RLA RENNIE LAKE ASSOCIATION
TRAVERSE CITY MICHIGAN

REFLECTIONS

NEWSLETTER OF THE RENNIE LAKE ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1 SPRING 2023

The Association is dedicated to the protection, preservation, and continued improvement of the beautiful and unique Rennie Lake and its watershed.

Important Notice: Please join us on June 24, 2023, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. for the RLA Annual Meeting. The meeting will take place at the East Bay Township offices located at 1965 N. Three Mile Road, Traverse City, in the south conference room. A quorum will be needed to vote on a proposed bylaw amendment so it is important that we have as many members present as possible. Please mark your calendars to attend! Coffee and light refreshments will be served! — We are also looking for new board members. If you are interested, please contact Chris Kristock through the RLA website. Thank you!

President's Comments by Ralph Bednarz
"Spring Forward"

Spring officially arrived on March 20 at 5:24 PM this year. For Rennie Lake, the spring season arrived on April 5 with "ice-out" on the lake. Spring is always an exciting time of the year for me when the ice goes out on the lake and the lake ecology springs into its annual cycle of hyper-activity. The migrating birds and waterfowl return to the lake and its shorelines; the chorus frogs, including spring peepers, start "peeping"; the bass beds appear; the dragonflies emerge and we all prepare for why we are here – special time on the lake.

I believe the Rennie Lake Association (RLA) is making a difference to help protect Rennie Lake and our "special time on the lake." Thank you to the RLA Board of Directors and support team and to the members for all you do for the RLA and the Rennie Lake and Forest Lakes community.

Enjoy all that Rennie Lake and its shoreline have to offer this spring and best wishes for a fun and safe 2023 lakes season. Enjoy reading the 2023 spring issue of ***Reflections***.

Appreciating Rennie Lake

By Ralph Bednarz

Spring has arrived. Soon we will be putting in our docks and boats and getting out to enjoy the lake. We ski, tube, sail, paddle, swim, fish and sometimes just relax while on the lake. But do we really appreciate all that Rennie Lakes has to offer? Let's all appreciate that lakes are natural ecosystems that support an array of aquatic and terrestrial organisms. Lakes are the home to the plants and animals that reside permanently or seasonally in, on or around the lake which we are fortunate to coexist. Let's all enjoy the ecology that Rennie Lake offers and do our part to protect.

North American Lake Management Society

The North American Lakes Management Society has sponsored Lakes Appreciation Month in July for the past 25 years. This annual month-long celebration of the Nation's lakes includes kid friendly activities such as a student poster contest and Lake Bingo; a Secchi Dip-In water quality monitoring activity, a social media platform to share your stories, photos, videos, etc.; media coverage of local Lakes Appreciation events such as Libraries Love Lakes; and Governors proclamations to highlight and appreciate the economic and ecological value of inland lakes. Visit the NALMS Lakes Appreciation Month webpage (https://www.nalms.org/lakes-appreciation-month/) for additional information and how you, your children or grandchildren can participate.

RLA FINANCIAL UPDATE
By Bryan Gilleland, Treasurer

The following is an update on the financial status of your Association, based on the financial statements as of February 28, 2023, representing six (6) months of operations in our fiscal year ending July 31, 2023. I am pleased to report that your Association continues to be financially sound, and your Board of DIrectors fiscally responsible.

Year-to-date (YTD) income is $1,830, compared to the annual budget of $1,785 . Dues received YTD total $1,290, or 70% of total income, compared to a budget of $1,785. Dues are less than budget due to lower than expected membership levels.

Donations comprised the remaining $540, or 30% of year-to-date income, compared to a budget of $0. All donations received during the first two years of RLA's operations have been placed in a savings account to serve as an emergency fund, and/or for special projects. As our Association's income is primarily derived from member dues and contributions occurring at the beginning of the fiscal year, we do not anticipate significant additional income during the remainder of the fiscal year.

