

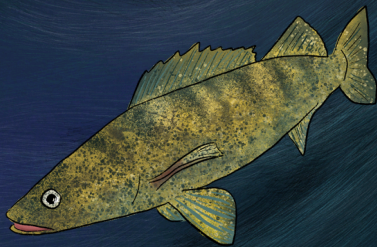
The Story of Walleye

and the call for justice from Grassy Narrows First Nation



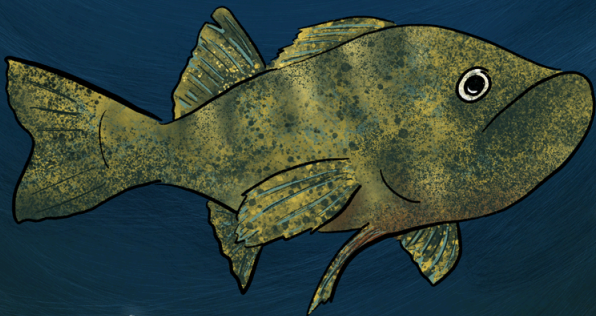
RAVEN

Written and Illustrated
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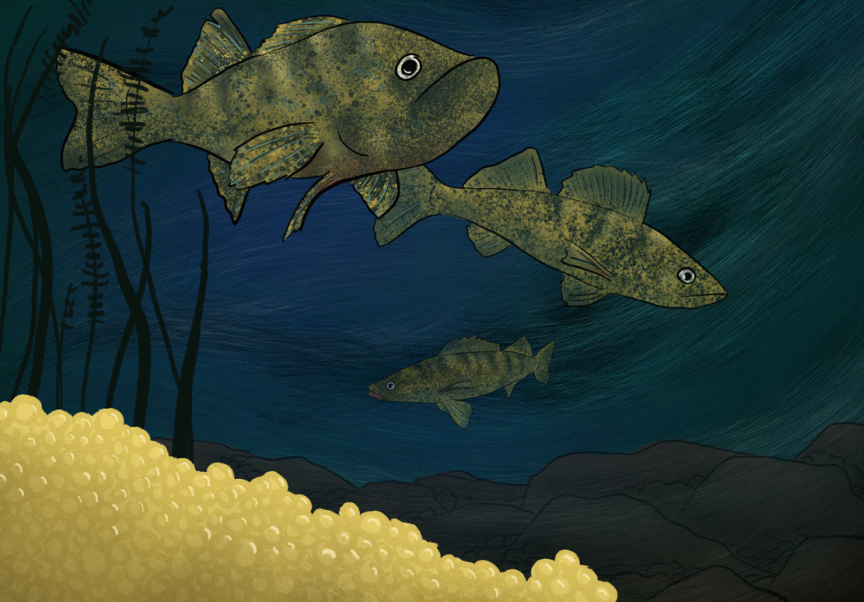


Walleye is a hefty nocturnal predator fish that lives in the English-Wabigoon River system. Within his ecosystem, Walleye is at the top of the food chain.

He eats small bottom-of-the-lake creatures such as crayfish, worms, minnows and so on. His whitish glossy eyes help him see in dark and murky waters, making him an excellent hunter.



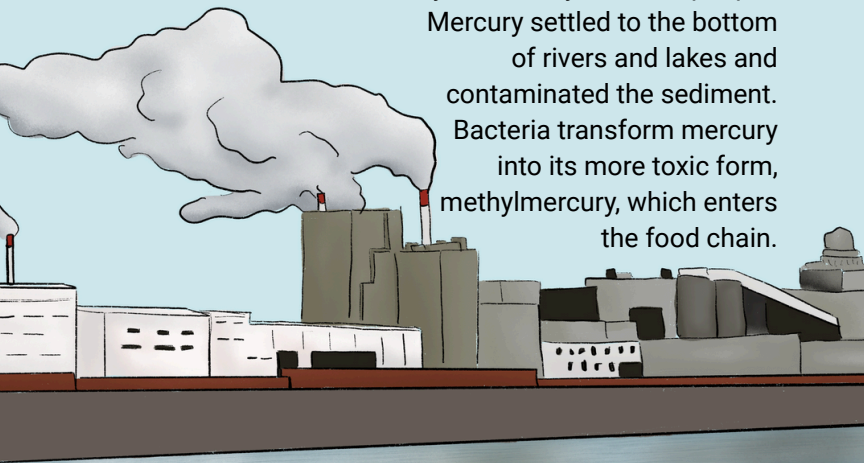
During spawning season, a single female Walleye can spawn up to 100,000 eggs, making it an abundant source of food for people who live in this territory, such as the community members of Grassy Narrows First Nation – Asubpeeschoseewagong Anishinabek.



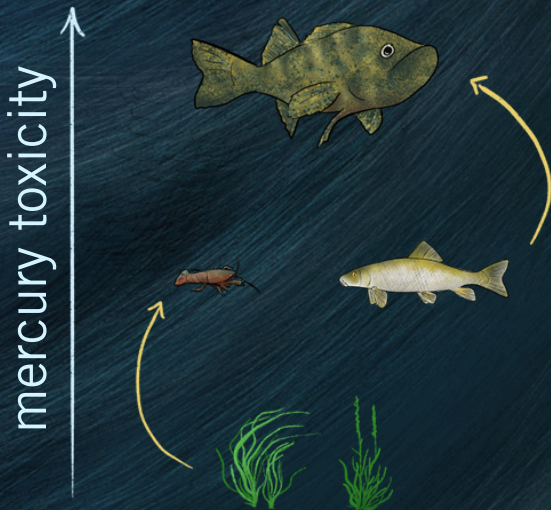
Decades ago, a pulp mill discharged 10 tonnes of mercury waste into the English-Wabigoon River system – into the rivers and lakes fished by the Grassy Narrows people.

