



# RALALA Lake Association

Spring 2019

## 2018 Events

July 6th 1PM  
Boat Parade

July 27th 9AM  
Annual Meeting  
CLT Town Hall

August 31st 5PM  
Raffle Party at  
Village Inn with  
Drawing at 6PM

September 14th  
Volunteer Apprecia-  
tion Party

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## Roosevelt and Lawrence Area Lakes Association

### President's Letter—by Linda Van Straaten

Happy Spring! I know after the recent snowstorms that it's hard to believe it's May! Your Ralala board has been busy all winter preparing for this year's activities and safety of our lakes. We are looking forward to a fun summer.

Ralala has contracted with PLM to again survey all 4 of our member lakes for milfoil contamination. Your membership dues and contributions over the years have allowed us to build up a reserve to

be able to do these surveys. We are also seeking help with funding our AIS surveying and treatment programs from both Emily Waters and the Crooked Lake Township board's AIS committee.

Speaking of funding, I want to give special thanks to 3M which gave us a grant of \$1500 again this year under a program that matches donations of time by 3M retirees with cash grants. In our case donations of more than 25 hours each by Roger Brekken, Mary Kowalski, and Darril Wegscheid provided our

*Cont'd on p. 9*

### 2018 Minnesota Loon Watcher Survey—by Sheila Langer

Loons are a big part of our lake country. Minnesota has the largest loon population in the United States. Because it would be difficult to collect loon data from all 12,000 of MN lakes each year, volunteer loon watchers help the DNR to gather information that serves as an early warning system for detecting changes in the numbers of birds and their health. If you live on a lake or regularly visit a lake and you have an interest in loons you can volunteer to participate.

My husband Gary and I have had a cabin on Lake Roosevelt for fourteen years. I have been collecting data for the MN DNR for 4 years. Loons return from the Gulf of Mexico in April and May. This year we heard the first loons on Lake Roose-



Juvenile loon on Lake Roosevelt—by Sheila Langer

velt on April 29, last year it was April 7. We use our boat and it takes us about two hours to cover all of Lake Roosevelt. Last year I collected sixteen days of data throughout the summer. As I monitor the loons, I record the number of loons I see, the weather, shoreline conditions and measure nesting success. Throughout the summer I keep an observation diary and my information is submitted to the DNR at the end of

*Cont'd on p. 2*

## Loon Watcher Survey cont'd from p. 1



summer along with a map showing nesting details. I also observed five large gatherings of loons called aggregations throughout the summer and the locations are also noted on my map.

Loon nests are made of matted grasses, rushes and twigs, built near the water level. Usually two eggs are laid and hatch after about 30 days of incubation. Loons prefer to nest on small islands or sheltered coves along the shore or might even be found on top of a muskrat mound.

Lake Roosevelt has three islands that are protected and have been designated as loon nesting areas and are clearly marked. It is the young loons that will keep the population going after the adults die. Loons can live 25 years.

Unfortunately, rarely do all young survive. Our heavy rainfall in June 2018 washed away at least one nest with eggs ready to hatch. Throughout the summer a total of twelve adult loons remained on the lake but at times there were as many as twenty-eight. We watched three chicks mature and get ready to migrate south.

Some of the dangers loons face are climate change, vulnerability, shoreline development, contaminants such as lead from fishing sinkers, injuries, death from entanglement in fishing gear, human disturbances, boats, pontoons, jet skis, kayaks and acidification of our lakes. Adult loons are rarely eaten by predators, but young can fall prey to eagles, skunks, raccoons, foxes, snapping turtles, northern pike and muskies.

Loons prefer cooler, deeper less populated lakes. I observed more loons consistently on the south side of Lake Roosevelt, which is wider, and less populated than the north side of the lake.

Pairs set up territories that can result in heated territory disputes. Male and female loons are indistinguishable by feather pattern and color. Males tend to be slightly larger. Both males and females tend to the nest and young. Adults have that iconic black and white pattern, but young will have drab gray downy feathers and juvenile loons are brown and gray from 2-4 weeks of age then turn gray and white after about 4 weeks of age.

The hope is that with over 40 years of data, the DNR will have the ability to detect significant changes in the adult population and reproductive success and to anticipate any problems that could jeopardize the future of our state bird.