YTD expenses total $790, compared to the annual budget of $1,725 . RLA website related costs represent $518, or 66% of the total YTD expenses, compared to a budget of $750. Expenses related to our water quality program comprise the next largest category of YTD expenses, representing $212, or 27% of total expenses, compared to a budget of $225. As the website and water quality expenses represent annual payments, we do not expect significant additional expenses in these categories for the remainder of the fiscal year.

The total YTD income of $1,830 and YTD expenses of $790 result in a YTD net income (surplus) of $1,040, as of 2/28/2023. An additional financial update will be provided at our Annual Meeting in June, and, as per our by-laws, a fiscal year-end financial report will be provided in the Annual Report within 60 days following the July 31, 2023 end of the fiscal year.

INCOME STATEMENT as of 2.28.23

	Budget	Actual	Difference
INCOME:			
Dues	$1,785.00	$1,290.00	$(495.00)
Contributions	-	$ 540.00	$ 540.00
Other	-	$ 0.39	$ 0.39
Total Income	**$1,785.00**	**$1,830.39**	**$ 45.39**
EXPENSES:			
Office	$ 225.00	$ 60.00	$(165.00)
Website	$ 750.00	$ 518.40	$(231.60)
Food/Bev	$ 75.00	$ -	$ (75.00)
Fees	$ 225.00	$ 212.00	$ (13.00)
Equip	$ 350.00	$ -	$(350.00)
Total Expenses	**$1,625.00**	**$ 790.40**	**$(834.60)**
NET INCOME (LOSS)	**$ 160.00**	**$1,039.99**	**$ 879.99**

Riparian Zoning Workshop by Rick DaBell

On February 21, 2023 East Bay Township held an educational workshop devoted to the topic of Riparian Zoning to assist the township in updating the Riparian Zone Ordinance currently underway. The meeting included educational information provided by watershed experts, small group discussion, and a presentation by the small groups at the conclusion summarizing their group's conclusions under the headings: 1) What's working well regarding riparian issues in the township; 2) What are some opportunities for improvement; and 3) What solutions would the group offer to the township. At the end, attendees were asked to prioritize the issues. Below were the top issues, according to the attendees:

— The actual Forest Lakes Overlay is robust. However, better enforcement is needed. Work to identify "incentives" (eg tax breaks) to comply with the ordinances rather than punishment. Punishment currently is too weak to be a disincentive.

— The township needs a septic system ordinance. This will require system inspections and remediation, which could be a substantial financial burden especially to those with older cottages. This is an example of where tax breaks could be used to encourage compliance.

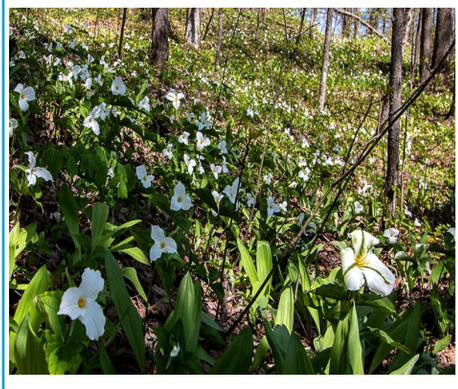
— More education of riparians is necessary to foster a culture of protection and preservation. One example cited was that many owners rent out their residences which often results in the renters having little incentive to “protect and preserve”. Education of renters could become a responsibility of the owners of short-term rentals by including it in STR regulations.

— A Forest Lakes Water Protection Plan that will provide the “blueprint” and tools to protect the lakes in the Forest Lakes area. The Boardman River Watershed Prosperity Plan, approved in 2018, does not recognize all 15 lakes in the Forest Lakes area and is not adequate to protect these lakes. The scope of the Plan is scaled to focus on the Boardman River and its tributaries, not the groundwater seepage lakes in the Forest Lakes area.

Cooperation with lake associations was cited as something that was working well. We at the Rennie Lake Association would definitely encourage the township to have more involvement with the associations. We certainly appreciate the township giving the opportunity at this meeting for riparians to become better educated and to provide input to the township zoning update. Let’s stay involved!

