



TODDY POND ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Spring 2019

Issue 42

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.

Hail to the Summer of '19

Join us to celebrate the season at the eighth annual Toddy Pond Hail to Summer Barbecue, on June 23 at the Balsam Cove Campground. Great food, old and new friends, and perfect weather – always!

The Thatchers, owners and operators of Balsam Cove, are again generously allowing us to use their pavilion.

The TPA will provide grilled chicken, grilled hot dogs, and soft drinks, and invites you to bring a side dish or dessert to share. If you're planning to come please drop us a line at toddy@mail@toddypond.org so we can plan on numbers.

Loons in Native American Mythology

Bob Levine

If you're interested in loons and participate in the Toddy Pond loon count, you're not the only one. John James Audubon and other naturalists were deeply interested in loons during the nineteenth century, and made drawings and paintings of them. And the Native Americans seem to have been obsessed with them, making loon masks and stone sculptures of them. I had thought it would be easier to find these objects in museum collections, but so far I've found a great many from the Eskimos (Inuit and Aleut peoples) in Alaska, from the Haida and other peoples of the Pacific Northwest coast, from the Wintu and many other peoples of California, from the Cherokee, the Algonquin and the Ojibwa peoples, and from the confederation of eastern Algonquian speakers in northern New England and eastern Canada known as the Wabanaki. Thus it is already clear that loons were objects of the Native American imagination throughout North America. It is also clear that in Native American belief, loons were imbued with spiritual qualities, not only because they are great divers but due to their night calls, which we on Toddy Pond know well.

In the tradition of the Abenaki (Wabanaki people who dwelt in our part of Maine), Medawisla the loon is the messenger of the great culture hero, trickster, and shapeshifter, Glooskap. Medawisla also spies on humans and reports their activities to Glooskap using its powerful voice. The Mi'kmaq, another Wabanaki tribe, have a story about how Kwimu (their name

2019 Calendar

June 22 — Maine Lakes Conference

For information, go to www.mainelakessociety.org

June 23 — TPA Hail to Summer BBQ

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

July 19 — IPP 101, 11:00–5:00

For information, email lucy.leaf@yahoo.com

July 20 — Toddy Pond Loon Count, 7:00–7:30am

July 20 — IPP Plant Paddle, 9:00–12:00

For information, email lucy.leaf@yahoo.com

August 11 — TPA Annual Meeting

Old Surry Schoolhouse (intersection of Rte. 176 and Rte. 172). Potluck dinner at 6:00 followed by meeting.

for loons) were first encountered by Glooskap and enlisted into his service. You can read this story at www.sacred-texts.com/nam/ne/al/al12.htm.

Loons, as ancient birds, have played a role in Native American mythology for millennia, and that is why loon imagery is so widespread across the continent. Sometimes they are characterized as helpers to the gods or to other characters in myth. They seem never to be nasty or villainous. And most often, their typical shape, size, and colors provide the subject for Native American artists to depict as beautiful emblems of their spiritual qualities.

My conclusion about loon mythology is that it represents what we call in anthropology the age-area hypothesis, that is, the longer something has been around, the larger the area covered by it. Loons have been around for a very long time, and the area covered by Native American loon mythology is from the Pacific Northwest to Toddy Pond, and many places in between.

2019 Loon Count

Steve Antell

The 36th annual loon count will take place on Saturday, July 20 from 7:00–7:30 AM. Last year twenty intrepid volunteers ventured out in thick fog and somehow managed to count

twenty adults hiding in the soup. But, alas, no chicks. We do know that at least two chicks were successfully raised during the summer and can therefore probably attribute the lack of sightings on count day to the weather conditions. Let's hope for better luck this year. As I write this, loons are already calling on the pond and should be starting the nesting process. I will again coordinate the count in July and am counting on those who have participated in the past. I'm also always looking for new volunteers. If you are interested or have questions, my email address is leafan@comcast.net and phone number is 802-734-1897.

