



## Upper Niagara River Drift Dives

**Date:** Friday, July 1st, 2016

& Monday August 1st, 2016

**Guide:** Michael Matthie

**Meet Time:** 10:00am

**Meet Location:** Bridgeburg Station Parking lot

1 dive, 2nd Optional

**ADVANCED DIVERS WITH COLD WATER**

**DRIFTING EXPERIENCE PLEASE**



### Directions from Float N' Flag to Bridgeburg Station Parking Area:



Start out going **SOUTHWEST** on **HARVESTER RD**



Turn **SLIGHT RIGHT** onto **GUELPH LINE**



Merge onto **QEW** – Head **QEW** toward **NIAGARA**. Then follow towards **FORT ERIE**



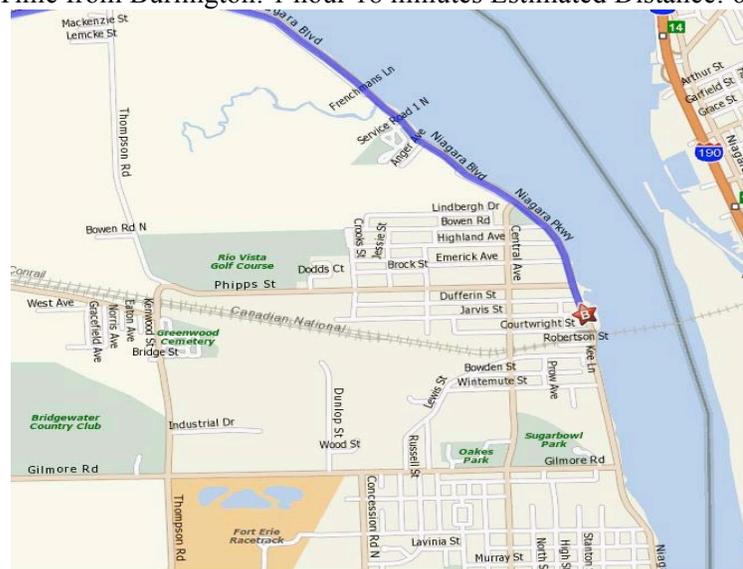
Take **Exit 12**, which is **RR-25 E/NETHERBY RD**. Keep left on the ramp and then turn **LEFT** onto **NETHERBY RD**. Continue until the end, and the river will be in front of you.



Turn **RIGHT** onto **NIAGARA BLVD/NIAGARA PKWY**. Drive 5-10 minutes up the parkway until you get to the train bridge (see map above)

End at the **Parking area** on the left across from **JARVIS STREET**

Estimated Time from Burlington: 1 hour 18 minutes Estimated Distance: 65.29 miles



### Marine Life in Upper River:

#### Sturgeon



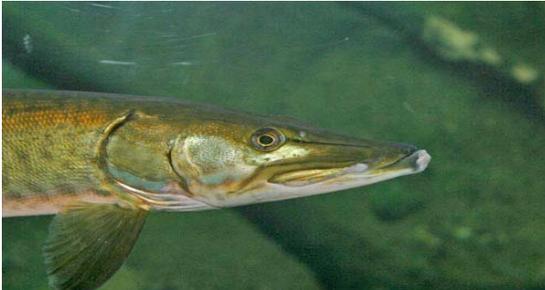
Considered a threatened species in this state, this living fossil has been making a comeback on the local front. These fish are easily identifiable by the sharp bony plates along their back and sides; and by their long pointed snout. Lake sturgeon can grow to lengths of over six feet, weigh in excess of 200 pounds and live to be more than 100 years old. Your best bet at seeing one of these fish is in the Niagara River. It is illegal to possess these fish.

#### Sheepshead



The sheepshead or freshwater drum is the only member of the drum family that lives entirely in freshwater in North America. They are quite common throughout the Great Lakes of Western New York And usually put up a good fight. The ear bones in the head of the fish have long been considered "lucky stones." Average size is only about 15 inches long, but they do get much bigger. The state record catch is currently 24 pounds, seven ounces

#### Northern Pike



This first cousin to the musky can be found with frequency throughout the Greater Niagara area. Found in weedy areas around the Niagara River, as well as some of the harbors off lakes Erie and Ontario. While no one has ever caught anything close to the state record 46 pound, two ounce mark, fish over 20 pounds have been recorded from local waters.

#### Blue Gill/Pumpkinseed



These popular panfish are just what the doctor ordered to keep young kids busy and happy. While these are two different types of fish, they'll often occupy the same waters, such as around sunken limbs, weeds or any type of shallow bottom structure. They can be found in lakes Erie and Ontario, the Niagara River, the Erie Canal and most inland lakes and ponds.

