

2018 Hamilton Harbour RAP Fact Sheet

BUI 1b Restrictions on Wildlife Consumption

REQUIRES FURTHER ASSESSMENT

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Delisting Criteria: There are no restrictions on consumption of wildlife from the Harbour attributable to local sources.



Note: A status change from 'Required Further Assessment' to 'Not Impaired' is being proposed in 2019 for this BUI.

Did you know?

PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) are a contaminant of concern in Hamilton Harbour with the potential to result in consumption advisories when found in high concentrations in fish and wildlife.

PCB sources have been identified and projects are ongoing to reduce PCB availability through BUI 6 Degradation of Benthos (e.g., Windermere Basin, Strathearne Slip, and Kenilworth Boat Slip remediation).

In April 2017, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry removed the open season for hunting snapping turtles, making it illegal to hunt them or harvest their eggs in Ontario.



A change in status from 'Requires Further Assessment' to 'Not Impaired' was recommended by a recent status update report (Dahmer 2016). The study found that PCB uptake by humans is unlikely due to:

- 1) a lack of PCB exposure pathway for wildlife,
- 2) decreasing contaminant availability to wildlife,
- 3) and/or laws that prevent people from taking wildlife (i.e., discharge of a firearm/bow and/or the killing or harming of specific wildlife).



What Was the Original Problem?

Although PCB concentrations in mallard ducks and snapping turtles were above U.S. standards, information on wildlife contamination in Hamilton Harbour was considered data deficient. There were also reduced population levels of traditionally hunted species.

Other AOC Comparisons

Only the St. Clair River AOC is impaired for the wildlife portion of this BUI. Their delisting criteria states that it will be not impaired when the general guidance for the consumption of indicator wildlife (e.g., snapping turtles, geese) are no different than the non-AOC sites in the Great Lakes. Niagara River AOC (Canadian Section) re-designated the BUI status to 'not impaired' based on the results of a community survey that indicated that wildlife from the area were not being consumed on an ongoing basis.

How are Improvements Being Made?

1. Actions were taken to discourage the use of Confined Disposal Facilities by waterfowl following a study in 1993 by the Canadian Wildlife Service. This interrupted the PCB exposure pathway.
 2. Windermere Basin was dredged, capped, and made into a wetland in 2013. Other local PCB sources have been identified and are in various stages of remediation. See BUI 6 Degradation of Benthos and BUI 1a Restrictions on Fish Consumption Fact Sheets for more information.
 3. Environment and Climate Change Canada measures contaminants in gulls, cormorants, turtles, and frogs to confirm improvements in response to continued restoration efforts in the Harbour. See the BUI 5 Bird or Animal Deformities or Reproductive Problems Fact Sheet for more information.
 4. A status update (Dahmer 2016) recommends a status of "Not Impaired" for the following reasons:
 - a. All waterfowl are protected by by-laws that prevent the use of firearms within the AOC.
 - b. Ducks, geese, and swans are also federally protected under the Migratory Birds Convention Act (1994). Additionally, Mute Swan and Canada Geese lack an exposure pathway to local PCB sources.
 - c. Mink consumption would not result in exceedances of Health Canada Tolerable Daily Intake
 - d. Snapping turtle and egg harvest was banned in April 2017 under the Ontario Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act.
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What Still Needs to Happen?

- No further remedial actions beyond those already in the works for other BUIs were envisioned.
- The Remedial Action Plan will engage the public and Indigenous communities on the recommended status change from 'impaired' to 'not impaired' as part of an assessment in 2019.

Where Can I Learn More?

[Ontario Environmental Registry](http://ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/displaynoticecontent.do?noticeId=MTMxMDUy&statusId=MjAwNjQw&language=en). 2018: ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-

External/displaynoticecontent.do?noticeId=MTMxMDUy&statusId=MjAwNjQw&language=en [accessed January 2019]

[BARC](http://hamiltonharbour.ca/reportcard). 2017. Toward Safe Harbour Report Card: hamiltonharbour.ca/reportcard

[Dahmer](#). 2016. Hamilton Harbour Area of Concern Status Assessment for the Restrictions on Wildlife Consumption Beneficial Use. 53 pp.

[City of Hamilton](http://hamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/6B512F07-8535-4A14-AC46-D24735E4AD6F/0/05114.pdf). 2005. Discharge of Firearms By-Law No. 05-114: hamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/6B512F07-8535-4A14-AC46-D24735E4AD6F/0/05114.pdf

[Gebauer and Weseloh](#). 1993. Accumulation of Organic Contaminants in Sentinel Mallards Utilizing Confined Disposal Facilities at Hamilton Harbour, Lake Ontario, Canada. Arch. Environ. Contam. Toxicol. 25: 234-243.

[City of Burlington](http://burlington.ca/clerks/by-laws/html/83-1991.htm). 1991. Discharge of firearms By-Law 83-1991: burlington.ca/clerks/by-laws/html/83-1991.htm

[Royal Botanical Gardens](#). 1989. RBG By-Law No. 01-3_C 3(a).

Most references can be provided as a PDF upon request. Visit hamiltonharbour.ca