Spring Sightings! By Sandy Witvoet

April and May are great months for new arrivals. Birds and blossoms take the big stage! We look forward to Robins singing, male Goldfinches changing into their striking yellow/black/white plumage, nest-building Red-winged blackbirds showing their distinctive shoulder patches, Grosbeaks and Baltimore Orioles with musical calls. Here are a few birds that may visit briefly, or sometimes hang around to nest. Warblers… Little, cute and quick! Look for them at about 20’ off the ground, flitting around and snagging a tasty (meaty) snack. Yellow-Rumped warblers (AKA, “Butter-butts”) are most common, but there are many variations in colors and markings. Native Sparrows… Many types. Around Rennie, most are rather secretive, but the Song Sparrow belts out one heck of a memorable song. A fave yardbird in Spring/Summer is the Baltimore Oriole. Oranges and grape jelly are feeder faves. They also forage for caterpillars. A rare visitor to our area is the Orchard Oriole, which kinda looks like a combo Robin/Oriole, briefly visited our yard. Flowers…. Trillions of Trillium. You may need to take a little road trip to see the majesty of a vast forest floor covered in Trillium. They thrive in an understory of Ash, Aspen, Maple, some Oaks and Hemlock. Southern Leelanau County, mid-May. You may also find Dutchmen’s Breeches, Ramps, wild Columbine and Trout Lilies. Enjoy!



Lake Trophic State

By Ralph Bednarz

Lakes are commonly classified into three broad categories based on their productivity or ability to support plant and animal life. The three basic lake classifications are oligotrophic, mesotrophic, and eutrophic.

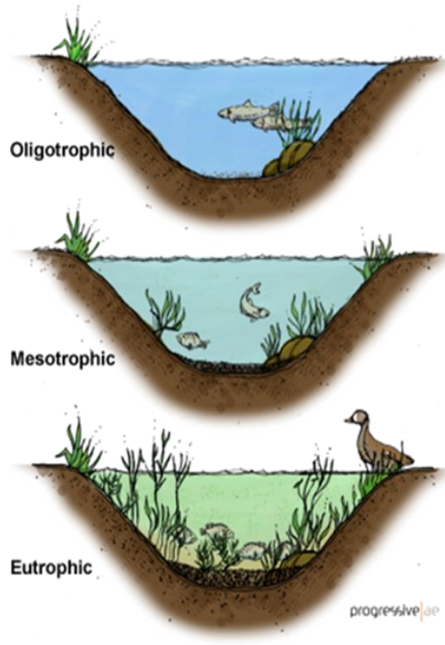
Oligotrophic lakes are generally deep and clear with little aquatic plant growth. These lakes maintain sufficient dissolved oxygen in the cool, deep bottom waters during late summer to support cold water fish such as trout and whitefish.

Mesotrophic lakes are lakes that fall between the two extremes of oligotrophic and eutrophic. These lakes have moderate water clarity and support a balanced aquatic plant community and a warm water fishery.

Eutrophic lakes have poor clarity, and support abundant aquatic plant growth. In deep eutrophic lakes, the cool bottom waters usually contain little or no dissolved oxygen. Therefore, these lakes can only support warm water fish such as bass and pike.

A forth class of lakes, **Hypereutrophic lakes,** are highly productive eutrophic lakes which have very limited water clarity due to over abundant, typically nuisance, algae and aquatic plant growth. These lakes typically have stunted fish populations and undesirable fish such as carp. They can be stressed by low dissolved oxygen levels in the entire lake.

Rennie Lake is classified as oligo/mesotrophic based on the water quality data collected over the past few years.



Source: https://www.michiganlakeinfo.com

Trophic State Indicators

Key parameters used to evaluate a lake's productivity or trophic state include Secchi transparency total phosphorus and chlorophyll-a.

Future issues of *Reflections* will report on each of these indicators.

Rennie Lake is annually enrolled in the MICorps Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program (CLMP). The 2022 CLMP Rennie Lake data report, and previous years reports, can be found on the RLA website or the MiCorps/CLMP website at: https://micorps.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/CLMP-Rennie-Grand-Traverse-280430.pdf.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

As of March 16, 2023, the Rennie Lake Association currently has 35 members and one "friend" (non-riparian owners who are concerned about lake issues. They are non-voting and pay lower dues.)

