

IMPROVED EEL LADDER HELPS ENDANGERED SPECIES *Supports Action Plan To Increase American Eel Population*

NEWS

July 8, 2009

A 300-metre extension to the eel ladder at the Saunders Generating Station in Cornwall and a new surface that helps eels climb the ladder faster will contribute to the restoration of the endangered American eel in the upper St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario.

The improvements to the eel ladder by [Ontario Power Generation](#) will ensure more American eels migrate safely to Lake Ontario and live out their normal life cycle. The improvements support an action plan to bring back the American eel. The action plan was announced last year by [Fisheries and Oceans Canada](#), the [Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources](#) and Ontario Power Generation.

The American eel is a native Ontario species, a top predator, and a key indicator of the health of the upper St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario ecosystems. Once an important part of Ontario's commercial fishery, the number of American eels has declined dramatically since the 1990s. The species is [classified](#) as "endangered" on the [Species at Risk in Ontario List](#).

QUOTES

"The improved eel ladder at the Saunders Generating Station will enable more eels to migrate successfully upstream and help restore the eel population. The American eel is one of many native species that need our help. Ontario is working with partners across the province to protect and restore species at risk through projects that will help reduce the rate of species decline and protect Ontario's rich biodiversity."

– Donna Cansfield, Ontario Minister of Natural Resources

"The eel ladder at Saunders has been in operation since the mid-1970s to provide upstream migration of American eel into the upper St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario. The recent improvements made at the ladder further enhance its effectiveness and demonstrate our commitment to work with our federal and provincial partners to protect an endangered species in Ontario."

– John Murphy, Executive Vice President for Ontario Power Generation's Hydro Business

"Our government recognizes the importance of the American eel to Canadian waters. Each partner in the American eel action plan provides much-needed expertise on the issues facing this important species. I am proud to say that, at the federal level, scientific research and advice provided by Fisheries and Oceans Canada has been essential in developing and implementing that action plan."

– Guy Lauzon, Member of Parliament for Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry

QUICK FACTS

- As part of efforts to restore the American eel, 3.9 million young eels were stocked into the upper St. Lawrence River and the Bay of Quinte since 2006.
- Restoring the American eel is especially challenging because all American eels are part of a single breeding population that spawns in the Sargasso Sea in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.
- Ontario's new [Endangered Species Act](#) took effect on June 30, 2008, making the province a North American leader in species at risk protection and recovery.

LEARN MORE

- See attached backgrounder to learn more about the American eel, additions to the Saunders eel ladder and other measures to restore the species.
- See attached fact sheet for details about the [Ontario Power Generation action plan](#).
- Go to ontario.ca/speciesatrisk to learn about species at risk in Ontario.

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