

# OCLAWA NEWS

TO PROMOTE AND PRESERVE THE LAKES AND RIVERS OF OCONTO COUNTY

Fall 2013

## Oconto County ranked #5 in State on 4<sup>th</sup> of July Boat Landing Blitz

by Amanda Strick

Fall has arrived! The leaves are in full color and for many folks in the Northwoods of Wisconsin this is a time to turn our attention to hunting, fall harvesting, and winterization of summer cabins. This is also, a great time to reflect on all the great work that has occurred over the summer months in regards to AIS prevention and education efforts.

During the 2013 field season, early detection surveys were conducted by Oconto County and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on ten lakes. These lakes included: Munger Lake, Grindle Lake, Chain Lake, McComb Lake, Bear Paw Lake, Rost Lake, Ranch Lake, Shay Lake, Wescott Lake, and the Oconto Falls Pond. These lakes were monitored using the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative monitoring techniques. Additionally, Wheeler Lake, Archibald Lake, Maiden Lake, and Pine Ridge Lake were surveyed using point-intercept methods.



This year's Clean Boats, Clean Waters program was incredibly successful. Peter Framnes and John Kamps began working in mid-May and concluded their monitoring efforts mid-August. A total of 964 boats were inspected between these two gentlemen and approximately 2,500 were spoken with at the boat landings!!! The county also had a phenomenal year for participation in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Boat Landing Blitz, out of all the counties

in the state, Oconto County ranked # Five for organizational participation; this means we had a significant amount of participation from volunteers. Thank you for making the 4<sup>th</sup> of July such a success in 2013 for Oconto County! Clean Boats, Clean Waters efforts were initiated for the first time at two major fishing tournaments in Oconto County: Master's Walleye Circuit May 30-June 2 where the Southern-Line 4-H Club came out for a rainy day of boat washing and boater education and the AIM Walleye Series July 18-21 where the



Northern Riders 4-H Club assisted in boat washing and handing out educational brochures.

Purple loosestrife was collected from the shores of White Potato Lake and distribute to the Oconto Middle School, Oconto High School, and Oconto Falls High School for beetle rearing. These beetles were dispersed on the Oconto Sportsmen's Club's land in Oconto to help control the purple loosestrife on the bay.



In the spring of 2013, the AIS Program received a grant to create replicas of various AIS including: Purple Loosestrife, Rusty Crayfish, Sea Lamprey, Zebra Mussels on rocky surface, an oversized Zebra Mussel, Round Goby, Silver Carp, oversized Spiny Water flea, and a replica of Curly Leaf Pondweed and have been used in classrooms, at camps, the Oconto County Fair, fishing tournaments and other events.

The County reviewed 35 boat access areas to determine which

landings required an updated AIS sign. Please report if your boat access needs a new sign. These are provided for free. New sign →

Zebra Mussel platforms were placed in Berry Lake, Waubee Lake, Bass Lake, White Potato Lake, Boulder Lake, Pickerel Lake, Wheeler Lake, Archibald Lake, Horn Lake, Explosion Lake, Little Horn Lake, and Reservoir Pond where all came back clear of zebra mussels. This is great news! If your lake has not participated and is interested in early detection monitoring for zebra mussels please contact me. Zebra mussels have been found in less than 5% of Wisconsin lakes predicted to be suitable for zebra mussels. In Oconto County, they've been reported in the Bay of Green Bay, the Oconto River including the Oconto Falls Pond and the Machickanee Flowage. As the temperatures fall and lake residents begin to remove piers, docks and boats from the water, remember to check for any new invaders that might have attached themselves to the equipment while it was submerged over the summer. In addition to a visual inspection, citizens/contractors are encouraged to feel smooth surfaces of equipment to check for juvenile zebra mussels as they may have a "sand-paper like" feel and are often invisible to the human eye. If zebra mussels or other new invasive species are found:

- If suspicious organism is noted please report the exact location where the animal was found.
- Take a digital photo of the animal in the setting where it was found (if possible). Then collect up to five specimens of varying sizes. Place in a jar with water; put on ice and transport to refrigerator.