## Upper Niagara River Drift Dives

### Musky



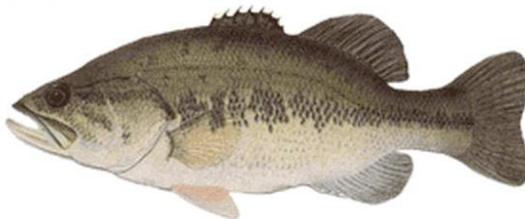
Musky is the king of freshwater and this majestic fish grows to mammoth proportions in the waters of Greater Niagara. Proof is the size limit of 54 inches for fish taken in Lake Erie in NY. Below the Peace Bridge in the Upper Niagara River and the Lower Niagara and Lake Ontario the size limit is 48 inches, still a monster of a fish.

### Round Goby



These small exotic invaders spell bad news for the local fish communities. Introduced into the Great Lakes through illegal ship ballast exchanges in the past decade, population levels have exploded and they are starting to displace native species of fish.

### Largemouth Bass



Largemouth bass have made a tremendous comeback to the Niagara Region. The presence of the zebra mussel, along with stringent pollution controls, has contributed to very clear water conditions throughout the Great Lakes. This has resulted in significant weed growth, giving the largemouth a place to grow and prosper. A big bucket mouth over eight pounds was taken in the summer of 2002. Largemouths are found in shallow, weedy areas of the Niagara River, as well as in bays and harbors lining the shores of both Ontario and Erie.

### Smallmouth Bass



Smallmouth bass are one reason that so many fishermen come to the Greater Niagara Region each year. Both Lakes Erie and Ontario hold huge numbers of smallies and they grow to trophy size as well. The state record fish comes from Lake Erie, an eight pound, four ounce fish hauled in during the special early season on Lake Erie.

### Lake Trout



Lake trout are part of a Federal restoration effort. Each year, New York's portion of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario receives around 620,000 fish. Lake trout abound in the Greater Niagara Region for a number of reasons. The state record comes from at 41 pounds, eight ounces. In Lake Ontario and the Niagara River, lake trout abound from the Niagara Bar to 30 Mile Point for those looking to target them. In the winter and early spring, lake trout actually run up into the Lower Niagara River. Average size in the river and out in the lake is 10 to 14 pounds. The previous state record of 39 pounds, 8 ounces came from the mouth of the Niagara River.

### Brown Trout



Most of the brown trout fishing takes place in Lake Ontario portion of Niagara County, although some of the Erie County inland streams may see some stocking. Browns can be found throughout the year in Lake Ontario or its tributaries and the lower Niagara River during fall and winter. July and August is a good time to target browns out a bit deeper, but inside of 100 foot depths. Fish over 30 pounds have been caught. The state record is 33 pounds, two ounces from Lake Ontario.



## Upper Niagara River Drift Dives

### Key Things You Should Know:

There is an abundance of zebra mussels on the river bottom and covering the rocks. Make sure your skin and particularly your hands are protected.

The bottom composition ranges from rock (shale) to mud to weed to shell (there are areas when millions of tiny zebra mussel shells have been bleached – so the effect is like a giant white sand dune!)

There are large rocks that need to be avoided. Although it's a lot of fun to vault over the large boulders, remember that the upper river is shallow and a hard vault will bring you to the surface!

There is a lot of boat traffic at times – stay by your float and surface close to shore!!!! **Each dive team MUST bring a Float and Flag.**

The current water temperature is predicted to be in the mid-70's. Depth of the dives is 20-25 feet max.

Musky and Pike have teeth and are quite territorial; when you see them, go around them!!! They don't move, you have to!!

The current changes speed during the drift and is running swiftly at the moment.

It is a good idea to add a couple of extra pounds to your weights to make it easier to control your buoyancy.

### Hazards:

Cuts from Zebra Mussels

Large rocks

### Last Minute Cancellations:

If you have signed up for the dive and can't make it that morning, please call Michael (905) 902-6158 on his cell to let him know.

### Washroom Location:

Millers Creek Marina  
2400 Niagara Parkway,  
Fort Erie, Ontario

Washroom and snack bar located at Millers Creek Marina, which is about 10 minutes before the meet parking lot. They are on the right side of the building.





