

## 30,000 young salmon introduced to the Humber River

By Nick Fernandes

Thousands of young fish were loosed into the Humber River last Wednesday as part of ongoing initiatives to reintroduce the Atlantic Salmon back into Lake Ontario and surrounding water systems.

This recent outing, staged from the bridge on Castleberg Sideroad, was lead by Ontario Streams' Project Coordinator Christine Pritchard, who tutored younger volunteers in their methods. It saw about 30,000 young fish released into the river.

Bags of the salmon fry (filled with water and oxygen) were floated down the river by hand to shallow, faster flowing parts of the river where the species favors as habitats. They were then released systematically at many different spots.

The fry will head down the river to Lake Ontario to grow, and when they are mature they will head back up the river to spawn where they were released. Atlantic Salmon do not die after spawning like other breeds, they can repeat the same cycle numerous times over their lives.

The Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration program, also known as Bring Back the Salmon, seeks to undo the damage done by settlers to the fish population more than century ago by gradually reintroducing the salmon to the watershed over a decade. More than 40 partner organizations are involved in the effort, including the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters.

According to Bring Back the Salmon, the first phase of the plan was completed in 2011, with 2.5 million fish being introduced to the waterways via areas like Duffins Creek, Credit River and Coburg Brook. Last week's effort was part of the second phase. The fish are grown in hatcheries by Fleming College and carefully transported in oxygenated water units.



Ontario Streams' Project Coordinator Christine Pritchard sent this batch of young salmon on their way down the Humber River.

Photo by Nick Fernandes