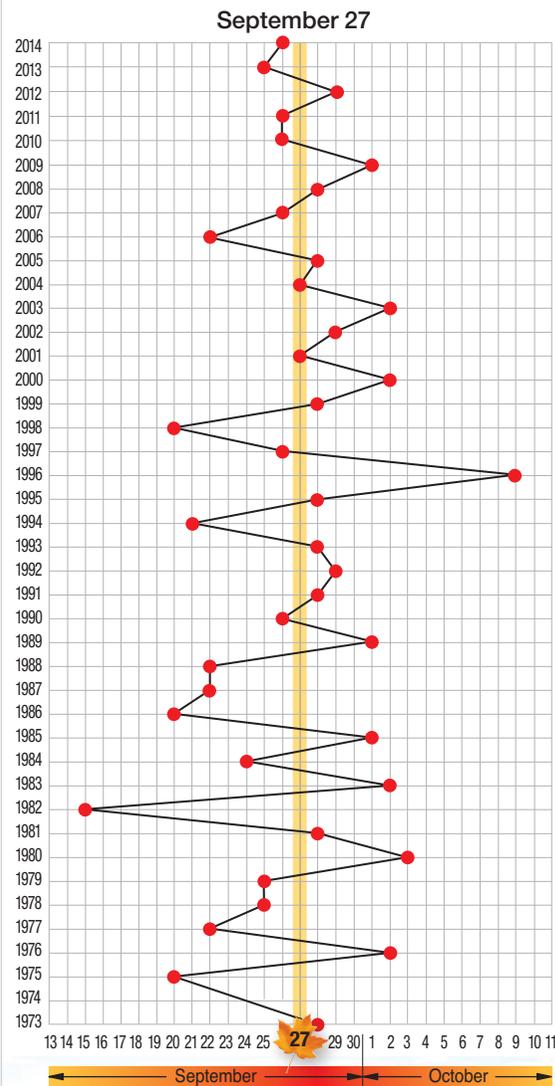


## AVERAGE DATE OF PEAK FALL COLOURS



## When will Algonquin's leaf colour be at its peak?

Algonquin colour admirers understandably want to know when the colours will be at their peak but this is difficult to say ahead of time. We have no crystal ball; however, fall leaf colour is usually best from late September through early October. Our graph illustrates the "peak" dates since the 1970s. This may help when you plan your autumn visit to Algonquin.

You can check for regular updates on the Park's leaf-colour status by visiting:

[www.algonquinpark.on.ca](http://www.algonquinpark.on.ca)  
or [www.OntarioParks.com](http://www.OntarioParks.com)

When in the Park, trails with good views of maple colour include:

**Hardwood Lookout**  
(at km 13.8)

**Track & Tower**  
(at km 25)

**Centennial Ridges**  
(2 km South from km 37.6)

**Lookout**  
(at km 39.7)

**Booth's Rock**  
(9 km South from km 40.3)

*Enjoy the view!*



## ALGONQUIN PARK IS BLACK BEAR COUNTRY

For most Park visitors, seeing a Black Bear in its natural environment is an exciting experience. However, the excitement diminishes when that Black Bear is rummaging through your cooler or tent, searching for food. As visitors camping in bear country, you have a responsibility to follow the bear rules and to know what to do if you encounter a bear.



PETER FERGUSON



### Rules in Bear Country

Each year, Park staff spend hundreds of hours dealing with problem bears – help our staff by following the rules when camping in bear country.

#### 1 Never feed or approach bears

The Black Bear is an intelligent animal, with the ability to remember food locations and can quickly become accustomed to human sources of food. People who feed bears create problems for everyone.

#### 2 Store food out of reach of bears

In campgrounds and picnic areas, store all food (including pet food) inside the closed trunk of your vehicle, if possible. Do not store food, cooking utensils or fragrant items, such as soap, toothpaste, or shaving cream in your tent.

When camping in the backcountry, put all food in a pack and hang it well off the ground – at least four metres off the ground and two metres away from the tree trunk – and away from the vicinity of your tent.

#### 3 Keep your campsite clean

In campgrounds, reduce the availability of garbage, and consequently garbage odours, by depositing your sealed bags of garbage daily in the bear-proof waste containers. Clean your picnic table and barbecue after every use, and clean up any spilled grease.

When camping in the backcountry, burn any food scraps and fat drippings thoroughly in a hot fire. Any remaining garbage should be placed in your litter bag and suspended along with the food. To eliminate food odours, dishes should be washed immediately after each meal (preferably well away from your campsite).

**Charges can be laid for leaving out items which may serve as attractants to any wildlife.**

**BEAR SPRAY** is pepper spray with a strength, and a propellant, specifically formulated to deter bears when it is sprayed in their eyes. Know how to properly use, store, and carry this product (available from many outfitters). Keep in mind that bear spray is no replacement for appropriate conduct in the outdoors.



The Visitor Centre offers **FREE WiFi** internet access ...and while there, don't forget to check out The Friends of Algonquin Park Bookstore and Nature Shop, or the Sunday Creek Café.

[algonquinpark.on.ca](http://algonquinpark.on.ca)



Algonquin

Vol. 56, No. 4 • September 1, 2015

# The Raven

A Natural and Cultural History Digest

## Algonquin's Tiny Trophy Fish

by Lev Frid

When most people think of fishes in Algonquin Park, they inevitably think of our popular game species – Smallmouth Bass, Brook Trout, and Lake Trout. Seeing the glint in a young angler's eye as he or she pulls their first bass out of the water or the rush of catching a spectacular Brook Trout on a pristine Algonquin lake are hard to beat. Indeed, most of the experiences that Park visitors have with our fishes are through angling. Angling is great fun, and an excellent way to observe our fishes up close – but they are hardly displaying their full suite of natural behaviours and colours when viewed in the hand.

"Out of sight, out of mind" is a common human philosophy and fish certainly suffer from our lack of attention. We lead fast-paced lives and, especially in this day and age, are used to getting information quickly,

efficiently and with minimal effort. For a naturalist, this approach is a rather poor one if we intend to fully understand the complex ecosystems around us, especially with fishes. While angling is a good way to view fishes in Algonquin, in order to see these creatures in their full glory one needs to venture into their realm – beneath the water's surface. It takes a little more effort and planning than picking up a pair of binoculars or an insect net, but those naturalists that have taken the plunge will tell you that the experience is just as fascinating as any bird or insect excursion.

There is no better family of fishes to illustrate this point than the darters (family *Percidae*). These small fishes are in the same family as

*Snorkeling Algonquin's lakes and rivers offers the best view of our fishes. Here, the author is observing some Logperch in the Barron River.*





LEV FRID

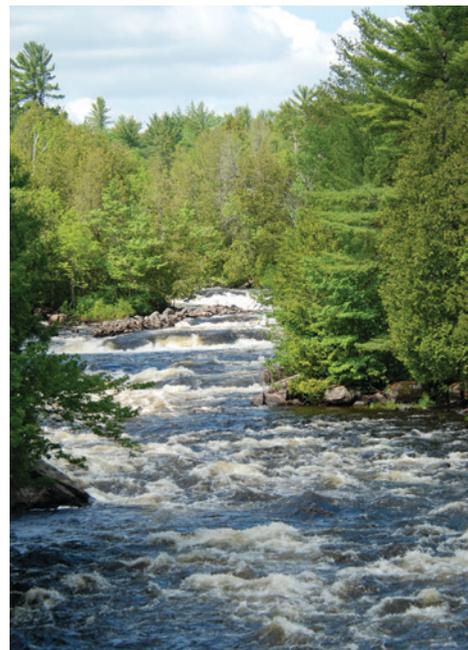
The Logperch is well adapted to the swift rivers and streams of Algonquin's East Side.

the Yellow Perch and Walleye, but unlike those two species, darters never reach lengths much greater than six inches, and are too small to take tackle or bait intended for game fish. As a result, they are not often seen and most people aren't even aware of their existence. This is a shame because these small, bottom-dwelling fishes are remarkably diverse, showing a wide array of fascinating behaviours, and having such an incredible range of form and colour that they rival coral reef fishes. There are over 150 species of darter – some are endemic to only tiny stretches of river in the Mississippi Basin, while others are widely distributed throughout Eastern North America. There are 12 species found in Ontario – some of which are incredibly colourful, common and readily found close to major cities like Toronto—and of those we have three species in Algonquin Park; the Logperch, Johnny Darter and Iowa Darter.

In order to observe darters, all one needs is a good-quality mask and snorkel that fit well and are comfortable to use (try a local dive shop). This will enable you to explore the seldom-seen world of our Algonquin fishes. Swimming slowly in shallow, sandy areas on Algonquin's East Side is how you will encounter our darters. The largest darter in Algonquin Park, the tiger-striped Logperch, is likely the first you will find.

At first glance, the Logperch appears to be a stretched-out version of the familiar Yellow Perch, but a closer inspection will reveal a fish that is exceptionally well-adapted to life in the fast lane – rapidly flowing streams and rivers. The elongated shape allows the Logperch to hold its position effortlessly in the swiftest rapids. Like a tiny aquatic pig, it uses its pointed snout to meticulously overturn rocks in search of the myriad of small aquatic invertebrates upon which it feeds. Unlike our

other two darter species, the Logperch will also swim up into the water column to feed and possesses a swim bladder that allows it to control its buoyancy and position. Due to the fast-flowing water in the Logperch's habitat, the female buries her eggs in the substrate to prevent them from getting swept away. It is in these shallow, sandy areas that the Logperch is best observed – watch for its quick bursts of movement, followed by a pause next to rocks or debris. If you want to see this amazing little fish in action, don't be afraid to dunk your head right into the rushing rivers of Algonquin's East Side – but hold on tight!



KYLE HOLLOWAY

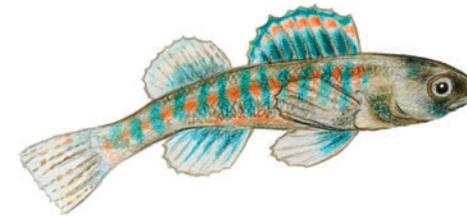
The Poplar Rapids of the Petawawa River above Lake Travers is an excellent place to observe darters.

Perhaps the greatest spectacle in the world of Algonquin darters, however, comes in May. Outside of the spawning season, the Iowa Darter—Algonquin's smallest—is not much for the eyes. It's a small, grayish-brown, bottom-dwelling fish that spends much of its time prowling the shaded waters of vegetated streams and ponds. It is easily passed off as a minnow and draws little attention. However, the melting of the ice in spring and the subsequent warming of the shallows results in

an amazing change for the male Iowa Darter. Rising hormone levels in response to the warmer water and increasing day length cause its sides to flush a bright, pumpkin orange. It begins to develop thick ultramarine bars vertically across the length of the body. The fins also begin to turn blue, especially the flag-like dorsal fin which also features a bright orange horizontal stripe at this time. Just as birds moult into their breeding plumage, darters change into spawning coloration – and for the male Iowa Darter, this means becoming one of the most visually striking animals in all of Algonquin Park. With these dazzling colours, the male will display to visiting females and fertilize their eggs, spawning over a sheltered site. Once this process is complete, the females will leave. As the water becomes warmer, the colours of the male Iowa Darter begin to fade until it is, once again, no more than a brownish-speckled prowler of still waters.

I hope you have found this story as incredible as we have. To learn more about the fascinating lives of fish, we recommend *Fishes of Algonquin Provincial Park* (available at Park bookstores and online at: [www.algonquinpark.on.ca](http://www.algonquinpark.on.ca)) and the lake exhibit at the Visitor Centre (km 43). It is one thing to read about Algonquin's fishes, but quite another to go and experience them

yourself. As mentioned earlier, it is not very difficult and exceptionally rewarding. Many fishes, and darters especially, are quite tolerant of humans observing them underwater, which affords excellent viewing. You don't even have to be a good swimmer—the spawning of the Iowa Darter mentioned above usually takes place in about a foot of water and this means that most of us can leisurely observe this amazing spectacle by just kneeling or floating lazily above the breeding darters. Excellent places to observe the behaviours mentioned here include the Squirrel Rapids just east of the bridge over the Barron River on the East Side, and the Poplar Rapids of the Petawawa River.



During the spawning season, the male Iowa Darter is one of Algonquin's most brightly-coloured animals.

ILLUSTRATION BY AMANDA GUERCIIO

The amazing lives of the darters in Algonquin are just one of the many rewards of snorkeling. There are 49 known species of fish in Algonquin, and even more in the rest

of Ontario, many of which have their own fascinating life histories for you to observe. Imagine watching spawning Iowa Darters or snorkeling in Poplar Rapids while following a Logperch with schools of bright pink Rosyface Shiners and huge Silver Redhorses swimming past. These are Algonquin

experiences that few people are aware of, but they are just as memorable as hearing wolves howling into a still night or canoeing up to a huge bull moose in summer. All you need to do is take the plunge. We guarantee that you, much like the bass or trout you may have come here to catch, will be hooked.

## Return of the Lost "Puppy"

Back in November of 2014, we ran an article entitled "*Once in a lifetime?*" about certain amphibians that have been recorded in Algonquin only a single time. We would like to make two timely updates. The first is to announce the discovery of one of these—a totally aquatic salamander known as the Mudpuppy—from Sec Lake in the Park's southeastern extreme this summer. A Park naturalist located three in a short bout of flipping rocks and logs in knee-deep water on August 1, 2015. Sec Lake is the headwater for the



PETER MALLS

Mudpuppies never leave the water and have a hard time scaling waterfalls into upland watersheds.

Indian River system which runs all the way to the Ottawa River where Mudpuppies are known to be present, and this salamander must be found here because of colonizing upstream. We don't mean to suggest this

is a recent invasion—they were probably always here, but under our radar. We would also like to amend our comments about the likelihood of the original Algonquin Mudpuppy record from Lake of Two Rivers in 1945 and another we mentioned from the northwest of the Park. An improved understanding of this salamander's inability to move over significant aquatic barriers like waterfalls leads us to suggest that the upland lakes on Algonquin's west side are among the least likely locations for this animal to occur in all of Ontario! Long, ragged whitewater sections of the rivers draining from the highlands of Algonquin effectively keep these salamanders out of most of the Park's area.

## Fishing in Algonquin Provincial Park

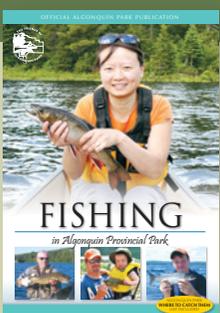
Algonquin is renowned for some of the finest fishing in Ontario, with hundreds of clear, cold lakes which are ideal for trout. Many visitors come to the Park with little or no idea of how or where to fish, or even the kinds of fish that might be expected. This book is intended to give you the knowledge that may make the difference between success and failure.

ONLY \$4.95



SHOP ONLINE: [algonquinpark.on.ca](http://algonquinpark.on.ca)

Also available at the Algonquin Visitor Centre Bookstore, the East Gate and West Gate



# OPEONGO

Store Open 7 days a week

Ice Cream • Groceries & Snacks • Camping Gear • Maps • Paddling Gear • Fish Tackle

Outdoor Clothing • Bug & Rain Gear • Outdoor Footwear • Books & Souvenirs

**RENTALS**  
high quality gear

- Canoe, Kayak
- Camping Gear
- SUP (stand up paddleboard)
- Fishing Rods
- All Inclusive Canoe Trips with and without guides

**DAY TRIPS**  
guided and self-guided

- Wildlife Viewing
- Opeongo Fishing
- Kayak Excursions
- Guided 3hr Canoe Trip

Great fun for the entire family!

**BOAT TAXI & TOURS**  
pick up / drop off service and guided tours

**Scenic Tours for 2 to 20 People!**

Call ahead for reservations and water taxi service

**Campground Special**

Canoe or Kayak rental **\$14.98** /day

Toll Free Reservations

**1.888.280.8886** 6km north of HWY #60 on Opeongo Lake Rd. [www.algonquinoutfitters.com](http://www.algonquinoutfitters.com)

Open Holidays • 1.613.637.2075 • Open July & Aug 7am to 8pm • Spring & Fall 7am to 6pm daily

Our apologies to Algonquin Outfitters—we neglected to include this advertisement in our 2015 Information Guide.