- Contact Amanda Strick, AIS Coordinator at 920-834-7155 and deliver specimens.

Lastly, thank you to all the volunteers who make the AIS Program a huge success each year in Oconto County! Please feel free to contact me with any questions or inquiries. Email: [Amanda.strick@co.oconto.wi.us](mailto:Amanda.strick@co.oconto.wi.us) or 920-834-7150.

## AROUND THE COUNTY

### **ANDERSON LAKE:**

Our annual Boat Parade and Picnic was held on July 27th. The Picnic was a great success with a wonderful crowd at Waters Edge enjoying food, refreshments, a raffle, and live music. A similar event is planned for the last Saturday of July next year. We are all excited about the new Web-Site started this past summer. It will be a new way for us to keep our members and others informed about Anderson Lake. You can find the site by entering : [www.andersonlakeassociation.wordpress.com](http://www.andersonlakeassociation.wordpress.com)

This summer about 140 spotted muskies in the 15 inch range were planted by the WDNR as part of their brood program to raise muskies for other Rivers and Lakes in the state. An electroshocking this fall did not find any muskies. No planting is planned for 2014. Dr. James Hodgson, recently retired from St. Norbert College as a Professor Emeritus of Biology and Science, spoke at our Fall meeting on September 17th on the fish food chain and how it affects lake productivity and algae growth. He studied this topic with others during a 27 year research project and it's affect on small lakes. The key point of his talk emphasized the importance of having predator fish, like bass, northern, muskie, or walleye in the lake along with other species like panfish, etc. Their studies found that with predator fish present, zooplankton (feed for small fish) increases, which they found results in a cutback on Algae production.

**ARCHIBALD:** Archibald Lake Association members have been hard at work this summer trying to manage our two known invasive species: Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) and Flowering Rush. Many members participated in the Clean Boats/Clean Waters and Adopt a Shoreline programs. We have significantly reduced the amount of EWM with a combination of chemical treatments and the manual removal of individual plants. After putting our DNR Flowering Rush research grant on hold last year, we have resumed testing two different chemicals in separate test areas. Volunteers are also hand digging individual plants to help control the spread of this invasive.

ALA members are not all work and no play, however. We have had fun at our annual picnic, volunteer recognition dinner and fall golf outing and dinner. Some members even braved the rain to participate in the Nicolet Plastic Walk Run in June. Nicolet Plastics donates the proceeds to area emergency response departments.

Our successful fund raisers have included two raffles, and several brat fry sales at the Lakewood Super Valu.



# Holman's win Berry Lake annual 4th of July Competition

Berry Lake held its annual 4th of July competition on July 7 and this year it was a dock/beach decorating contest with the theme Superheroes.

"It was a hot day to be wearing Superhero costumes, but everyone had fun despite the heat," said BLPOA secretary-treasurer Kay Rankel.

The winners were:

» 1st place and \$50 went to the Holman family for their Batman display. They had awesome props including a Batmobile on the beach, phenomenal costumes and put on the best show for the judges. The Batman theme was playing loudly as the judge's boat drove up to their dock and they handed out great treats (bribes!) to the judges.

» 2nd place and \$35 went to the Jensen family. They were all decked out in different Superhero costumes including the Hulk and Cat Woman and had a pyrotechnics display for the judges.

» 3rd place and \$25 went to the Arnoldussen family. The family made a huge banner and the kids did a great job entertaining the judges.

Honorable mentions go to the Stiles family, the Asselmeier family and the Pierquet family.

"All did a wonderful job," Rankel said.

Next year's competition will be a boat parade and the theme will be Patriotic.



The Holman family are the winners of the Berry Lake annual 4th of July Competition.



2nd place winners are the Jensen family.

