Lake Ontario Food Web

**Sea Lamprey**

Sea lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*). An aggressive, non-native parasite that fastens onto its prey and rasps out a hole with its rough tongue.

**Piscivores (Fish Eaters)**

- **Chinook salmon** (*Oncorhyncus tshawytscha*). Pacific salmon species stocked as a trophy fish and to control alewife.
- **Coho salmon** (*Oncorhyncus kisutch*). A Pacific species imported and stocked since 1966. Reproduce in many streams, but population sustained in hatcheries.
- **Atlantic salmon** (*Salmo salar*). A valuable sport and commercial fish. More aggressive than other types of salmon and are likely to attack other fish.
- **American eel** (*Anguilla rostrata*). The American eel is a catadromous fish; it lives most of its life in freshwater and migrates to the ocean to spawn.
- **Rainbow trout or Steelhead** (*Oncorhyncus mykiss*). A lake strain of non-native rainbow trout, rarely found deeper than 35 feet. Supplemented by stocking.
- **Smallmouth bass** (*Micropterus dolomieu*). Native coolwater species. Intolerant of pollution so is a good indicator of a healthy environment.
- **Brown trout** (*Salmo trutta*). A European species introduced in the late 1880's. Mostly does well in slightly degraded habitats.
- **Lake trout** (*Salvelinus namaycush*). Nearly eliminated by sea lampreys during the 1950s and 1960s. Stocking and lamprey control are resulting in its resurgence.
- **Walleye** (*Stizostedion vitreum*). Carnivorous night feeders, eating fishes such as yellow perch and freshwater drum, insects, crayfish, snails, and mudpuppies.
- **Burbot** (*Lota lota*). Elongated, cylindrical, freshwater codfish.

**Forage Fish**

- **Lake whitefish** (*Coregonus clupeaformis*). Native found in cold waters. Bottom feeder—diets have shifted to include zebra and quagga mussels.
- **Yellow perch** (*Perca flavescens*). Native that schools near shore, usually at depths less than 30 feet.
- **Slimy sculpin** (*Cottus cognatus*). Native, nocturnal inhabitant of nearshore areas where it primarily eats invertebrates.
- **Rainbow Smelt** (*Osmerus mordax*). Found in both coastal and offshore habitats. Light-sensitive, so prefers water in the warmer seasons.
- **Alewife** (*Alosa pseudoharengus*). Atlantic species that invaded Lake Ontario in 1949 via the Welland canal.
- **Round goby** (*Neogobius melanostomus*). Invasive, introduced into the Great Lakes via freighter ballast. Feeds on bivalves, including zebra mussels, crustaceans, insects, and small fishes.

122 species of fish, including at least 13 non-natives, make their homes in the waters of Lake Ontario. Seven species of native fish have been extirpated from Lake Ontario. This food web includes only the dominant species.