



TODDY POND ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Fall 2017

Issue 39

OUR MISSION

We believe that we have a responsibility to protect Toddy Pond and its watershed so that we and future generations may enjoy its beauty and the recreational opportunities it provides. Our objective is to protect the air, water, soil, plant and animal life of the watershed and to preserve its economic, ecological and aesthetic value by encouraging responsible land and water use.

THE SUMMER OF '17 ON TODDY POND began with disasters. On the day before the annual TPA Hail to Summer barbecue, eagles attacked and killed a nesting loon, leaving two unhatched eggs on the nest. Just over a week later an alert and expert Courtesy Boat Inspector discovered fragments of invasive Eurasian water-milfoil on a boat trailer parked at the public landing. Unfortunately, the trailer had already entered Toddy Pond to launch before there was an inspector on duty.

The following articles chronicle these disasters and their aftermaths. The good news is that neither story yet has a conclusion, and we have reason to hope that the Summer of '17 may be remembered for disasters redeemed.

Rescue at Indian Island

Francis Owen

Sometime between 9:00 and 9:30 on Saturday, June 24th, I returned to our Big Pine Island camp on Toddy Pond after bringing my wife, Cara, to the Trenton Airport. It was a foggy morning and I debated whether to stay at camp or head off to work when I heard some loon noises out in the pond. I knew the loons nesting on Indian Island (about two hundred yards off of Big Pine Island) were close to hatching their young, so I ventured to the shore to see what the noises were about. To my dismay, I saw two eagles on the island, one approaching the nest from the water and another at the north end appearing to be feeding on something.

I quickly scrambled into a rowboat and made my way out to the island. As I approached, it was obvious that the dry eagle on the island was feeding on a loon carcass, and the wet one was clambering onto the nesting beach and headed toward the eggs. The dry eagle flew off as I tied up the rowboat around the corner on the north end, away from the nest. I ran over and chased the wet eagle to the island's high spot where it attempted to fly, but, being so wet, could only crash into the water. The wet eagle then swam back to a large rock on the island's south shore, spread its wings, and began to dry off while I cursed it nonstop for several minutes.

The remaining loon parent stayed in the water off the beach, so I stood at the island's high spot, blocking the wet eagle from returning to the nest and hoping the other loon would

June 23 — Maine Lakes Conference

Time and place to be announced. For information, go to www.mainelakessociety.org

June 24 — TPA Hail to Summer BBQ

Balsam Cove Campground pavilion, 4:00–7:00 (food served around 5:00)

July 21 — Toddy Pond Loon Count, 7:00–7:30am

come back to sit on the eggs. However, after a time it became obvious that the beach was a massacre site and the loon was not returning. Eventually, it swam off.

At this point I called my son Henry, who lives nearby, and relayed the morning's events, declaring I would attempt to contact the state and any bird sanctuaries to see what was the best recourse in this situation. Unfortunately, it being a Saturday, there was no one at the state level that could offer any assistance or guidance and I was left on my own to find a solution. I began calling about to find out if there were any bird sanctuaries that could help. After quite a few phone calls, I was finally referred to Avian Haven, an organization located in Freedom, Maine.

At that point Henry arrived by canoe. He removed the loon carcass from the island in an attempt to make the beach amenable to the other loon's return to the nest. After that, two loons did come back and paddle around the island, but they stayed offshore, well away from the wet eagle on the rock. Eventually, they paddled off and did not return.

Meanwhile, I got in contact with Avian Haven and explained the situation, and they agreed to accept the eggs and to attempt to hatch and raise the unborn loon chicks. Henry and I then gathered the eggs, wrapped them in our shirts, and paddled back to our camp. We found a small box, warmed some towels in the dryer, placed the eggs inside, and headed off in our vehicle to meet Avian Haven volunteers in Bucksport.