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## Muskies and Aquatic Invasive Species—by Roger Brekken

There are 11,842 lakes in MN greater than 10 acres. And while the situation is always changing, as of last fall the DNR stated that less than 7% of these lakes are infested with aquatic invasive species. The DNR "manages" 99 muskie waters.

By cross referencing the DNR AIS infested lake list with the DNR muskie water list, one can determine the muskie waters infestation level. For the 11 hybrid

musky lakes in the metro area, 9 have aquatic invasive species for an infestation level of 82 %. For the 46 stocked pure strain muskie lakes, 30 are infested. Lake Roosevelt is one of them! This is a level of 65%. Of the 34 natural muskie lakes, 9 are contaminated for an infestation level of 26%. The predominate infestations are Eurasian milfoil and/or zebra mussels.

If one includes all muskie lakes,

the infestation is 48 out of 91 for an overall infestation level of 53%, well above the overall 7% stated by the DNR for all lakes in the state. What does this say? Of course one cannot conclude that those who fish for muskies are the only cause. But there does seem to be a very strong correlation, one that I think is reasonably predictable, given that these lakes will have a

*Cont'd on p. . 6*

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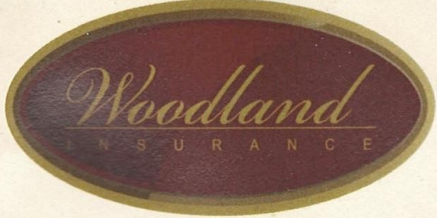
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**DNR Liaison Report—by Roger Brekken**

On November 16, 2018 a RALALA group met with Mike Knapp, Assistant Area Fisheries Supervisor at the Brainerd DNR office. Here is a summary of what we learned from Mike:

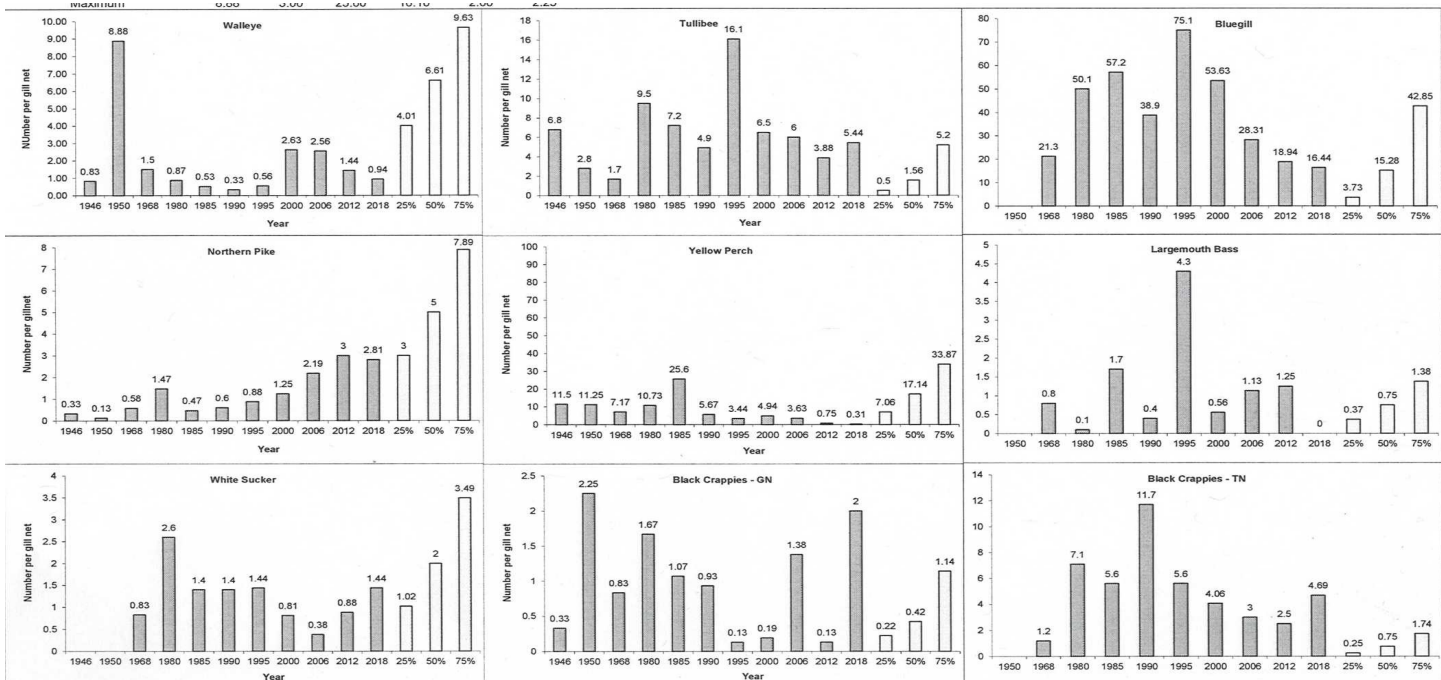
**ROOSEVELT SURVEY** The DNR conducted a fish survey in 2018 (last prior survey was in 2012). Gill nets, trap nets and electro fishing techniques were used. As of this writing, the final report has not yet been approved.

