



NEWS LOCAL

Anglers asked to leave Cobourg harbour

By PETE FISHER, Northumberland TODAY
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Local fisherman Ron Reyns says that, as a courtesy, the docks shouldn't be stored on the east pier wall where they interfere with anglers' pursuit of fish. PETE FISHER / Northumberland Today

COBOURG - Summer hasn't arrived yet and things are heating up at the Cobourg harbour.

Pro fisherman Ian West of Port Hope set out for a day's fishing with Marley Hornyak on Victoria

Day but they were soon greeted by marina staff.

The dialogue was captured on three cameras mounted on West's 21-foot bass boat. West regularly uploads videos of his fishing trips to his

website, fearfishing.com.

As of Thursday morning the video, which is 10 minutes and 25 seconds long, has garnered nearly 3,000 views. West has added music to the video, giving it almost a comical tone.

“Excuse me, please no fishing in the harbour,” yelled an employee from shore just after Hornyak reeled in a pike.

West and Hornyak were casting from their boat just south of the north wall.

From the camera’s view, most slips appeared to be empty in the area in which they were fishing.

“I don’t think you can tell us not to fish in the harbour,” West responded.

“I just told you. How can I not tell you what I just told you?” the marina attendant replied. “Fishing is not allowed in the harbour.”

The dialogue goes back and forth, with West stating at one point, “You can’t stop us from fishing in Ontario waters.”

“So you’re telling me the Town of Cobourg owns the water I’m floating on?” West asked.

“Yes,” replies the attendant. “You’re not allowed to break Town bylaw.”

“The Town doesn’t own the water,” West countered.

A short time later, another attendant can be seen in the video walking onto the docks and approaching the pair who are fishing in an area where the boat slips are empty.

“Out of respect we’re asking you to not fish in this area,” the attendant told them.

“We haven’t hit a boat, we haven’t casted near a boat, we casted around the boats,” West told the attendant. “You can’t stop us. We’re just being polite, not fishing around boats. But we still have the right, as citizens of Ontario, to float on this water.”

The attendant asked the pair to fish farther south in the basin, but West responded, “we need to catch fish - this is where the fish are.”

A short time later, video shows West and Hornyak fishing in the basin of Cobourg harbour, catching and releasing numerous pike.

Just over eight minutes into the video West states on camera, “Well, we got some pike. We’re on our way back to Port Hope - the fish-friendly community.”

Before the video ends West, who has arrived back at his home, says “We got yelled at. We got in trouble. Everyone out there, remember: fishing is not a crime.”

West told Northumberland Today during a phone interview that he’s fished in Cobourg harbour with no problems in the past, and that he wanted to get video of the day’s fishing.

West said he was informed by a boater at the marina that syringes had been found around the harbour the day before.

“I was shocked,” he said. “There are needles in the harbour and (they’re) going to give me a hard time about fishing?”

“It’s Ontario or Canada’s water, it’s not for 50 boats down there It’s for everybody.”

Being a professional fisherman, West has heard about various issues of fishing in the Cobourg harbour in previous years, but was still hoping there would be no issues. West even stated one of the reasons why he launched his boat from Port Hope was the fear they may tow his boat and trailer if he launched from Cobourg.

“They jumped all over us,” said West.

If the marina attendants treated him like that on video, West wonders, what would they say to a youth fishing there.

“How would he be treated? I feel bad for any kid who wants to go down there and fish this summer.

“That’s the sad part of it all. Fishing is for everybody.”

As far as the days fishing went, West said, “it was awesome. That place is loaded with pike.”

The video has also been uploaded to nationalprostaff.com where it has garnered many

comments.

“My blood is boiling,” Huw Spicer commented.

“You’ve spent time and money on a day’s fishing for enjoyment. These people will continue to harass fishermen because they know most will not return.”

Heinrich Bier stated, “Just because you can afford a fancy boat and an expensive dock slip doesn’t mean you own the water around it. We all have equal rights to use the water, especially when we pay for a license to chase fish.”

Local fisherman Ron Reyns heard about what had taken place and was fishing at the harbour on Thursday morning to show his support for West.

“I’m doing this in support of fishing in the Cobourg Harbour where it is legally allowed to be done,” he said.

“Same with Ian West being told out of ‘courtesy’ and ‘respect’ of the boats it would be nice to see these two floating docks removed for the respect of shore anglers.”

Town of Cobourg communications officer Ashley Purdy said after reviewing the Town bylaw and speaking with the Town’s lawyer that, “the Cobourg Marina is part of Lake Ontario which is Federally regulated.”

“Yes it is legal to fish in the Cobourg Marina,” stated Purdy in an e-mail.

“I do want to note that the Marina Staff are well-intentioned in the fact that they are looking out for the safety and well-being of the boaters within the harbour, potential people swimming, and navigating the traffic of other potential water craft (dragon boats, paddlers, etc.)”

However she stated, it is not legal to fish in the following areas located within the Marina according to the Fishing Bylaw 79-91:

- a) the centre pier of the harbour;
- b) the marina berthing slips located in the harbour east basin;
- c) the marina fuel dock area extending from the north wall of the harbour to the centre pier;
- d) the pedestrian walkway along the north wall of the harbour.

“So basically the Town of Cobourg does have jurisdiction to enforce Fishing Bylaw 79-91 when the fishermen is on municipally owned lands as mentioned above.”

The video can be viewed at:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-JK0-sp2kZ0>

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