Here are some good reasons for being a part of the RLA:

- You care about Rennie Lake and want to preserve and protect it for future generations.
- The RLA stays informed and involved with issues that may effect the quality of our lake and interacts with township officials (and state representatives when necessary) to expresses questions or concerns in order to be part of the process.
- The RLA helps keep track of legislative bills that are important to our lake that may have been introduced in the Michigan House or Senate.
- The RLA tracks efforts and initiatives from other agencies and organizations to stay informed about issues that may impact the lake, and works cooperatively with those groups when appropriate.
- The activities of the RLA are conducted entirely by passionate volunteers who donate their own time and personal resources to helping preserve and protect our extraordinary freshwater lake.
- A majority of the RLA's activities are dedicated to monitoring the water quality and aquatic invasive species in order to protect the lake.

Thank you for being a member, and please encourage your friends and neighbors to also join the RLA.

Buoy Bob talks boating safety and some general good advice from a "Salty Dog"

Well, it's about time we fill up our gas tanks and fire up the motor for another summer of boating fun on Rennie Lake. Before you do, why not take a minute to review some very basic items to make sure that you enjoy the water without any accidents or unfortunate events. A small amount of preparation can prevent an issue from becoming a catastrophe.

Here are some websites I have seen with information that can help assure that your boating summer is a safe one. They deal with Life Jackets, Fire Extinguishers and other good items to make sure you have on board before each push off.

www.michigan.gov/dnr/things-to-do/boating/rules-and-regs/life-jacket-rules

This informative webpage gives details about the proper size, quality and number of life preservers to have on your boat BEFORE you push off from your dock. It is also important to review the location of the Life Jackets in your boat – that is, which seat or storage compartment are they in?

> Do your passenger's know where they are in an emergency?
> Do they really know how they work and how to you put them on?

The 10 minutes of "stink eye" your family or friends will give you for giving the Life Jacket Safety Speech, will be worth it IF THE UNFORTUNATE THING HAPPENS and everyone is scrambling for a life jacket. I recently found out that a throwable personal floatation device is a required piece of safety equipment for the boats on our lake.

https://boatus.org/fire-extinguishers

Not many of us think about it, but there are guidelines for the quantity and type of fire extinguishers to have on the size and style of boats I see on Rennie Lake. I know this is something easily forgotten or not thoroughly verified at the start of each boating season, but the result of NOT HAVING a Fire Extinguisher on board can be indescribably bad.

It's not just the motor and associated gas tank that presents a fire risk, but also smoking in the presence of towels or tee-shirts or other temporarily not in use clothing, portable gas barbeques and matches or butane lighters used for random purposes (fireworks?) are among the other potential fire hazards.
So, take a minute to check your boat's firefighting equipment against the recommendations in this web page link. It's OK to have MORE than recommended but the minimum is provided based on experience and knowledge of somebody smarter than me for sure.

Finally, familiarize all your "captains" with the location and operation of these fire extinguishing devices.

Boat Safety Checklist & Safety Equipment | Discover Boating

Things you "never thought of, but wish you had when you need them" is another area of potential "good preparation" to make sure every trip out is enjoyable and returns to its starting point. Most boats have plenty of under-seat storage so a small plastic tote bin can be used to carry many of the items recommended in this website and stored on board, all the time! Some items you may want to consider include:

1. Medical kit for cuts, scrapes, seasickness or small emergencies
2. Sound making device or a visual distress signal
3. A roll of electrical tape or duct tape, scissors and string.
4. Anchor with line to hold your boat in place while you wait for help to arrive
5. A small bucket or two can come in handy for any seasick guests or other tasks.
6. Oars or paddles if the engine quits
7. Cellphone to call for help (and the contact information for neighbors or acquaintances on Rennie Lake you can call if there is no boater nearby)
8. Knife to cut a line snagged around a fouled propeller. Take care to disable the engine before attempting any work on the prop (pull the key or the operator safety key out and store it out of sight)
9. Snorkel mask to inspect what's going on under the boat

10. Heavy duty flashlight (don't forget the batteries) or you can buy a crank generator model and keep it on safely stored on board
11. Skier or diver down flag (if your guests are inclined to participate while anchored in a position)
12. If going out at dusk or after dark you must have operational running and navigation lights, be extra attentive while moving at night as other's may not have read this newsletter article to the end!