## BERRY LAKE:

- The BLPOA is in the process of creating our APM plan and hope to have it in place by the spring of 2014.
- Our annual 4th of July competition was a dock/beach decorating contest (we alternate every year between that and a boat parade). This year the theme was "Superheroes" and several residents went all out. I'm attaching the article from the Times Herald newspaper who printed our submission, it includes photos of first and second place.
- A lake level monitor was installed this year by the US Geological Survey, this is part of the ongoing research being done by them here. The Department of the Interior US Geological Survey has

received a permit through the WDNR this spring to install a continuous water level recorder at Berry Lake in 2013. The equipment consists of an on-shore aluminum enclosure along with buried conduit that will be trenched from the enclosure to the shoreline and then below the lake bed out to a point where it can be anchored to the lake bed. The current conditions can be viewed at: [http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv?site\\_no=44532208828180](http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv?site_no=44532208828180)

## **Townsend Flowage Association:**

Boater Safety Class was held June 14 and June 15 and 14 students passed the exam.

Thank you to everyone who attended and worked at our annual corn roast and family fun day August 3. This is our only fund raiser and we appreciate the support.

Five zebra mussel traps were handed out at our spring meeting we will return them to the DNR for inspection.

Jon Marsh is our new TFA representative to Oconto County Lakes and Waterways board.

Now that we have enough water the new weed harvester was put in water on Tuesday, September 3. On Friday, September 6 we painted the old weed cutter.

Reports from fisherman and fishing tournaments are that the fish are bigger and the loss from the drawdown was minimal.

Observations on our lake this summer showed a very significant reduction in Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM). Onterra LLC, the aquatic plant survey company, will be doing a survey this fall and then we'll know for sure what affect the water draw down had on the distribution and intensity of this invasive species. The report and the map will be posted in the kiosks and web site.

Several members of the association expressed their dissatisfaction with Oconto County on filling the water level after the dam repair on Reservoir Pond. Oconto County didn't always give the board the correct information and did not follow the process and timeline they told us. There was a question as to why they did not fill both bodies of water at the same rate rather than filling Reservoir Pond first. At our general meeting a motion was made from the floor to write a letter to Dave Christenson, our Oconto County Supervisor, expressing our dissatisfaction with the way Oconto County handled the situation and negative impact the low water level had on the economy of the area. Motion passed.

At the general meeting members expressed concern about boaters and jet skis not obeying the slow no wake buoys. Their shorelines are eroding and it is a safety concern. Slow no wake is enforced by the DNR and slow no wake after 5 pm is enforced by the Town of Townsend. We need law enforcement presence on the lake to get this under control. The board will request the new DNR warden to attend our spring meeting.

Carol Haggstrom our Loon Ranger gave a very interesting presentation on loons and our loon population on the Townsend Flowage. She also made beautiful and delicious loon cookies.

## WHEELER LAKE:

Wheeler Lake held its annual golf outing on Saturday August 24<sup>th</sup>. This annual event has become the signature summer fund raiser for our association. The event was held at McCauslin Brook Country Club in Lakewood WI. The 9 hole, shotgun start event was won by the Joel Gmack foursome with a score of -7 on the back nine. After the golf all attendees enjoyed fantastic buffet style meal and an expansive raffle. Many thanks to local shops who donated items for the raffle.

The Wheeler Lake Association also held their annual Venetian Boat Parade. This event is always held on the first Saturday after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Nearly a dozen boats participated with over a hundred spectators on shore cheering them on. This is always a fun family event.