As I drove with the heat cranked up high, Henry placed his hands on the eggs in an attempt to keep them warm. He noticed a crack in one egg and said, "I feel some movement." We then heard scratching and, to our amazement, peeping. I was concerned that the eggs could hatch at any moment and

we would imprint onto the chicks as their parents. I teased Henry that he would be the “Loon Daddy,” and he retaliated by labeling me the “Loon Savior.”

Luckily, the eggs survived the hand-off to the Avian Haven folks and the trip to the haven’s hatching facility. Later, we heard that the eggs had become quite chilled, but had been successfully warmed. One chick hatched that night and the other the next day. Though dismayed by the loss of the adult and the abandonment of the nest, we are overjoyed by the chicks’ successful hatching and upbringing by Avian Haven.

Return of the Dynamic Duo

Chris Dadian

Over the weeks following the rescue and hatching of the loon eggs rescued by Francis and Henry Owens from Indian Island we had periodic reports that the chicks were thriving in the care of the rehabilitators at Avian Haven, growing as babies will and acquiring essential though necessarily limited life skills in their human-protected environment.



Cara Guerrieri and Henry and Francis Owen



Toddy Twins not quite two weeks old

We knew they would have to be released eventually, but were surprised and delighted to hear in late August that Avian Haven had received permission from Maine IF&W to release the chicks – on Toddy Pond!

The release was planned for the first week of October, after the chicks had passed the twelve week mark, the point at which hatchling loons in the wild generally begin to separate from their parents and make their way on their own.

But we apparently hadn’t reckoned on the precocity of the Toddy Twins (or their biological clocks). Diane Winn, direc-

tor of Avian Haven, contacted me on September 24 to say that the chicks were becoming “increasingly restless,” and that waiting until October might not be in their best interest. Two days later, along with another rescued chick about their age, they were gently returned to the water of Toddy Pond, just a couple hundred yards from Indian Island.



A major concern was that not having imprinted on adult loons the chicks would have problems self-identifying. But again expectations were disappointed – in a good way! Within minutes of their release, as we watched from shore, the chicks encountered an adult loon and immediately followed it.

Over the next several days I was able to observe more astonishing and positive behavior on the part of one of the chicks, which returned repeatedly to the area of the release. I recorded these in detail, with photos, in a series of postings to the TPA website. (From the homepage at toddypond.org click on News on the menu line, then scroll down if necessary.)

No definitive sightings of any of the chicks have been reported for the past several weeks, but this is not cause for great concern: the “chicks” are close to full size and would be difficult now to distinguish at any distance from adults, especially after the adults have shed their summer plumage; and the distinctive, color-coded leg bands that the chicks wear are very difficult to see at a distance of more than a few yards. By now many of the loons of Toddy Pond will already have taken wing for winter waters, where birds hatched this summer will spend at least a couple years.

If this turns out to be the end of the story it is a very satisfactory one: thanks to the care of their rescuers and rehabilitators the chicks have survived disaster, and Toddy Pond has held them, nurtured them, and, we hope, sent them on their way. But the Dynamic Duo have surprised us more than once ...

If you’d like to learn more about Avian Haven or support the salvific efforts of these caring wild avian rehabilitators, visit their website, avianhaven.org. The Avian Haven Facebook page includes an album of photos of the Toddy Twins.

Wake Up Call!

Sarah LeVine

When Lucy Leaf arrived at the East Orland public boat landing to take the early Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI) shift on the foggy Sunday morning of July 2, 2017, she saw just one truck and boat trailer in the parking lot, both with Connecticut

license plates. She likes to stretch her legs on arrival at the landing and that morning as she walked around the lot she straight away noticed a suspicious looking plant hanging from the trailer's support bar. She recognized it from training for Invasive Plant Patrol work she'd been doing for the past several years. And once, a few years back, she'd seen the Stockbridge Bowl in Massachusetts completely clogged with it.

"It didn't occur to me to photo the plant fragment with my smartphone," she recalls. "Rather, I simply picked the still wet 5-inch piece off the trailer and inspected it. Seeing its distinctive whorls and thick leaves made my heart sink. I was 95% sure I was looking at Eurasian milfoil. I pulled a second long-stemmed fragment with some dried leaves on it off the trailer and put both in a plastic bag."