When finalized, it will be published on the DNR website in the "Lake Finder". The results below are from preliminary findings. Comments are relative to other similar lakes.

**Forage fish:** The tullibee (cisco) population has improved since 2012 and is now in the 75th percentile (compared to other similar lakes) The average length was 9.6 inches. Yellow perch, however, were at their lowest num-

bers since 1943. This decline is occurring statewide.

**Walleye:** Although stocked every odd year, the population of walleye has decreased to its lowest level since 2000 and is far below the 25 percentile. Mike said, however, the DNR likely will maintain its current stocking plan for now. The average walleye length was 18.1 inches and 93% were 12 inches or more (average weight = 2.6 lb).



**DNR Liason Report-cont'd from p.4**

**Bass:** Largemouth are at their highest population level since 1995, near the 75 percentile, with an average length of 12.6 inches. Smallmouth were caught at one tenth the largemouth rate and had an average length of 15.9 inches.

**Northern Pike:** The pike population was low, near the 25 percentile. However the average length was good at 25.8 inches with 67% being 24 inches or larger. Roosevelt has a new possession limit of 10 fish with not more than two over 26 inches. All fish in the range of 22-26 inches must be released.

**Panfish:** Black crappies were abundant, above the 75 percentile. Fifty two percent of the crappies were 8 inches or larger with a range of 3.9 to 11.3 inches. Blue gills were near the fifty percentile but small in size with an average length of 5.6 inches. Only 10 % were 7 inches or longer.

**Muskie:** A special survey was conducted of muskies in 2018. Stocking began in 2011 and continues in even numbered years. The original stocked muskies are now 31 to 44 inches long.

**STOCKING.** Walleyes will be stocked in Roosevelt every other year with 390 lbs of 4 to 8 inch fingerlings. Fingerlings have a better survival rate than fry.

Muskies are stocked in even years (390 fish in the 10-12 inch size range). All are tagged. It will be ten years before we will know if there is any natural reproduction (evidenced by muskies with no tags). There is no evidence at this time that the muskies have a negative effect on other game species in the fishery, but the DNR will continue to monitor this situation.

**AIS REMEDIATION.** The University of Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) is in the lead position on fighting AIS. Here is a synopsis of recent developments

**Eurasian Water Milfoil:** There is some evidence that certain bee-

*Cont'd on p.7*

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**Muskies and AIS cont'd from p. 3**

higher number of itinerant boats moving from lake to lake.

The DNR made a unilateral decision to stock muskies in Lake Roosevelt. There was no public input, no public hearings, etc. However, we the local people and our lake associations are left

"holding the bag" for AIS remediation costs. The DNR does not assist in this effort. Is the cost of AIS remediation versus the additional business for the local economy from muskie fishing a fair trade? Do Muskies Inc, Minnesota Muskies and other muskie organizations contribute significantly to the solu-

tion and remediation? I think not. What can we do besides "grin and bear it"? Maybe RALALA should contact the muskie organizations and "hit them up" for financial assistance with our remediation costs. Maybe one of you has a better idea.