## Upper Niagara River Drift Dives

### Drift Dive #1: Frenchman's Creek I – Train Bridge



**Entry:** Parking Area off break wall by Bridgeburg Station Sign (Roughly across from Jarvis Street)

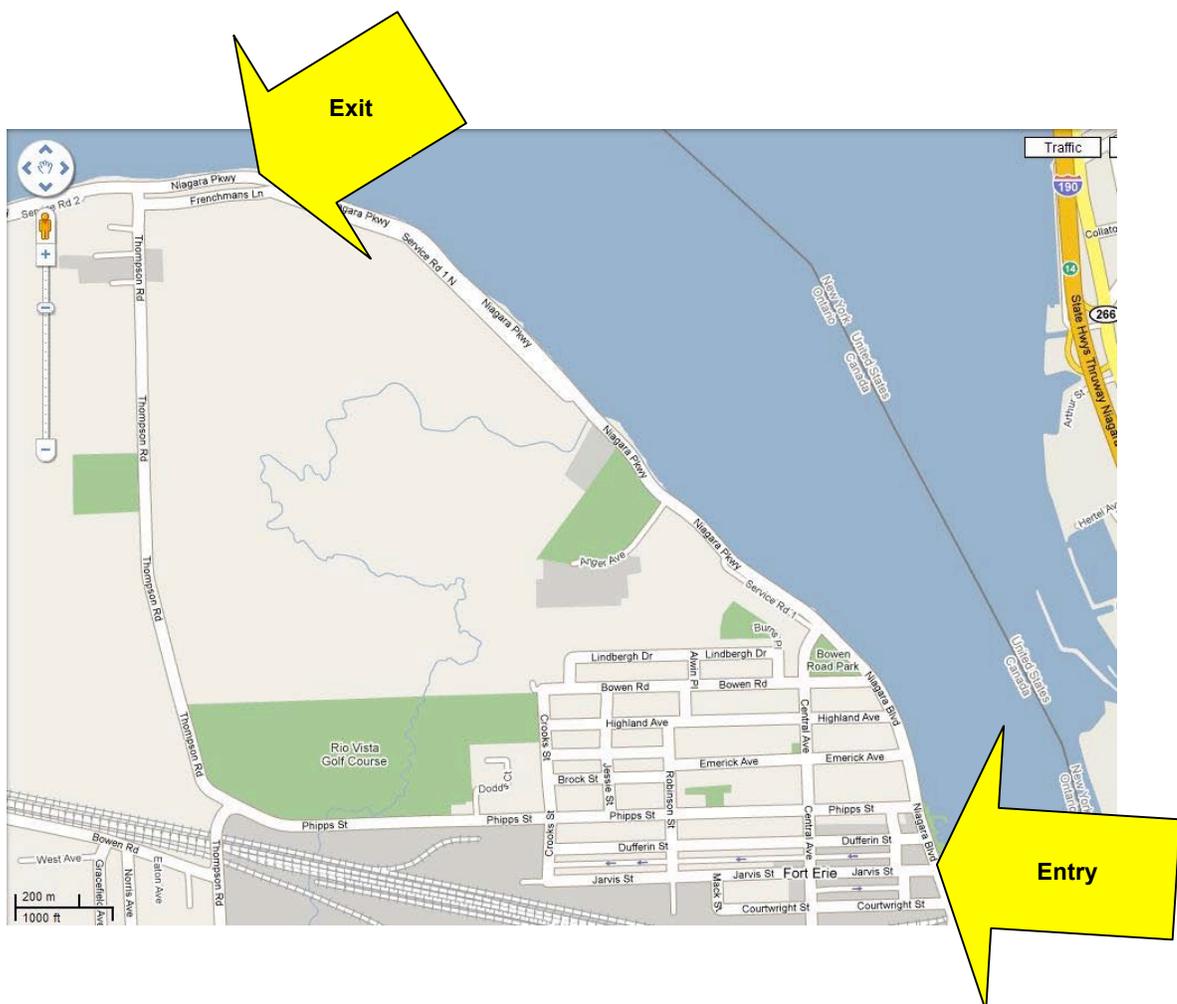
**Exit:** Parking Area – Pump house by Frenchman's Creek signage (roughly across from house address 1237 Niagara Parkway)

**Distance of Drift:** Approximately 2.3 km

**Bottom Time:** Approx 32 minutes plus 3-minute safety stop/swim to the left

**Maximum Depth:** 17'-20'

**Things to see:** Usually an abundance of marine life, variety of bottom compositions





## Upper Niagara River Drift Dives

### Drift Dive #2: Frenchman's Creek II – Pump House (optional)

**Entry:** Parking Area – Pump house by Frenchman's Creek signage (roughly across from house address 1237 Niagara Parkway)

**Exit:** Parking Area by Service Road 4 (roughly across from house address 2075 Niagara Parkway)

**Distance of Drift:** Approximately 2.5 km

**Bottom Time:** 45 minutes plus 3-minute safety stop/swim to the left

**Maximum Depth:** 26'

**Things to see:** Usually an abundance of marine life, variety of bottom compositions

**Note:** During this dive, you will hear a lot of creaking from what sounds like a very old metal dock - do not be alarmed