Have the best and safest boating summer ever,

Buoy Bob

Additional links available for information:

2023 Spring Boating Safety class schedule – from US Coast Guard Auxiliary-Traverse City http://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=091-26-10

Also a link to East Bay Charter Township's inland lakes webpage - http://www.eastbaytwp.org/residents/inland_lakes_boating_information.php

UPCOMING EVENT OF INTEREST

MARK YOUR CALENDAR for *Saturday, June 10th 1 to 2:30* ***pm***

Be an informed and active Spider Lake (substitute - Arbutus Lake, Rennie Lake) steward who helps preserve our recreational and environmental gem. Creating/maintaining a shoreland (shoreline and uplands) with an abundance of native plants does that, including protecting water quality. Attend this "fifth annual "Protecting Our Lakes & Shorelands" presentation in person and meet fellow local riparians or attend virtually.

Find more information and register for this free presentation at: https://natureiscalling.org/events/protecting-our-lakes-amp-shorelands-shoreland-ecology-amp-sustainable-management-1?fbclid=IwAR3Tj-0T2VOxeaFsSOLu9K4F3KLzShaZTRMtvsckB9KNK_MxIzGoR5vNakY

That link shows this: Protecting Our Lakes & Shorelands: Shoreland Ecology & Sustainable Management

Description: Trees are a critical component of any healthy waterfront as they provide many functions, including bank stabilization, reduced erosion, carbon sequestration, and soil structure, in addition to providing food sources for many land based and aquatic organisms. District Forester Ellie Johnson will discuss the importance of trees to the shoreland ecosystem and how to sustainably maintain this human/surface water interface.

When: Saturday, June 10th, 1:00 - 2:30pm

Where: Boardman River Nature Center, 1450 Cass Rd., Traverse City, MI 49685. *Virtual join-in option available!*

Registration: Required. Please **click here** to register.

Welcoming our Loons

By Ralph Bednarz

Along with the advent of Spring and "ice-out" in the lake is the return of migrating waterfowl, including the loons. Rennie Lake is fortunate to annually host a pair of loons and provide a home for them and their chicks during the summer months until they fly off in the Fall. Loons are truly a symbol of high quality lakes which we all can appreciate. We enjoy observing the loon pair establish their nest, successfully hatch their chicks and care for the young loons throughout the summer months. It is to our benefit that the loons choose Rennie Lake as their home and a place to raise their young every year.

The RLA has taken on an initiative to legally place loon nesting area buoys around the nest location as a cautionary marker. The RLA has been given permission by the Federal Department of Interior, Land Management Bureau to use the bottom land around the island in the north lobe of Rennie Lake, "Little Rennie", to anchor buoys. The RLA has obtained a permit from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for the legal placement of the loon nesting area buoys through July 6, 2023.

If you are interested in helping with the placement and recovery of the buoys this season please contact Ralph Bednarz.

The ‘Great Northern Diver’ - Common Loon Sightings Becoming Increasingly Rare in the Great Lakes Region

by Scott Brown, MWA e-Newsletter Editor

Prompting the return of a flood of fond memories of northern pike and walleye fishing with my son and grandson while on fly-in fishing trips to northern Ontario’s Shabuskwia Lake, the other worldly sound of a loon’s call has always held special meaning for this ageing baby boomer. Although I have not visited this gorgeous wilderness lake in many years, my son and wildlife biologist grandson tell me that loon sightings even in the far north have become increasingly rare.

