



FISH AND MUSSEL FIELD STUDY FACT SHEET

Walleye.

This fact sheet provides information about VIA HFR's fish and mussel study program. It tells you how to get answers to your questions and give us your comments. Your insights will help shape the program.

What is a fish and mussel study?

A fish and mussel study focuses on fish and mussels and where they live. The study will help HFR planners to protect fish and mussels while building and operating the new railway.

Key terms

Fish

Any aquatic animal that depends on and carries out its life in entirety in aquatic environments. They are generally coldblooded vertebrates, meaning they have backbones. They also have gills and fins. The term "fish" can also refer to shellfish, meaning aquatic creatures that have no backbone and have a body wrapped in shells, like clams, scallops, mussels and oysters.

Mussels

A type of shellfish that can live in either saltwater or freshwater habitats. They have a long, asymmetrical shell. Some examples of mussels in the HFR study area include the black sandshell, the elktoe and the flutedshell.

Fish habitat

Areas frequented by fish, or on which fish depend, to carry out reproduction, growth, feeding and finding shelter. These can include ditches, drains, wetlands, rivers and even areas that are dry for parts of the year. Some examples of fish in the HFR study area include the white sucker, walleye and largemouth bass.



Flutedshell Mussel.



Largemouth bass.

Why study fish, mussels and their habitat?

All fish, mussels and their habitats are protected under the federal Fisheries Act. Understanding fish and mussel habitats, and the other species that depend on them, is important for their protection. By examining the conditions in a specific area, we can understand how to maximize environmental protection. For example, if a bridge is needed, how would piers in the water affect fish and mussels? These studies will describe the type of fish, mussels and their habitats and determine baseline conditions for future studies.



White Sucker swimming in the St. Lawrence River.



What do fish and mussel studies involve?

HFR planners will review available data on the water systems and their fish and mussel species. Areas for further study will be chosen following this review. The study areas will be selected using mapping databases, aerial photography and may also be informed by local communities. HFR planners will visit the chosen areas to record:



Physical characteristics (such as their dimensions, substrate composition, vegetation composition and shoreline conditions);



Water chemistry and velocity (pH, dissolved oxygen, temperature, conductivity);



Significant habitat features (groundwater upwellings, suitable spawning habitat, suitable species-at-risk habitat); and,



Fish and mussel sampling (where necessary) to describe the fish and mussels using that habitat.

All captured fish and mussels will be returned to the water alive and safe. These studies will be complemented by other sources of information, including Indigenous knowledge (when provided).



Group of Walleye swimming.

When will fish and mussel studies occur?

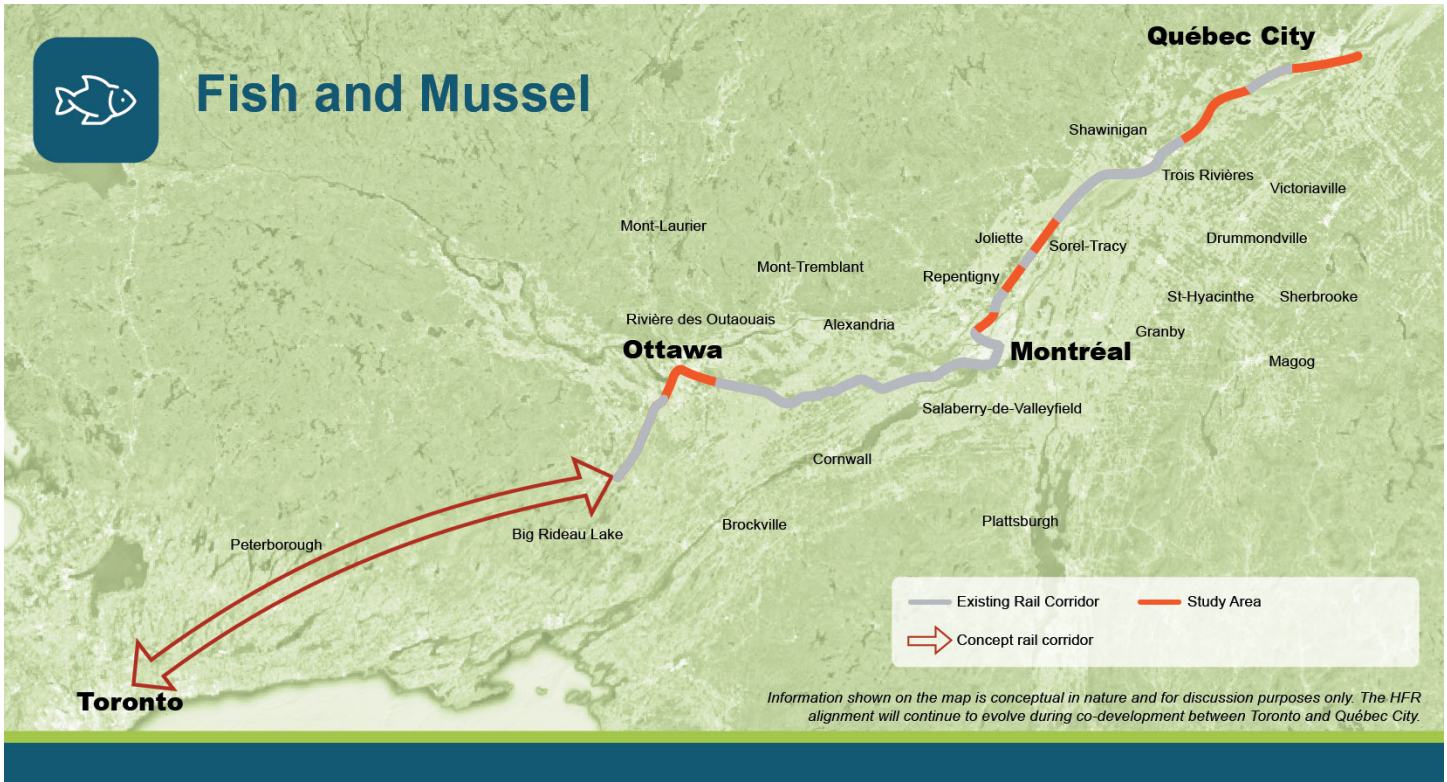
Fish and mussel studies are generally timed to take place during low water conditions. The 2024 fish and mussel studies will occur between June and November.

Study Type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Fish and Mussel												



Where are fish and mussel studies taking place?

The 2024 fish and mussel studies will take place along sections of existing railway routes in Ontario, from Twin Elm up to Ottawa and down to Vars, and in Québec near Laval to the 740 highway in Québec City.



Where can I learn more about HFR?

If you're interested in getting more information, or if you have a question or comment, please visit www.hfr-tgf.ca. You may also contact the HFR Team via email at: questions@hfr-tgf.ca

For more information on Canada's impact-assessment process, visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessment-agency.html>