



YREA Winter 2018 News & Views

GM Salmon Hits the Market

Genetically modified (GM) salmon are now being sold & consumed in Canada. These fish have been altered with growth hormones, enabling them to reach market size in half the time of conventional fish. We are told that there is no danger to wild fish as the GM salmon are raised in enclosed tanks and are said to be sterile. What will be the long-term effect on human health of fish that are sterile and grow twice as rapidly? Even producers who aren't organic advertise their meat as being hormone free and Canada bans growth hormones in milk for good reason. Only time will tell if this GM fish poses a human and environmental risk.



But by August 2017, 5 tonnes of unlabelled GM salmon had been sold in Canada, even though many grocers do not currently plan to carry it. Of course, there are restaurants, prepared foods and pet food where this fish could turn up. Until we know more and have GM labelling in Canada, it might be wise to [avoid buying GM salmon](#). Instead, choose wild salmon. Or forget about salmon altogether and ask for delicious [organic trout from Ontario](#). Other local fish options are pickerel, whitefish and smelts. You can even catch your own, like the guys in photo above are doing on Lake Wilcox. For sustainable seafood, check out [SeaChoice for healthy oceans](#).



The Plight of Polar Bears

An Inuit biologist, social scientist and traditional seal hunter based in Igloolik has spoken about the effect of climate change on polar bears. As global warming reduces the amount and duration of pack ice where polar bears hunt for seals they are forced onto land and into communities, giving the *impression* to some that

their numbers are rising. Their duration on land in the summer is increasing when polar bears often go months without eating. The time they spend on Arctic sea ice, where they travel, hunt and raise their young is decreasing due to the melting of their habitat.

Research on the impact of global warming on Arctic marine mammals is ongoing. With a moratorium on offshore oil and gas drilling in place, the Canadian Government is working on a new Arctic policy framework ensuring a strong, sustainable and viable Arctic economy and ecosystem. Polar bears are in peril. We all have a responsibility to change our personal habits so we can in turn, slow climate change. Check out [BULLFROG POWER](#). Make a switch to renewable energy by using green electricity, green natural gas & green fuel so we won't need Arctic drilling. You can also [learn more about polar bears](#)



Packaging, or lack thereof...

YREA has been ranting about excess/unnecessary packaging since 2008 when we wrote to major grocers regarding this issue. Thankfully, there has been SOME

progress - such as compostable, recyclable takeout containers and less fresh produce wrapping at SOME stores. But for those of us who enjoy world cuisine, seeking out exotic ingredients, we cannot fathom the need for a Styrofoam tray and cling wrap for two Asian eggplants, two peppers or two chayotes. Who would have thought that it has come to the point where we choose NOT to buy produce because it is over packaged in non-recyclable materials. But that is where we are now and suppliers/grocers need to pay attention.

It is hoped that in the very near future, plastic produce bags will give way to compostable ones that we could reuse in our kitchen green bins, thereby eliminating untold amounts of plastic from this one source. In the meantime, Metro, Longo's and Loblaws take back plastic, so dispose of plastic packaging there if your municipality doesn't collect in a blue box program. In the meantime, put those produce bags



Improve your indoor air

Our indoor air quality is known to be 3 times more polluted than outside and given that we spend nearly 90% of our time inside, it might be a good idea to do some air cleaning. Besides stopping the use of toxic 'cleaning' products, air 'fresheners' and [dry sheets and fabric softeners](#), you can breath a little easier by adding some living greenery to your home. A [NASA](#) study concluded that the plants they tested each had unique ways to naturally cleanse the air of toxins that have a negative effect on health. Try a few houseplants to increase your wellbeing.

Embrace winter!

Seeing as we spend so much time indoors, why not get out into nature for a walk or cross-country skiing more often? Except perhaps snow shovelling, nothing is more invigorating. Or join a guided SNOWSHOES AND SNOW CLUES trek through the Oak Ridges Conservation Reserve suitable for the whole family. An opportunity to enjoy the wonders of winter wildlife and identify tracks and signs of local animals. [Click here for more info](#) and to



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