*It is evening, perhaps an hour of daylight left. The  
glassy lake is dimpled with rising fish, the distant shore a  
dim lavender balustrade of pines. All bathed in a soft,  
translucent light, pure as the first dawn. The day was  
swift with racing clouds, but now all is still. Still. Even  
the evening hymns of birds are for the moment absent.  
The thrushes and grosbeaks, the loon, the vireo—silent.  
I have long loved the voices and songs, the poetry,  
I've found in the wilderness. But in this moment, this  
eternity of stillness, a simple truth is clear. Sometimes the  
most beautiful songs are unsung, the loveliest poems  
unspoken. In silence is equilibrium, poise, balance.  
Silence is, itself, a voice.*

By Douglas Wood, Paddle Whispers

# GREAT NEWS ON ZEBRA MUSSELS

BY Amanda Strick AIS Coordinator Oconto County

I wanted to let you know that all of the zebra mussel platforms that were placed in Berry Lake, Waubesa Lake, Bass Lake, White Potato Lake, Boulder Lake, Pickerel Lake, Wheeler Lake, Archibald Lake, Horn Lake, Explosion Lake, Little Horn Lake, and Reservoir Pond came back clear of zebra mussels. This is great news! It is important as you are weatherizing docks, boats, and other water equipment for the

winter to be vigilant and keep an eye out for invasive species. The article below has some information about how to look for zebra mussels and please, report any abnormal sightings. Also, please let me know if your lake would be interested in monitoring next year!!! The more monitoring we are able to do in Oconto County, the better we can protect the county's waters.

**Fall is best time to look for zebra mussels as boats & piers are removed for winter.**

As the temperatures fall and lake residents begin to remove piers, docks and boats from the water, remember to check for any new invaders that might have attached themselves to the equipment while it was submerged over the summer.

***Take a few minutes to exam your dock or boat while you are removing it. Do you see anything suspicious attached? If so, please report specimen to the county coordinator as soon as possible.***

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are non-native plants and animals that threaten Wisconsin's lakes and river systems by causing environmental and economic harm. Zebra mussels can clog water intakes and pipes, encrust piers, boats, and motors, and their sharp shells can cut the feet of swimmers.

Zebra mussels have been found in less than 5% of Wisconsin lakes predicted to be suitable for zebra mussels. In Oconto County, they've been reported in the Bay of Green Bay, the Oconto River including the Oconto Falls Pond and the Machickanee Flowage.

***Oconto County has hundreds of miles of streams, 365 lakes, and 27 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline. This abundance of water increases recreational opportunities in addition to the number of vectors for both introduction and movement of aquatic invasive species. Please review this link to see where AIS has been identified in Oconto County:***

***<http://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/invasives/AISByWaterbody.aspx?species=&location=43>***

To protect the rest of Oconto County's lakes and rivers, please carefully examine piers, boats, boatlifts, rafts, and any other equipment that has been in the water for a prolonged period of time for signs of zebra mussels during removal.

In addition to a visual inspection, citizens/contractors are encouraged to feel smooth surfaces of equipment to check for juvenile zebra mussels as they may have a "sand-paper like" feel and are often invisible to the human eye. If zebra mussels or other new invasive species are found,

- If suspicious organism is noted please report the exact location where the animal was found.
- Take a digital photo of the animal in the setting where it was found (if possible). Then collect up to five specimens of varying sizes. Place in a jar with water; put on ice and transport to refrigerator.
- Contact Amanda Strick, AIS Coordinator at 920-834-7155 and deliver specimens.

Responding quickly to new AIS detections is critical to help curb the spread into other waterbodies.

There are also specific laws lake property owners and contractors must follow to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. Prior to removing equipment from the water Wisconsin law requires that you:

- **INSPECT boats, trailers, boat lifts, piers, rafts and equipment.**
- **REMOVE all attached aquatic plants and animals.**
- **DRAIN all water from boats, vehicles, and equipment.**

To learn more about zebra mussels or Wisconsin aquatic invasive species regulations visit: [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) keyword “invasive species”.

Thank you so much for your contribution in protecting Oconto County’s waters through observation and the reporting of AIS.

