



Classroom Hatchery Program Overview

Atlantic Salmon were native to Lake Ontario but became extirpated from the lake by the late 1890s due to environmental degradation, damming of rivers, overfishing and pollution.

The Atlantic Salmon Classroom Hatchery Program is one of the education components of the Bring Back the Salmon Program, which is also known as the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program (LOASRP).

This five-month hands-on education program on Atlantic Salmon and the biodiversity of the Lake Ontario watershed introduces students, parents, and teachers to the Atlantic Salmon species, their history in Ontario, and the restoration efforts to bring back a healthy and self-sustaining population to Lake Ontario. Salmon raised in the hatchery become part of the overall number released into the target streams annually. The Classroom Hatchery program creates long-term environmental awareness and engagement among participating students at the schools.

The goals of the program are to:

- Engage students in a large-scale, historic restoration effort
- Deliver messages on habitat, ecology, stewardship, and biodiversity using Atlantic Salmon as a tangible example of those concepts
- Foster a sense of ownership and stewardship towards an environment that now has “their” fish
- Achieve a broader public awareness for the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program as the students take their experiences with the classroom hatcheries back to their families and communities

Program Components:

Egg delivery: We deliver 100 Atlantic Salmon eggs to your classroom in January or early February. At this time, we introduce the students to the program, what Atlantic Salmon are, why we are doing the program and their responsibilities as “members of our science team.” We then introduce the students to their fish and place them into a special incubation tray in the tank.

Presentations: From February to April we visit your class, virtually, three times to check in, give short presentations (10-15 minutes) and answer questions.

Fry release: In May or early June, we return to the class to collect the fry. The students meet us at one of our restoration streams and together we release the fish. At the fry release we debrief the lessons from the program.

Additional Resources:

We provide teachers with a classroom hatchery manual, curriculum-linked lesson plans, activities, and some videos.

Resources and additional information can be found on our website.

www.bringbackthesalmon.ca

School Responsibilities:

It is the responsibility of the teachers, students, and school staff to do the following:

- Respond to scheduling correspondence from Bring Back the Salmon staff in a timely manner. We have over 80 participating locations, Burlington – Orangeville – Kingston, to schedule and want to be efficient with our time and travel.
- Set up hatchery equipment (including filled with water – please see the classroom hatchery manual), as per instructions, prior to egg delivery.
- Perform daily (school days only) checks on equipment to ensure proper function and catch issues that may impact the health of the fish quickly.
- Book and fund the bus for the field trip to release the fry and obtain all school/parent approvals.
- Properly clean and store hatchery equipment at the end of the program cycle.