What Lucy found – Eurasian water-milfoil

Knowing she could reach the Maine Warden Service by dialing 911, she did so and within ten minutes Warden John Carter got back to her. "He told me he'd come as quickly as he could and in the meantime, if the boat returned, I should inspect it closely; however, I should not confront the owner about the plant on the trailer he'd left in the lot."

When Warden Carter arrived at the landing, the owner of the trailer had not returned. After taking his own photos of the bagged milfoil fragments and the trailer, Carter went out on the lake to look for a boat with Connecticut registration and its owner. Eventually he was successful, locating the boat pulled up on the shore at a camp on Middle Toddy. The owner, who was visiting a friend for the weekend, told Carter that the last lakes he'd visited were two small ponds in Connecticut (both known to be infested with milfoil). Warden Carter later reported that the man had been very apologetic about the plant being found on the trailer. He insisted he'd steam-cleaned his boat in Connecticut, but had missed the plants underneath the trailer. He received a summons and under Maine law could have been fined up to \$5000 for launching a boat carrying an invasive aquatic plant. (Ultimately, he paid just \$100.)

Next day Lucy sent the suspicious plant fragments to VLMP (Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program) for identification. A week later, she received confirmation that the plants were indeed Eurasian water-milfoil.

"As for us Toddy Pond property owners, we'd received a wake up call," says Lucy. "How should we respond to the possibility that milfoil is now in our lake?"

"VLMP told me if any fragments had gotten into the lake, they could take a year or two to get established. Meanwhile, we should be hyper-vigilant. Given our busy public boat landing, Toddy Pond is at high risk for infestation. Their advice was first, we should continue our annual surveys of aquatic plants along our 22-mile shoreline and second, have an ex-

perienced team carefully patrol the East Orland boat landing area every year. Thus in August 2017, three of our certified inspectors, using a large trunk scope for improved visibility, patrolled the boat landing area and found no invasive aquatic plants. When our twenty plant patrollers surveyed the entire lake later in August, they found none either.

"So we can hope that we're clean for now," Lucy concludes, "and do everything we can to keep it that way."



For the past two summers Lucy, with support from her sister Barbara Leaf, has been our Courtesy Boat Inspection coordinator. In 2017, after several summers as a member of the South Toddy Invasive Plant Patrol team, she became Invasive Plant Patrol coordinator.

Heartening News from Range Pond

Dave and Betty Parsons

Editor's note: The Parsons' reluctant "flight" from their summer home of many years on Range Pond in Androscoggin County was chronicled in Sarah LeVine's History and reprinted in the Fall, 2015 Newsletter. Dave and Betty sent this follow-up after learning that fragments of invasive Eurasian water-milfoil had been found on a boat trailer at the Toddy Pond public landing.

Betty and I had a visit yesterday with Robert Limoges, regarding his work on the milfoil problem on Range Pond.

Variable milfoil was detected on Range Pond roughly ten years ago. Bob and his wife are both scuba divers, so they surveyed the infested area and found five variable milfoil plants (after a false start finding native milfoil like ours).

For five years Bob and Gloria removed the milfoil by pulling up the plants along with their roots. Because the milfoil was detected early, this was a manageable approach of control. Unfortunately, milfoil reappeared each year in slightly different locations.

VLMP and the Maine DEP were actively involved. Finally,

a “permit by rule” was obtained from the Maine DEP to use benthic barrier tarps submerged in the lake to eliminate sunlight and thus kill the milfoil. After three years using these tarps, all of the variable milfoil was eradicated and the VLMP certified Range Pond as cleared of the variable milfoil invasion.

Thanks to the volunteer efforts of Bob and Gloria Limoges, total cost for the cleanup was less than \$1000. Good news!