# Our Future Flies on the Wings of Pollinators

By Patrick O. Googin, Lakes Specialist, UWEX Lakes Lake Tides Vol.38 No.3 Edited by Matt Marty

Pollinators are essential for our natural world. They are necessary for the reproduction of up to 90 percent of the planet’s flowering plants and two-thirds of the world’s farmed crops whose fruits and seeds sustain human life. In Wisconsin, bees, flies, wasps, hummingbirds, butterflies, moths, beetles and ants all play a role as critical pollinators.

As with all wildlife, pollinators have suffered as landscapes have changed. Pesticides, habitat loss, invasive plants and animals, diseases and parasites, and monoculture cropping methods have negatively impacted pollinator populations. We stand at a crossroads as huge numbers of honey bee colonies are lost every year. Our heavily developed agriculture and urban landscapes lack the necessary habitat to support the very pollinators we need to produce our crops.

Wildlife and agriculture researchers are learning more about managing habitat for wild bees living around our farms and countryside. The public is starting to recognize that the most nutritious and tasty parts of their diet are only possible because of insect pollination. Nature lovers and native plant enthusiasts are teaming up with pollinator protectors across the world through projects such as the Great Sunflower Project (<http://www.greatsunflower.org/>) and Monarch Watch (<http://www.monarchwatch.org/>). At the very least, we must reconsider our view of bees, ants, and other pollinators as “pests”. If possible we should set aside a portion of “our land” to provide an appropriate space for our natural allies.

## Create your own pollinator-friendly garden habitat

**Go crazy with color:** Different colored flowers attract different kinds of pollinators and having flowers blooming from spring into fall is ideal.



**Stick with native plants:** Focus on plants that are native to your region which are adapted to the pollinators of your region. Get help at: <http://wisplants.uwsp.edu/index.html>.

**Create a big target:** Arrange the flowers in clumps rather than single plants. It makes the flowers easier for the pollinators to find.

**Choose a spot to “rewild”:** Find a small area of your back yard to return to nature. Create a space using old logs, sticks, rocks and other yard debris where insects can use for nesting habitat. Let the grass and other plants grow and you will likely attract a variety of helpful critters.

**Transform a small space:** No yard? Add pollinator friendly plants to window boxes, containers, and balconies.

**Use pesticides responsibly.** Reduce the use of pesticides to those targeted to specific pests and spray when pollinators are not in your garden such as at night or when flowers are not in bloom.

## Broiled Marinated Goose Breasts

Serve these breasts with celery and lightly curried rice.

½ cup teriyaki or soy sauce  
½ cup tawny port  
(sherry will do too)  
½ cup of olive oil  
1 medium onion, finely sliced  
3 cloves garlic, sliced

15 juniper berries crushed in  
mortar and pestle  
2 tsp. powdered ginger  
1 tsp. grated orange rind  
salt and pepper  
1 wild goose

Mix all the ingredients except goose.

Split goose down back. Spread flat, and marinate 6-12 hours, turn as often as possible, or put ribs up and fill cavities.

Broil 8-10 minutes to side or according to preference for doneness, basting two or three times with marinade.

Posted on Tue, Aug 13, 2013 : 10:43 a.m. from the Ann Arbor News

# Great Lakes loons dying in record numbers from botulism outbreak spurred by ecological disturbance

By Rick Taylor

*(Editor's note: This story was originally published on Aug. 5, 2013, but received limited visibility on AnnArbor.com and MLive.com.)*

The **Common Loon**, arguably one of the most beautiful birds that grace our Great Lakes, is dying at an alarming rate. The fact that they're dying is troubling, but the cause is downright scary. Most readers are familiar with the loon, but here's a brief description for those who are unfamiliar with these gorgeous diving birds.

The loon is about the size of a small goose and has black and white plumage with piercing red eyes and can be found throughout the Great Lakes and other northern waters. Not only is their beauty unmatched, their eerie calls echo across waters they inhabit that make them one of the most unforgettable birds you'll ever see or hear.

Recently, the [Great Lakes Science Center](#) - a Division of the United States Geological Survey - has discovered that the Common Loon can dive down to 150 deep catching fish with their beaks.

