



## WHITE LAKE PRESERVATION PROJECT

### **White Lake Loon Survey and Wildlife Observations**

**June 30 to July 7, 2018**

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During our stay on White Lake we experienced days of relatively high winds as well as calm periods allowing us to make our detailed observations and loon count. The clarity of the water was very high and we were thrilled to see loons ‘flying’ under water as they pursued their prey. Especially noticeable was a significant population of cormorants perched on the rocks in the narrows and also on a rocky outcrop near the western shore below Deadman’s Island. We did not see any Bald Eagles this year although others have observed the presence of at least one nesting pair. Over the last several years three Osprey nests were lost with a new one established (for the second year) on the east side of southern Hardwood Island. Finally, the number of great blue herons was much lower than in previous years.

#### **Loon Observations<sup>1</sup>:**

1. As in previous years 2 adults and 2 chicks. Chicks were large enough to no longer ride on the adult’s back. Very active and tamed, seen fishing and feeding constantly. They travel the whole range of the Broad Brook grassed area including the lower tip of Hardwood Island depending on weather conditions.
2. We did not see as many Blue Herons as in previous years along the Western Shore as the Rocky outcrops were mainly submerged this year. On separate occasions we observed 3 adult loons fishing and a very surprised duck which landed amongst them, was startled and took off immediately. The area/channel, just south of the last part of Hardwood Island, remains a favorite group fishing area for 3 to 4 adults usually at days end.
4. One adult and two chicks feeding near cottages on Eastern shore. One more adult further North well into Three Mile Bay completed this family.

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<sup>1</sup> Observation number is correlated to a location number on the map below. Any site numbers omitted was because of inactivity.

5. For the second year, the Ospreys have returned to their nest site located on the Southern tip of Hardwood Island. Two large chicks in the nest were not yet flying on their own, but jumping up and down.
6. Southeast below Hardwood Island 2 adults feeding in rocky shallow area.
7. The entire channel between the western shore and McLaughlin and Hardwood Islands has become a gathering/fishing place for groups of adult loons. The most active period is shortly after nightfall. Loons can be heard calling for most of the late evening and well into the night.
9. At the entrance to and on the South shore of Three Mile Bay, were 2 adult loons and one chick. A few hundred yards into the bay another 2 adults but no chicks.
10. Two adults in the main channel in front of Cedar Cove marina braving the heavy boat traffic.
11. Two adults with no chicks were spotted at the far end of Three Mile Bay.
13. Off Centennial lane, just before the entrance to Pickerel Bay were 2 adults with no chicks. Further into Pickerel Bay were 2 adults near the South shore bays.
14. At the far end of Pickerel Bay were 2 more adults this time with two large chicks actively fishing amidst a fair amount of JetSki traffic from the marina. The usual large Osprey nest in the center of the bay was very active with two chicks still in the nest.
15. Further up in Eggshape Bay, 2 adults and two chicks were constantly moving and feeding.
16. Right above Windy point and sheltered behind Howards Island were two more adults with two good sized chicks.
17. Just above Stanley Island two adults fishing amongst the rocky outcrops with no chicks seen. The bald eagle's nest on Stanley Island appeared to be in good repair, but was vacant.
18. Very few Blue Herons were observed on the rocky Western shore this year.
19. On the Eastern shore, below Deadman's island, the bay held two adult loons with two small chicks. Deeper into the bay one more adult was seen closer to a weedy area. The active osprey nest above held 2 hungry chicks actively calling for food. Across the lake on the opposite (Western) shore one adult loon was spotted. Two wood ducks were seen near the rocky inlets.
20. Across from the bay entrance leading to White Lake Marina and well inside the Western opening of the inlet were 2 adult loons fishing. South on the rocky shores a few Blue Heron were seen darting in and out of shallow areas.
21. Inside the bay entrance towards the South in tall grass, 3 adult loons with no chicks were observed.
22. On the Northern shore of the bay, in the channel between the Northshore and Jacob and Myrtle Islands (which is open due to higher water levels) one adult and two chicks of fair size were seen. Closer to the cottage area towards the marina 1 adult and two chicks were tolerating the high volume of boat travel.

23. We traveled to the far end of the lake past site 23, the former Osprey nest, and went close to the White Lake Dam area. On the return leg following the Western shore, we noticed 3 to 4 Cormorants, which we hope will stay up at that end and not invade the lower areas of White Lake as they would no doubt compete with and displace loons. No loons were observed in this area of the lake, however quite a few gulls were observed feeding near the dam.
28. We ventured into the far reaches of the bays beyond the marina and initially found more boat traffic than usual, at least until we reached Hayes Bay. At the entrance of the second part of Hayes Bay near Bane Bay, we spotted a very shy adult loon couple with only one small chick. They were clearly not accustomed to boat traffic as they retreated amongst the tall reeds.

### **SURVEY RESULTS:**

During the 2018 observation period, we counted 44 adult loons on White Lake, with 10 mating pairs producing 18 offspring.

The table below gives a comparison of this year's results with those of previous years:

OBSERVATION	2013	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of Adults	23	40	32	45	44
Number of Nesting Pairs	7	10	11	19	10
Number of Chicks	16	17	16	21	18

**July 23 – 30, 2018**

