

# Wealth in Fish and Game

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The public are slowly awakening to the vast importance of conserving the natural resources of this Province and commencing to realize what wealth would accrue if these were wisely administered, yet little practical effort, so far, has been made to secure to the people the full fruits of what nature has so bountifully bestowed upon us.

It is not necessary to dwell here upon the value of preserving and properly utilizing our forests and of afforesting the millions of acres which have been cut over and other land unfit for agricultural purposes, or of dealing with the rich stores of mineral wealth that these may enrich our own people rather than foreigners, or of developing the power we hold in our numerous lakes and rivers, or securing for the present and future generations a supply of food fish in our great lakes. Every citizen is interested directly or indirectly in these matters, and each stands to profit thereby if the community can be brought to see things in their proper light and so insist that they be dealt with in a prudent and effective manner.

Of the above sources of wealth the public are more or less aware, but there is still another which ought eventually to prove of immense value to the country of which but few are cognizant, that is, our game fish and other game. Now it is not on account of the value of these in themselves (indeed they are of comparatively little intrinsic value) that attention ought urgently to be directed to their conservation, nor is it for the purpose of affording pleasure to a few persons of leisure in our own midst. This is worthy of some consideration, but is not by any means of the most importance,

for so far as the great body of our people are concerned, perhaps not more than one in a hundred cares one iota whether there be any game in either forest or stream. What is here insisted on is that it is on account of the economic value to the province as a whole, not for the benefit of the few, that active and effective measures ought to be instituted for their protection.

The matter of chief importance connected with our game fish and other game is the attraction these have for foreign tourists and the amount of money left by them in the country each season. There seems to be little conception at present of what value this source of wealth will eventually become to the province of Ontario if due precautions are taken in time to prevent our rivers, lakes and forests from being depleted.

Every one knows of the valuable asset we have in the silver mines of Cobalt and Gowganda and the gold of Yukon; none need to be told of that, but few seem to be aware that in the attractions we possess in our rivers, lakes and forests lies latent a greater fund of wealth than all these combined. This will appear to most persons to be rather a broad assertion and somewhat startling, but nevertheless it can be shown to be a fact.

The state of Maine had for many years expended large sums in protecting and restocking the rivers and lakes with game fish, and to satisfy the people there that the expenditure was profitable and yielded a rich return, the government took steps in 1907 to ascertain definitely how many persons entered the state that year attracted by what the fish and game offered. They found that above half a million persons, men,