The loons are diving down to 150 feet to eat fish to survive. Loons only reside in the Great Lakes for a brief period in the late summer and fall on their way from their northern breeding lakes to their wintering grounds in the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean, but they feed heavily on highly concentrated schools of fish that occur in the deeper waters of the Great Lakes.



Lake Sturgeon

photos courtesy of USGS

Many of the fish they're eating are Round Gobies, an invasive fish inadvertently brought from Europe in the ballast water of ships.

Believe it or not, the goby itself is not the problem as to why the diving birds are dying. The problem is Botulism E. “Botulism E.,” you say? How and why do the Great Lakes have such a terrifying disease?

Dr. Kurt Newman with the GLSC stated the following: “Botulism E. toxin is the most toxic substance known to man. One gram of purified toxin could kill hundreds of thousands of people.”

We have to go back in time to set the stage for this situation that affects us all. It started with the invasive Zebra Mussel and then the introduction of another invasive mussel called the [Quagga Mussel](#).

Both mussel species have the ability to filter Great Lakes water at an alarmingly fast rate, in turn, clearing up the water. Most people would think clear water in the Great Lakes is a good thing. Unfortunately, that wouldn't be the case.

The mussels are taking away food for tiny fish to eat; they're upsetting the food chain making its way up to the predators including the sturgeon, salmon and trout species. The salmon and trout numbers are dwindling but that's not the point of this story; at least for now anyway.

The greater problem is the water is getting clearer, allowing the sun to penetrate to the bottom of the Great Lakes; in particular Lake Michigan.

The sunlight reaching down more than 50 feet is allowing algae mats to grow along the bottom of the lakes, especially Lake Michigan where its most hit. Algae mats are growing very fast and they're many feet thick. The top layer of algae is getting sunlight, but the lower layers begin to decay, and large amounts of algae are sloughed off the algae beds, sometimes by storms. This results in tons of algae being washed off and decomposing on the lake bottom, and that's where the Botulism E. bacteria grows and produces toxin.

The Goby swims through these piles of decomposing algae and eat worms and bugs that have eaten up the toxin from the rotting algae, and diving birds like the Common loon and Cormorants dive down to eat the Goby and other deep swimming bait fish.

The Gobies carrying the Botulism E. toxin are now infecting the birds that eat them. So, now we know how the birds are getting the Botulism E., but how do they ultimately die?

Simply put, Botulism E. carries a neurotoxin that affects the central nervous system of the infected birds. This neurotoxin causes paralysis and the birds often drown because they can't perform the simple task of keeping their head above water.

Scientists with the GLSC are working with the [USGS National Wildlife Health Center](#) and the National Park Service, and they have estimated that we've lost more than 100,000 birds to date and the numbers are expected to get worse until scientists find a way to intervene.



A Common Loon, dead of botulism.

Birds have been dying all over the Great Lakes, but where and when they get the toxin, and where they wash up on the beach, is unpredictable.

It was estimated that around 3000 loons died from botulism in Lake Michigan in 2012. This could have a significant effect on loon populations if it occurs often, as there are only 20,000 adult loons in the Great Lake states.

These scientists have also found that botulism outbreaks are more likely to occur when lake levels are low and water temperatures are high. These are exactly the conditions predicted under climate change, so we can probably expect the problem to get worse.

This is a relatively new problem and it affects us all. We're dealing with a highly toxic substance that is increasing its territory on our Great Lakes. Furthermore, it's killing our diving birds, the majestic Lake Sturgeon and the deep diving duck populations.

If you thought the Great Lakes were doing okay, then it's time to reconsider. I'll stay on this story and give updates in a timely manner.

*Rick Taylor warmly welcomes your comments and story ideas. Feel free to email him at [rtaylor@reinhartrealtors.com](mailto:rtaylor@reinhartrealtors.com).*

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