



WHITE LAKE PRESERVATION PROJECT

White Lake Loon Survey and Wild Life Observations

June 29 to July 6th, 2019

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The weather: Our first venture on the lake, on July 29, was cut short by menacing black clouds moving into the area. We did manage a quick tour of the Broad Brook area and managed to beat the rain back to the cottage. The rest of our observation period was beautiful, with warm and usually calm conditions for all of our morning and evening outings.

General Observations:

- Water levels were higher than in 2018. Known (2018) nesting sites were flooded and not used in 2019.
- The loon population was strong in all the familiar areas. Most of the adults with chicks had twins with only a few exceptions having a single offspring.
- Interestingly, there appeared to be a greater variety in size/age of the chicks. Some were very small and recently hatched, while others were quite large, already diving on their own and no longer relying on their parents for rides.
- In some areas such as Broad Brook and Sunset Bays, lake water clarity continued to increase allowing us to see to greater depths.
- In certain areas such as Eggshape Bay and the far end of Three Mile Bay, shore waters appeared compromised, with a higher density of vegetation and clouds of algae present.
- We noticed a significant increase in vegetation (compared to 2018) starting from the shoreline of Broad Brook Bay to the far end of Sunset Bay. Some of the vegetation reached the surface of the water and was dense enough to fowl our motor propeller.
- As in previous years, adult loons gathered at nightfall in the channel stretching from the entrance to Sunset Bay northward between the western lakeshore and the length of Hardwood Island. These cooperative line-fishing gatherings, involving at times 6 to 8 loons, likely indicated that fishing was successful in this area.
- This year, we did not visit the far end of the lake near White Lake Village, not venturing past the opening to the Village Basin. We did confirm that the Osprey

nest in the area, which had disappeared during the last few seasons, was never rebuilt. We also did not venture to the far East end of the lake (Hayes Bay) and went only as far as the White Lake marina. A lack of time and a distraction by a very colorful Chinese Dragon boat paddled by visiting seniors, prevented us from venturing farther. We did observe an osprey fishing in the large grassy bay just east of White Lake Marina.

Site specific observations:

1. As has been observed in previous years, Broad Brook Bay hosted two adult loons with two large chicks. The family was calm and tolerant of our presence. These loons were active feeders near the south end of Hardwood Island and appeared to be feeding in deeper water thus avoiding near-shore areas of dense aquatic plant growth.
2. Sunset Bay remains devoid of permanent loon residents. Starting at the southern end of the lake in Sunset Bay, aquatic plants are increasing in density and spreading further into the bay itself. At the mouth of Sunset bay, we observed an adult (Mallard?) ducks caring for three ducklings. Several adult loons were observed feeding in the bay but no chicks or pairing of adults was observed.
3. Near the mouth of Sunset Bay and on the western shore, we observed several Great Blue herons. These are very shy birds and must be approached with care if one is hoping to get within photographic range.
4. Just before the entrance to Three Mile Bay, on the eastern shore, we observed two adult loons with a single very small chick. The family was seen close to cottage docks when feeding.
5. The osprey nest on the east side Hardwood Island continues to be active. Only one chick was seen in the nest and although not yet flying, was noisily jumping up and down, anticipating its parent's return with food. On the eastern side of Harwood Island, we observed on several occasions, adult Bald Eagles either circling the area or perched on high tree tops in search of food. We did not discover the nesting site.
6. Within the deeper channel that separates the last small island at the southern end of Hardwood Island, two adult loons were observed but with no chicks.
7. The bay on the western side of the lake just south of McLaughlin's I., appears to be a favorite fishing spot for Blue Herons. We observed a large population of little minnows at that spot which explains the presence of the Herons.
8. Off the shore of Birch Island facing the opening to Three Mile Bay, were two adult loons with two medium-sized chicks in an area where food was readily available.
9. In those parts of the south side of Three Mile Bay where there are no cottages, we logged in three separate sightings of two adult loons with two medium-sized chicks.

10. Several adult loons were observed close to Cedar Cove, coping with passing boat traffic. When we were on the lake, most of the north shore of Three Mile Bay, which is heavily developed with cottages, was contaminated with some form of cloudy algae floating near the shore line. The bloom extended right up to the very mouth or entrance of the bay.
11. The eastern end of Three Mile Bay appeared stagnant. There is a very high density of aquatic plants present, and although a productive area for loons in past years, this area is now empty with the exception of small birds darting in and out of the tall grass. However, at the small bay on the southern side where the water is deeper and darker, we observed a very active pair of loons with two medium-sized chicks.
12. On the south shore of Three Mile Bay opposite Cedar Cove, we recorded two adult loons with two small chicks. This family stayed very close to unpopulated wooden areas.
13. Just past the entrance on the south shore of Pickerel Bay, we observed two adult loons and two large chicks. The osprey nest on the highest dead tree on the center island was very active with two large chicks. Although not yet flying, they were very vocal and trying out their wings.
14. At the far end of the bay near Pickerel Bay Lodge and beyond, the water appears very slimy, stagnant and with lots of algae. No loons observed. This area was a productive location just a few years ago.
15. We observed no loons in Eggshape Bay, but did notice a marked increase in aquatic vegetation. No Herons were seen amongst the tall grass as in previous years.
16. Windy Point hosted the usual two adult loons and 2 medium-sized chicks. These loons were observed on the far side of the small islands adjacent to the point.
17. Amongst the smaller rocky outcrops on the northern end of Stanley Island, we observed two adult loons caring for 2 medium-sized chicks. This family was repeatedly observed in that immediate area and did not wander off. The Bald Eagles' nest located there still looks to be in good shape but no chicks were seen, possibly because they had fledged. Two adult eagles were seen, on separate occasions, flying above the channel between Stanley Island and the eastern shoreline. In this location, we observed several Great Blue Herons.
18. Just south of Dead Man's Island, on the eastern shore, the large bay located there hosted an osprey nest with two very vocal chicks. The open section of the bay held two adult loons with two very small chicks. Deeper in the bay, but not accessible to the pontoon boat we were using, were two additional adult loons. We could not, however, see any chicks although they could have been hidden in the grassy area.

19. In the area just opposite the White Lake Marina, we observed on several occasions, three of four adult loons feeding. Adult Mallard ducks were also observed as were several Great Blue Herons.
20. On the south side of The Canal near the White Lake Marina, we observed two adult loons and two large chicks actively feeding. Further to the east, there was a small rocky island with a tall dead tree. This unique perch was being used by an osprey to spot fish below. After spending several hours waiting, we were fortunate to witness a successful osprey catch. At one point, the osprey successfully caught a fish about 12 inches long and struggled to gain altitude after the capture. We quickly followed the osprey to the south shore of the bay where it was perched on a dead tree while eating its catch with great gusto.
21. On the north side of the same area, and in the narrow channel between the mainland and Myrtle and Jacob's Islands, two adult loons and two small chicks were observed feeding. Continuing through the channel to where it opens up just before the White Lake Marina, we observed one adult loon and two small chicks. All were braving the boat traffic coming from the marina.
22. Birch Island continues to host a Bald Eagle nest. This year there were two adults and two chicks. The chicks had fledged by the time we saw them, but were staying in close proximity to the nest while being feed by their parents.

Summary of Loon observations:

Total number of adult loons:	38
Number of nesting pairs:	12
Total number of chicks:	23