We on Toddy Pond can take several lessons from the Range Pond experience:

1. Stay diligent in our surveys. Eurasian milfoil can grow in deeper water than variable milfoil, up to fifteen feet down. If our lake is invaded, signs of plant growth should be detected this year or next year latest. The boat launch area should be especially checked.

2. When/if invasive milfoil is found we should actively seek the assistance of the VLMP and the Maine DEP in eradicating the problem. Directly using benthic barriers is currently the most effective method of control.

3. Don't panic if invasive milfoil is found. After variable milfoil was discovered on Range Pond several camps were sold at discounted prices. After 2–3 years, property values recovered.

With active TPA participation this problem can be managed.

Courtesy Boat Inspection

Barbara Leaf

Closing up camp felt especially difficult this year given the Indian summer weather and the spectacular fall foliage on Toddy Pond Road. As I started my drive home, I made a stop at the boat landing to soak in one last look at the pond. Other than the water level, the lake stays very much the same, for which I am forever appreciative.

We had another very successful boat inspection season. Stephen Sheehan and Sandi Kuykendall returned for a second year as our paid inspectors. We also had 25 volunteers who filled in both on early weekend mornings and later hours on the weekdays. Between volunteers and the paid inspectors we conducted 1040 boat inspections! We are so fortunate to have a dedicated group of people who volunteer every year. We cannot thank those people enough, especially since we depend on our volunteers to qualify for our CBI grant. No volunteers translates to no grant money from the state. To both our volunteers and our stalwart paid inspectors, thank you all so much.

Did we find any plants? We found only two plant fragments during all those inspections and they were found to be native plants. On the other hand, our CBI coordinator, Lucy Leaf, did find an invasive plant on one of the boat trailers sitting in the parking lot early in July. (For more detail see the story, “Wake Up Call,” in this newsletter.) While plant fragments may be few and far between, having found just that one invasive plant indicates we must stay vigilant. As such, we are committed to continuing our Courtesy Boat Inspection (CBI) program in the years to come.

Unfortunately, we have not been able to find a replacement CBI project coordinator for next year and therefore we will be taking a different approach to filling our very necessary volunteer slots. As we have in the past, we plan to send an email

in May calling for CBI volunteers. We will NOT be able to make follow up phone calls thereafter, so if you are willing to help, please make it a point to respond to that initial email. We will send all the necessary forms by a confirming email once volunteers are matched to a date. All our forms will also be available on the website. In addition, we will have a lockbox on the back of the boat landing kiosk where you can place the CBI forms at the end of your shift. No more mailing them! We will have more information in the spring newsletter and on the website so please check it out. We can always use more volunteers given that we will have lots of dates to fill.

See you in 2018.

2017 Loon Count

Steve Antell

The thirty-fifth annual Toddy Pond loon count took on July 15. Twenty-seven volunteers provided complete coverage of the pond and tallied twenty-five adult loons, up three from 2016, and two chicks, down one from last year. While the number of adults nicely exceeded the thirty-five-year average of nineteen, the number of chicks lagged behind the average of just over three.

We do know the chick count could have been higher. Two chicks hatched in the narrows between South and Middle Toddy but were not found on count day. One had been discovered floating dead in the pond by a kayaker, possibly the victim of a boat hit. The fate of the other is unknown, but bald eagle predation is certainly a possibility. A second nest, on Indian Island in Middle Toddy, met with disaster when the female sitting on the nest was attacked and killed by a bald eagle (see the article earlier in this issue for a full account).

In light of threats to the loon population by bald eagles, boaters, and other factors, we would like to get a better handle on nesting success than can be provided by a thirty-minute survey. As a start I am asking Toddy Ponders to report any known nesting activity to me next year as soon as it is observed. I am hoping we can then keep better tabs on the nests, without being disruptive to the adults. If there are ways that we can work with Maine Audubon, Internal Fish and Wildlife, and other environmental agencies to protect our loons, that is something we want to do.

My email address is leafan@comcast.net. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like to participate in the count next year.