Although there are five species of loon in North America – all member of the Family Gaviidae, including Red-throated Loon, Pacific Loon, Yellow-billed Loon, and Arctic Loon, the most abundant is the Common Loon (scientific name: *Gavia immer*). The International Union for the Conservation of Nature reports that the majority of the approximately 640,000 common loons that remain on earth are found in Canada.

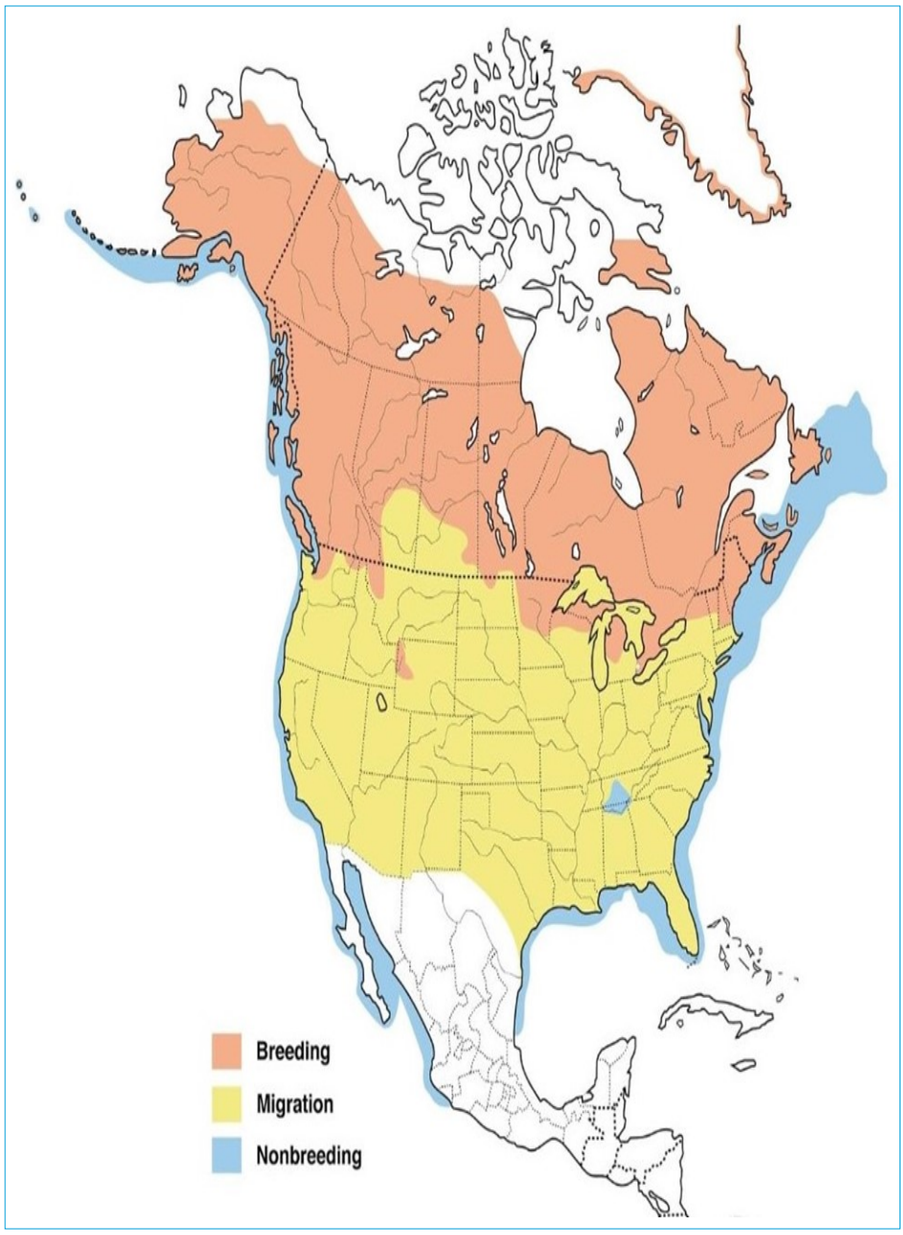
Although they are awkward on land due to the fact their legs are placed far back on their bodies, common loons have evolved as water birds that venture onto shore only to mate and incubate eggs, and learn how to dive long before they learn how to fly. Though the name loon derives from their goofy, awkward walk, they are often referred to as ‘great northern divers’. Capable of staying submerged for up to five minutes as they forage for fish and aquatic insects, loons are particularly well adept at hunting underwater due to their solid bones that make them less buoyant, their capacity to rapidly expel air from their lungs, and their ability to flatten their feathers in order to expel air from their plumage. The capacity to stay submerged for long periods is also enabled by their extraordinary physiological capacity to slow their heart rate while diving in order to conserve oxygen. The red eyes of loons have also evolved to allow them to detect fish and other prey in the low light conditions that are often present in water depths of up to fifteen feet.

