

White Lake Loon Survey and Wildlife Observations

June 26 to July 3rd, 2021

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It was with some apprehension that we started our 2021 loon survey on White Lake. The infestation of a black fly which impacted on nesting loons, resulted in a drop of nesting pairs from 12 to 2 and chick production from 23 to 4 in 2020 when compared to our count for 2019.

We time our loon survey to coincide with the period that loon chicks are fully hatched and in the water with their parents. This makes for the best photography of loons on White Lake. This year, we immediately realized that for some reason, a few nesting loons were still incubating their eggs. Some of these eggs hatched after our survey, however, our report includes most of the new hatchlings as reported to us by others who observed these late nests for us.

Since the arrival of zebra mussels in White Lake, we continue to observe very high water clarity and the proliferation of aquatic plants. Areas which were easily reached by boat in previous years are now choked with aquatic plants. This year we also observed in many parts of the lake the presence of nuisance filamentous green algae forming large 'clouds' of green just under the surface of the lake and often extending to the lake bed.



Photo Credit: Joyce Benham

Site specific observations:

The specific numbered sites cited below correspond to the numbered sites shown on the map below. Not all sites were occupied by loons in 2021 although they may have been in other years.

- Site 1: Single adult loon near the outlet of Broad Brook.
- Site 2: One adult loon.
- Site 4: Two adult loons.
- Site 6: Two adult loons.
- Site 9: Two adult loons and one chick.
- Site 12: Two adult loons.
- Site 13: Four adult loons and one chick.
- Site 14: Two adult loons.
- Site 15: One adult loon.
- Site 19: Two adult loons and one chick.
- Site 20: Two adult loons.
- Site 23: Two adult loons and one chick in Village Basin.
- Site 26: Two adult loons.
- Site 28: Two adult loons and one chick.

Summary of Loon observations for 2021:

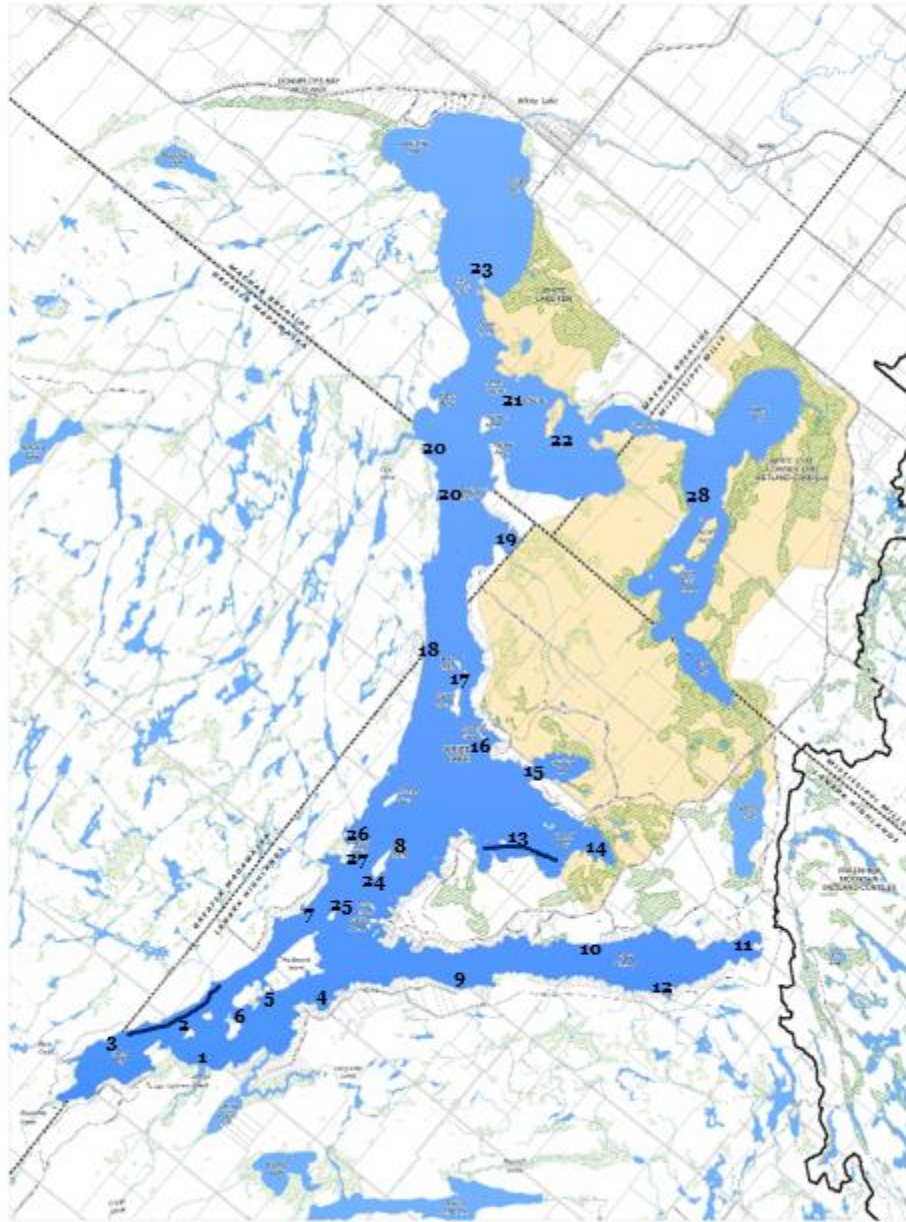
- Total number of adult loons: 27
- Number of nesting pairs: 5
- Total number of chicks: 5

The table below summarizes the results of loon surveys for eight years starting in 2013. It is clear that 2021 was a difficult year for loons. The number of loons returning to the lake did not substantially recover from the low numbers of 2020. Nesting pairs were also very low as were the number of chicks produced.

OBSERVATION	2013	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of Adults	23	40	32	45	44	38	25	27
Number of Nesting Pairs	7	10	11	19	10	12	2	5
Number of Chicks	16	17	16	21	18	23	4	5

Loon Observation Sites

June 26 – July 3, 2021



Wildlife Observations:

During our stay on White Lake, we made numerous observations of wildlife including bald eagles, ospreys, otters, and great blue herons. Of particular interest was witnessing the mating of two very large snapping turtles. The photo below was taken near the outlet of Broad Brook.



Photo Credit; Joyce Benham