Plant Patrol 2017

Lucy Leaf

I call this a very successful year for Plant Patrol. Nineteen patrollers or partnering teams participated in this year's survey, with one more volunteer preparing for next year. Some surveyed two or three sectors to cover the twenty-five sectors we have delineated, and all were completed.

We had some major accomplishments this year. Mapping the sectors took an effort that began in mid-winter, with the aim for consistency and reliability in getting a full Level 3 survey done. Level 3 means that our entire shoreline has been surveyed. We survey the littoral zone, where sunlight penetrates to the bottom, allowing plants to grow. While it is permitted to

survey just for invasive plants, many of us are increasing our proficiency in identifying the native plants as well.

This proficiency has improved with the distribution of our booklet, *Native Plants of Toddy Pond*, our second big accomplishment this year. This effort began years ago, requiring a major concerted push to update the photos, verify the identifications, and get the booklet ready for printing. The outcome was more than we hoped for. All patrollers have a booklet and we have also donated booklets to surrounding lake associations and groups to help promote Invasive Plant Patrol (IPP).



IPP volunteer Donna Tamaki patrols a plentiful patch of pickerel weed

We have also worked closely with the Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (VLMP), who not only organize the program, but also provide the workshops that teach us how to do it, from the introductory Plant Paddles to Advanced Plant ID. IPP 101 is always available for patrollers who wish to get certified or who want a refresher. I have taken all the workshops over the last two years, though I was certified five years ago.

That leads me to the Annual VLMP Conference, which I also attended this year. What struck me most was the immensely dedicated people I met who are involved with Plant Patrol all over the state. If an invasive infestation is detected, an organized team of volunteers comes to the rescue. They come with boats, markers, and snorkeling equipment with the capacity to scan a targeted area to a level of precision that I found remarkable.

This year, we have also gained some new resources right here in Hancock County. Mark Whiting and Catherine Fox are the regional coordinators for VLMP, and they live close to Ellsworth. We couldn't be more fortunate to have this husband-and-wife team who have come right to our doorstep several times this summer to help us identify suspicious plants, educate us further on native plants, and coordinate all our paperwork with VLMP. Mark is a PhD biologist who has worked for DEP in the past, helping to identify invasives, and Catherine is a great organizer.

Through Mark and Catherine, we have expanded our involvement in IPP beyond Toddy Pond, connecting with other volunteers and increasing our knowledge of the plants. I plan to join them for the VLMP Leader Round Table in November.

All I can say is: Plant Patrol is addictive. It is now my favorite volunteer activity, and I enjoy the people I meet and go out patrolling with. New patrollers are always welcome and we are glad to help get people started. So Plant Patrol 2017—it's been a very good year.

New TPA Website Is Up and Running!

In July, with the help of Ian Foster, Michael Paige, Dan Staples, and others, the TPA website was finally transferred to its new platform.

Over the coming months we will be adding extensive content and resources, especially relating to our continuing projects. But you can already find news, an events calendar, useful links (including one to our online store), archives of the newsletter and *Toddy Pond History*, a lost-and-found, classifieds, and more!

The information on the site is accessible to all, but TPA members who register on the site can also post classified and lost-and-found notices, message other registered members, and receive email notifications of important news. As our online community grows, forums will allow registered members to share information. Instructions for registering can be found on the homepage.

Check out our new toddypond.org!

Toddy Gear Online!

Barbara Leaf

With our new website comes a new way of shopping for Toddy Pond merchandise. T-shirts, hats, sweatshirts, stickers, note cards and more are now available for purchase online through an on-demand production and distribution service called Cafe Press. We are just getting started at coming up with merchandise and designs that may be of interest to our members.

Go to <http://www.cafepress.com/toddypondshop> and take a look at what is available, then place your order. Toddy Pond Association benefits from your purchases. If you have suggestions for additional items, please send me an email at leafan@comcast.net and I will see if I can fill the gaps.

And with thanksgiving ...



Bon voyage!

*Peace and
Seasons Cheer*



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