include lake whitefish.



## Northern Pike

Northern pike have historically had a very limited range in FMZ 17. Pike have gradually expanded into Canal and Balsam lakes in the western portion of the zone, and the Crowe River watershed in the east. The expansion into other bodies of water is considered a major threat to muskie populations. Pike and muskie have very similar requirements for spawning habitat and often share spawning areas. The threat arises because pike hatch earlier, giving them a competitive advantage over muskie. Given this fact, the ministry is encouraging anglers to harvest northern pike in most of FMZ 17 to help prevent their spread.

**The three options being considered for panfish, northern pike, and lake whitefish in FMZ 17 are:**

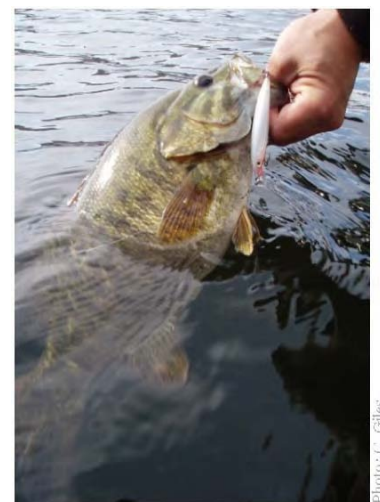
- 1) **Open season 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday in April to November 15<sup>th</sup> (current regulation).**
- 2) **Open season April 1<sup>st</sup> to December 15<sup>th</sup>.**
- 3) **Open all year.**

A monitoring program would be implemented following any extension of the panfish and lake whitefish season to ensure that increased angling pressure does not compromise the sustainability or quality of the resource. Any extension of the panfish and lake whitefish season would also extend the season for species not listed in the regulations.

## Bass

Bass (largemouth and smallmouth) are becoming increasingly popular game-fish in FMZ 17, and the angling opportunities for these species are high quality in terms of the size and number of fish present.

Bass productivity in the zone is high, and it is expected that climate change will result in a further increase in bass production. They are primarily a visual predator and the clear water caused by the filter-feeding



zebra mussel populations in zone 17 give bass a competitive advantage over other species, such as walleye. As a result, the ministry is considering increasing angling opportunities within the zone through an extension of the fall bass fishing season.

**The two options being considered for bass seasons in FMZ 17 are:**

- 1) **Open Season 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday in June to November 15<sup>th</sup> (current regulation).**
- 2) **Open Season 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday in June to December 15<sup>th</sup>.**

### **Muskellunge (Muskie)**

Volunteer angler diaries submitted by individuals specifically targeting muskie showed a much higher catch rate in zone 17 (0.16 muskie per angler hour), compared to the average catch rate in the rest of the province (0.07 muskie per angler hour) for the period from 1979 to 2004. Global climate trends and increased water clarity are expected to benefit muskie populations. In addition, many muskellunge anglers consider the late fall period to provide the best quality fishing opportunities.



Photo: K. Reynolds

**The two options being considered for muskellunge seasons in FMZ 17 are:**

- 1) **Open Season 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday in June to November 15<sup>th</sup> (current regulation).**
- 2) **Open Season 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday in June to December 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**While extended fishing seasons offer many social benefits for anglers and increased revenue for local businesses, there are also some concerns associated with extended seasons. These include:**

- **Public awareness of access points.**
- **The potential for incidental catch of walleye during the closed season.**
- **Aesthetics of ice huts and litter left by anglers.**
- **Public safety concerns associated with ice conditions.**

### **Put-Grow-Take Walleye Management Opportunity**

Walleye are the most intensely targeted fish species in FMZ 17. Recent declines in walleye numbers have caused serious concerns for anglers. One option being considered to provide an enhanced walleye angling opportunity for anglers is put-grow-take stocking on smaller water bodies within FMZ 17. Lakes stocked for these purposes would no longer be managed for naturally reproducing walleye populations, but rather for the sole purpose of providing angling and harvest opportunities. The lakes will have

less restrictive regulations in order to provide more opportunity for harvest. The ministry has identified potential criteria for selecting lakes that would be managed for put-grow-take fisheries.

***The selection process for identifying lakes to be managed as put-grow-take fisheries factors in the following:***

- ***Lakes with a viable, naturally producing walleye population are not suitable lakes.***
- ***Lakes without public access are not suitable candidates.***
- ***Put-grow-take stocking in FMZ 17 should be limited to lakes between 100-1000 hectares in size, or a series of lakes in close proximity that exceed 100 hectares (until such stocking can be assessed for its cost effectiveness).***
- ***There must be public support for managing a lake as a put-grow-take fishery.***

The enhanced opportunities of put-grow-take waters may also divert angling pressure from naturally reproducing populations, promoting natural reproduction elsewhere in the zone.



Photo: C. Giles

## **Provide Feedback**

The ministry is encouraging the public to provide feedback on the proposed management options. Feedback will be collected from numerous sources, including information sessions, internet postings and a public feedback survey.

**For more information on the draft Fisheries Management Plan, dates of public information sessions, and to provide comment, visit:**

[www.ontario.ca/zonecouncils](http://www.ontario.ca/zonecouncils) or contact:

Ministry of Natural Resources  
 Peterborough District  
 Tel: (705) 755-2001  
 E-mail: [FishPTBO@ontario.ca](mailto:FishPTBO@ontario.ca)