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**DNR Liason Report-cont'd from p. 5**

tles can eat milfoil. However sunfish eat these beetles. Triclopyr (used by RALALA) is still the most effective treatment. Studies of low-dose whole lake treatments are currently being evaluated. Mike said that it is important to keep a robust native plant community leaving no room for milfoil.

**Zebra Mussels:** MAISRC is currently studying low dose copper treatments. There will be a bay-wide experimental treatment of veligers in Lake Minnetonka during the summer of 2019.

**Starry Stonewort:** Hand pulling of a small population in a Stearns County lake has proven effective at reducing the number of plants.

**Leavitt Lake Walleye.** Several years ago, RALALA volunteers re-

moved beaver dams in the stream between Lawrence and Leavitt, and the DNR and Cass County built a new spillway under County Road #48. The purpose was to facilitate migration to and spawning of walleyes in Leavitt. This had not happened, because the water velocity was too fast for walleyes. We asked if the DNR has determined whether these steps worked. Mike replied that fish can now make the journey, provided the water levels are not too high and beaver dams are not rebuilt.

When asked if northerns or muskies could move into Leavitt from Lawrence, Mike indicated that neither is likely, but northerns would have more chance. When asked if Leavitt could be

stocked, Mike indicated that the DNR would not do so, but RALALA could try (with a permit). He suggested one pound of walleye fingerlings/littoral acre every other year at a cost of about \$20/lb.

**Smokey Hollow Walleye.** There is a 14 foot drop from Smokey Hollow to Roosevelt. They are connected by a small stream just south of the public landing. We asked whether a northern or muskie could migrate into Smokey. Mike said it is highly unlikely to happen. With regard to stocking Smokey Hollow with walleye, Mike said that the DNR would not do it, but the lake association could try it. However it would likely not work, because the DNR did try stocking Smokey in the 1960's without success.

**RALALA Improves “Choice Raffle” for 2019—by Darril Wegscheid**

RALALA is making major improvements in the raffle for 2019. We are increasing the number of winners to five, adding more money to the prize pool, and adding a \$1375 gift certificate to Reed’s Sporting Goods, in Walker and Onamia, enabling the first winner drawn to choose among a broader array of outdoor equipment than just the rifle that was the first prize in the past. Because of the much appreciated generosity of Browning Firearms, North Country Distributors and Mr. Mike Schuett, we have been able to feature an outstanding firearm prize option each year. While the winner may still choose a Browning X-Bolt at Reeds, they can alternatively choose to use the certificate to acquire a trolling motor, paddle board, kayak, canoe, fishing gear, a log-splitter or any of a variety of other outdoor items.

The five prizes are: (1) the \$1,375 gift certificate at Reeds, (2) \$1,000 cash, (3) a \$250 local gift certificate, (4) a \$200 local gift certificate, and (5) a \$150 gift certificate. The \$5 raffle tickets are

expected to be available about mid-June. The raffle is set for the Village Inn at 6:00PM on Saturday of Labor Day weekend, August 31st. For more information, check the RALALA website at: ralalalakes.org.

RALALA relies heavily on the raffle to provide funding for its efforts to protect and preserve the lakes. Every dollar raised is carefully accounted for and used to help us prevent new Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) from gaining access to the lakes, and for managing the current small patches of Eurasian Water Milfoil in Roosevelt Lake.

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**President's Letter cont'd from p. 1**

match. Thanks everyone! If any of the rest of you worked for a company with similar programs please let us know.

Ralala has always participated in membership of many local and state environmental organizations. Many of you may be personal members of the MN Lakes and Rivers Advocates, headed by Jeff Forester. Please follow MN legislative ac-

tions that Jeff has highlighted in his recent emails....follow along on [www.mnlakesandrivers.org](http://www.mnlakesandrivers.org) Important legislation is before our state government....be aware and alert!!

We have new options that we are working on for more participation among other lake associations, new educational tools for AIS prevention, a new format for our fundraising raffle....plan ahead to

join in and help!


Our organization relies on your involvement...please step forward to help on committees or volunteer to be on the board. We are always seeking new input from our members...share your gifts with all of the lake region as you help your lake association. Get to know your lake neighbors through participation!

**Larson Haynes**  
Owner

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