Empowered by their capacity to rapidly descend and to swim at an extraordinary fast pace while underwater, loons are considered highly effective hunters that are capable of consuming a large quantity of small fish in relatively short order. Biologists familiar with the unique bird species have estimated that a single set of loon parents and their two chicks are capable of eating a half ton of fish in a single fifteen-week season. Due to their reliance upon diving to depths of up to fifteen feet to forage for food, loons prefer healthy inland lakes hosting relatively clear water and healthy fisheries. Loons are known to shy away from inland lakes suffering from poor water clarity. Frequent loon sightings in a particular region are considered a reliable indicator of the presence of large, healthy inland lakes hosting abundant fish populations, relatively clear waters, and the existence of undisturbed natural shorelines.

Graced with relatively small wings in comparison to their size and weight, loons are attracted to large lakes that provide them with an opportunity to takeoff into the wind and skitter across the water’s surface for a long distance before creating enough aerodynamic lift to eventually become airborne. Once airborne, however, common loons are capable of flying at speeds of up to 70 miles per hour. It is interesting to note that their need for long, water-based take off ‘runways’ has caused migrating common loons to become stranded as they sometimes mistake wet highways and parking lots as rivers and lakes.

Due to their relatively large bodies, small wings, and the fact that their fast flight requires a lot of energy that must be replenished along the way, common loons are considered medium-distance migrants. (Please refer to the map that appears below.) The common loons of the northern United States and Canada migrate from lakes to the coastal oceanic waters of the Pacific or Atlantic. The loons of western Canada and Alaska migrate to the Pacific Coast ranging from Alaska’s Aleutian Islands to Mexico’s Baja Peninsula. Great Lakes region common loons migrate to the Gulf of Mexico or Florida coasts. Common loons that inhabit the lakes of eastern Canada migrate to the North Atlantic Coast.

Sharp declines in the abundance of all five loon species in North America have thus far been primarily attributed to Intensive lakefront development, facilitated loss of optimal loon habitat, and a commensurate loss of preferred nesting and rearing habitat. Ecologists familiar with the decline of loon populations in North America also indicate that multiple stressors including the not yet well understood influences of climate change, diminished fish populations, acidification of inland lakes, and the loss of eggs and chicks to an increasing number of scavenging predators have also contributed to the decline of loons throughout the northern United States and Canada. It is important to point out that common loon populations in the Laurentian Great Lakes region have also experienced decline due to increasingly frequent outbreaks of Type-E botulism that has caused massive annual die-offs of common loons, and other fish-eating birds in the past twenty five years.



YOU'RE INVITED!!

Please join us for an afternoon of food, fun and visiting with your neighbors!

When: Saturday, May 27, 3-5 pm
Where: Woods and Waters beach (southeast area of Big Rennie Lake)
Who: Come one, come all!!
What: The RLA will provide hot dogs, chips, cookies and sodas. (Please bring your own chair.)

Access the event by boating up to the beach. However, if you prefer to drive, contact Mollie at 310-922-3530 for parking instructions.

If you have any questions, please email us through the RLA website (Rennie Lake Association.org)

Looking forward to seeing you all there!

Don’t forget to stay up-to-date on the latest happenings at the RLA website: https://rennielakeassociation.com

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