

Hardcore surfer takes on Lake Ontario's winter waves

By Laura Stanley | Posted: Mar 16 2008 7:08 pm



Wild winter waves: Rob DoBias surfs Lake Ontario during one of Toronto's many snowfalls earlier this month.

Instead of sitting at home in front of a warm fireplace with a hot cup of coco during some of Toronto's recent snowstorms, Toronto police officer Rob DoBias has spent a lot of his time outside checking the wind and surf conditions on Lake Ontario.

"You have to have a really good east wind or a really strong south-west wind," DoBias said.

The worse the weather is, the better for DoBias. In fact, bad weather is exactly what he hopes for.

"I see a storm coming and I get excited," DoBias said.

DoBias, 33, grew up surfing off the coast of North Carolina. He lived so close to the seashore, he said he could look out his bedroom window to see if there were waves or not. When he moved to Toronto in 2004, DoBias decided he'd to find a way to continue to surf.

"Surfing is my life...It's my number one passion," he said.

After doing some research, DoBias found a site called Lakesurf.com "There's a pretty big culture here," DoBias said. "There's a big group of surfers in the great lakes area." DoBias says there are approximately 490 registered surfers in the Great Lakes area.

The only catch was that the best surf on Lake Ontario arrived in the winter months.

“Every other day in January we had fun surf,” DoBias said.

Though DoBias is a veteran surfer he rarely surfs alone.

“You want to take a buddy or two out with you,” he said.

One of the biggest challenges with surfing in the winter is the cold. DoBias and other Lake Ontario surfers deal with water temperatures of approximately 3 C. When surfing, DoBias wears a thick wet-suit that covers his entire body, leaving only an opening for his face.

DoBias is used to the reactions he gets from his friends and colleagues when he tells them he’s going surfing in the middle of a snowstorm.

“When you think of surfing, you picture Hawaii or somewhere nice and warm,” he said. “It’s like nothing I have ever done before.”

“Surfing is a lifestyle,” DoBias said. “When you go on vacation you go on surf trips. It’s my high in life. “Every wave is different; it’s never the same ride.”

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