Mercury settled to the bottom of rivers and lakes and contaminated the sediment.

Bacteria transform mercury into its more toxic form, methylmercury, which enters the food chain.



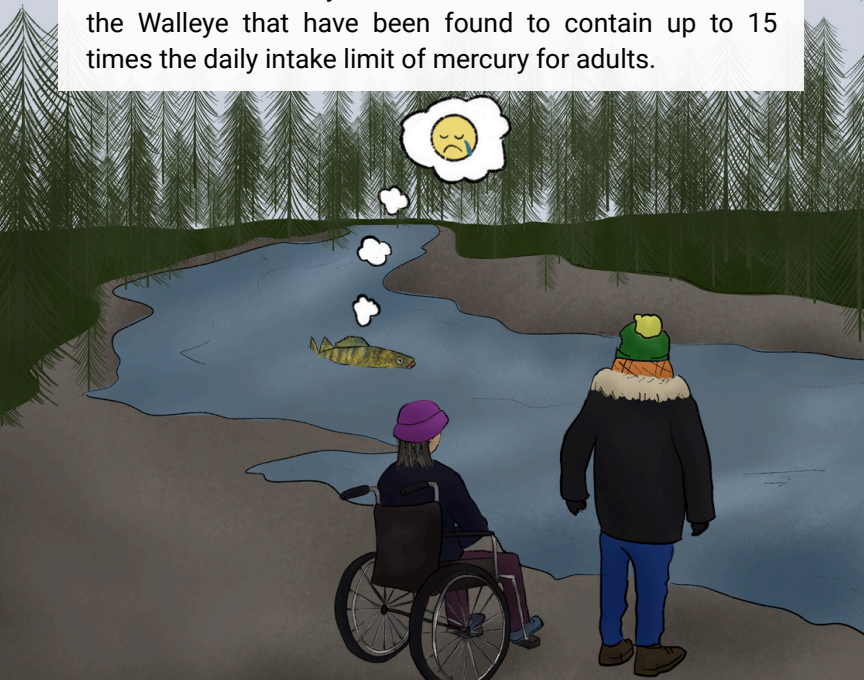
Due to the contaminated sediment, White Sucker, a fish near the bottom of the food chain, has been found to have elevated levels of mercury. And as mercury makes its way through the food chain to the Walleye at the top, its toxicity increases.



The Walleye is a key food staple in the Grassy Narrows' community. First and foremost, this is a spiritual and cultural food. The relationship with and tie to eating Walleye is a part of the Grassy Narrows community identity as Indigenous people.

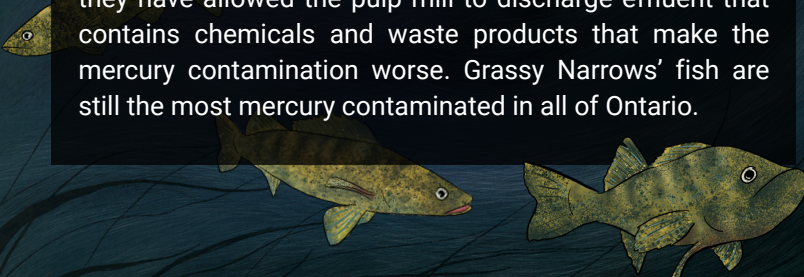


Further, people in the remote First Nation do not have the money to always buy food in the stores, or to go further by boat. The community continues to and will continue to eat the Walleye that have been found to contain up to 15 times the daily intake limit of mercury for adults.



The persistent contamination of Grassy Narrows' river system has severely impacted the lives, health, and well-being of generations of community members. To this day, 90% of tested community members experience symptoms of mercury poisoning, which has wide ranging impacts on the nervous system and other organs. Some sufferers can't swallow, speak, or move without difficulty. Others face vision problems, cognitive impairments, and early death.

Over five decades have passed since the initial contamination. To date, the governments of Canada and Ontario **have not cleaned up the river system**. Moreover, they have allowed the pulp mill to discharge effluent that contains chemicals and waste products that make the mercury contamination worse. Grassy Narrows' fish are still the most mercury contaminated in all of Ontario.



Grassy Narrows First Nation has been bravely taking action for decades to hold the Provincial and Federal governments accountable for the contamination of their life-giving waterway, and to call for justice for the community.

Grassy Narrows people have blockaded, demonstrated, revived their ceremonies, and built a movement. They have stopped clearcut logging on their territory and kept all industry out of their 7,000 square kilometre Indigenous Sovereignty and Protected Area.

Now, their resistance includes legal action.



The legal case calls on the governments of Canada and Ontario to compensate Grassy Narrows for damages arising from these failures, to act to remediate the river system, and to respect and uphold their solemn Treaty promises and relationship with Grassy Narrows instead of authorizing industry to destroy their lands and waters, making the mercury problem worse. **Grassy Narrows First Nation deserves to see justice for the harms they have endured for many decades, and the community has the right to hunt, fish, and trap without being poisoned.**

**Learn more and support the legal action at
raventrust.com/grassy-narrows**

RAVEN has a mission to provide access to justice for Indigenous Nations.

Supporting the assertion of the inherent and constitutionally-protected rights of Indigenous Peoples is a powerful pathway towards reconciliation and environmental justice. Working together we've raised millions of dollars to back some of the most groundbreaking legal challenges of our time.

RAVEN has supported Indigenous Nation partners who have halted mines, stopped pipelines, and created better laws.

Together, we are a part of the movement for Indigenous justice. Visit www.raventrust.com for more info.

