



WHITE LAKE Property Owners Association
Environment Volunteers



ENVIRONMENT BULLETIN

2023 White Lake Loon Report

We are happy this year to have multiple inputs into our annual Loon Survey Report. All of the participants are naturalists and/or photographers and know loons and their behavioural habits very well. Longtime participants in the survey were Joyce Benham and Robert Carrière who surveyed the lake from July 1 to 8. The second participant was Brian Houle who surveyed the lake over the month of July. Finally, Nora and Donnie Gordon did a full survey of the lake on a single day in September. The last section of this report details the cause of death of a loon found on White Lake this year.

The [full version of the 2023 White Lake Loon Survey](#) contains details of observations and tallies and can be downloaded from the [White Lake Science Website](#).

Perhaps the most difficult population to monitor is the single adult or young adult. Lone birds on the lake or loons engaging in group communal feeding may be part of a nesting pair located in another part of the lake.

Care should then be taken when tallying up the total number of loons on the lake. From past experience, it is reasonable to assume that there are at a minimum ten unattached loons on the lake at any given time during the summer months.

The results for 2023 are given in the table below. These compare very well with the best seasons we have recorded since 2013. Clearly, White Lake is great habitat for loons. White Lake is a shallow and very productive lake producing a good supply of feeder fish for all aquatic species, both fish and fowl.

One of the reasons loons do well on White Lake is because about 25% of the surface area of the lake are wetlands. These wetlands are in danger today from the spread of [invasive phragmites](#). Once established, loons will have great difficulty building nests in the very dense vegetation. We also regularly see property owners destroying wetlands to improve

access to open water at their cottage. This is how native species can become endangered over time.

Observation	2013	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Adults	23	40	32	45	44	38	25	27	-	48
Nesting Pairs	7	10	11	19	10	12	2	5	10	19
Chicks	16	17	16	21	18	23	4	5	15	22

Deceased Common Loon on White Lake

On May 23, 2023 we received a report of a dead loon on White Lake. Two observant residents of the lake spotted a loon thrashing about as though it was in distress. Located near Hardwood Island, the loon soon died. Two additional loons stayed with the dying loon until it died.

On the advice of the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative the loon was recovered in a manner that would not expose anyone to possible pathogens. The loon was picked up and sent to a laboratory for analysis.

The final diagnosis was death by severe aspergillosis. Tests for avian influenza were negative. The internet provides the following information on the fungal infection:

Spergillosis is an infection caused by Aspergillus, a common mold (a type of fungus) that lives indoors and outdoors. Most people breathe in Aspergillus spores every day without getting sick. However, people with weakened immune systems or lung diseases are at a higher risk of developing health problems due to Aspergillus. The types of health problems caused by Aspergillus include allergic reactions, lung infections, and infections in other organs.

Between 5 and 10% of loons die from this fungal infection

Conrad Grégoire and David Overholt

Environment Volunteers, White Lake Property Owners Association

January 12, 2024