

# HABITAT



ISSUES

AND

OPTIONS

**H**abitat for fish, birds and other wildlife has been degraded or lost in the St. Lawrence River area of concern. This pamphlet describes how this has happened and discusses options for dealing with the problem.

The St. Lawrence River is one of the richest wildlife habitats in Ontario, supporting many species of plants and animals, including game fish and waterfowl. This abundance forms the cornerstone of tourism and recreation in the area.

Charlottenburgh Marsh and Bainsville Bay are two key wetlands that provide a home and breeding ground for over 150 species of fish and wildlife. Another large wetland lies along the south shore and adjacent to the Mohawks of Akwesasne Reserve.

Aquatic plant beds in the river also provide valuable habitat as do wetlands located in the watersheds draining into the St. Lawrence.

Historically, construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway changed wetlands and

eliminated many reefs and shoals that sustained aquatic life.

Today, development of wetlands for residential, commercial and agricultural use is a major concern, as is the combined effect of many small shoreline projects. Construction of docks, canals, retaining walls and agricultural drains can degrade water quality and alter flow patterns, causing erosion and siltation problems and damaging habitat such as fish spawning areas.

Seaway traffic and natural wave action also cause erosion. For example, natural wave action erodes Point Mouillee, adjacent to Bainsville Bay, at the rate of about 1 to 2 metres per year.

An additional concern is the effect on habitat of chemical pollution, an issue outlined in other pamphlets. But dealing with river pollution will not in itself preserve the valuable wildlife habitats of the Cornwall area of the St. Lawrence. Protection against physical damage and gradual loss of habitat must accompany pollution control efforts.

# ISSUES



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Remedial Action Plan  
Plan d'Assainissement

Canada Ontario  
Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Protection de la Nature  
Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources

