

# A/OFRC PROJECT UPDATE

## THESSALON FIRST NATION

2017-18

### WETLAND TURTLE AND AMPHIBIAN SURVEYS

#### INTRODUCTION

The Anishinabek/Ontario Fisheries Resource Centre (A/OFRC), in partnership with Thessalon First Nation (TFN) completed a Wetland Turtle and Amphibian Survey in 2017 and 2018 to get a baseline inventory of species that call TFN home. Along with recording turtle and amphibian species observed, A/OFRC crews also noted the presence of other species such as moose, bear, and wolf among others, along with sources of potential contamination.

#### METHODS

The amphibian surveys are auditory (hearing-based) surveys. They can be conducted 30 minutes after sunset until midnight. Survey sites were selected based on the presence of good amphibian habitat. Basking turtle surveys are stationary surveys whereby observers visually identify basking turtles to species



Wetland complex on Thessalon First Nation



Three painted turtles as observed through a spotting scope during basking surveys

using a spotting scope, binoculars, or the naked eye. Roadside cruises and railway walks also took place. These surveys generally take place on warm, sunny days, when turtles are most likely to be encountered basking. Fyke nets baited with sardines were also used to live capture turtles. Minnow traps baited with bread and dog food were deployed to inventory minnow species.

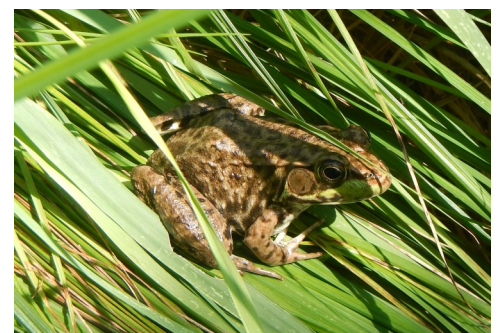
#### RESULTS

7 species of amphibians were identified: Grey Treefrog, Green Frog, Mink Frog, Spring Peeper, American Toad, Leopard Frog, and Chorus Frog sp. (Western or Boreal). Two species of turtle were identified utilizing TFN wetlands, Painted Turtles and Snapping Turtles. Painted were by far the more numerous species, while there were only a few Snapping observations. The minnow traps revealed the presence of the following fish species: Fathead Minnow, Northern Pearl Dace, Northern Redbelly Dace, Pumpkinseed, and Brook Stickleback.

#### CONCLUSION

Thessalon First Nation has a variety of different habitats utilized by many species of plants and animals. Although there is ample turtle habitat, most turtle observations were made on the north side of the rail tracks, despite good habitat to the south. Amphibians, specifically frogs and toads, were found in abundance with 7 species recorded. Some other species of note detected include: Moose, Black Bear, Gray Wolf, Garter Snake, Broad-winged Hawk, Common Nighthawk (Species at Risk), American Bittern, Pied Billed Grebe, Belted Kingfisher, Nodding Trillium, Pipsissewa, Marsh Marigold, Indian Pipe, and Pinesap, among others.

A full technical report detailing the A/OFRC's findings, as well as recommendations for future projects, will be available in winter/spring 2020.



A Green Frog observed at TFN. Green frogs were consistently abundant throughout the study site



For more information on this or other fisheries projects please contact:

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