Plant Patrol Is for Everyone

Lucy Leaf

We hope that past patrollers will be able to continue with their usual sectors. But there is always room for more. If anyone wishes to begin patrolling even a small section of shore for invasive plants, we can accommodate.

All patrollers receive a copy of "Native Plants of Toddy Pond" and some basic materials and equipment. A patroller can go out regularly or even just once anytime between July 15 and September 15, though early August is ideal. And remember, you don't need to know the name of a single plant to rule out invasives with a simple one-page key. Just about any shallow-draft boat can be used. Some snorkel their sectors while swimming.

However, you might just get hooked as some of us have, and find that aquatic plants are taking up space in your refrigerator waiting to be identified (not required, I should add). And remember I will provide a personal tutorial and paddle with anyone who is interested to look at aquatic plants.

Please note the workshops offered this year again at Alamoosook Lake, listed on the newsletter calendar. We still have copies "Native Plants of Toddy Pond," available for \$12. Please contact me with questions: lucy.leaf@yahoo.com.

Friends Don't Let Friends Jeopardize Toddy Pond

Chris Dadian

In Maine we are hyper-aware of the threat of invasive aquatic plants because most of our lakes still don't have them and we don't want them. But in many places to our south and west, infestation by these species is widespread if not ubiquitous, and has been for many years, and people have, unfortunately, accepted their presence as a mundane fact of life.

Twice in the past two years our courtesy boat inspectors have found variable leaf milfoil on boat trailers at our public boat landing. In both instances the boats were from other states and their home waterbodies had been infested for many years. And in each instance the boat's owners had a close personal tie to Toddy Pond.

Friends and relatives who come to visit and bring their watercraft with them certainly don't intend to jeopardize the paradise that they enjoy here, and the same generally holds true for renters. In both cases just mentioned the boat owners were devastated when the plants were found and deeply remorseful. But inspecting their boats and trailers – we often find plants hitchhiking on trailers – was not on their pre-flight checklist or they didn't know how to inspect properly.

If you have folks visiting with boats or rent to people who will be bringing boats, please remind them know how important it is to us all that invasive plants not find their way into Toddy Pond and that even a small fragment could infect. You might also mention that it's against the law in Maine, as in many other states, to transport *any* plant on a boat, and that in Maine the law is enforced and penalties can be severe.

If the last waterbody the boat visited is known to be infected steam cleaning before departure is appropriate, and even if the waterbody is thought to be uninfected a thorough inspection should be made. Even if you have launching capability on your property, suggest to your guest that they put in at the landing on Route 1 and take advantage of the free courtesy boat inspection.

If you'd like some literature on invasives and the threat they pose, and guidelines for self-inspection to send to your guests in advance, send a note to toddymail@toddypond.org, or call me at 469-0234.

That's Classified

Chris Dadian

From time to time we receive requests from members who want us to help them advertise a service for hire or item for sale or rent, or wanted, by sending a notice to our email list. We then have to explain with regret our long-time policy of keeping the email list commercial free and limiting its use to association announcements and urgent messages (a runaway dock or fetched-up kayak or lost kitten is an urgency).

Now we can tell folks to take matters into their own hands. On the Toddy Pond website members can post and manage their own classified ads, which can be seen by anyone who visits the site (member or not).

To place an ad (including a lost and found notice for that runaway dock) you must be an active member of TPA and register on the site. Registration is how we keep the site secure: only those known to us (that is, members) can post. You can register in just a few moments on the site, and if you aren't yet a member, accomplish two things at once. Just click on Join and fill in the information requested. If you are joining the association or renewing your membership this way there are instructions for paying dues. Once we receive the information (and dues, if applicable), we'll send you a notice that you're registered and you can then post away.

The screenshot shows the Toddy Pond Association website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Home, About Us, News, Pond Projects, The Dam, Toddy Pond History, Events, Toddy Pond Gear, and Useful Links. Below the navigation bar is a large banner image of a lake with a wooden dock and a chair. The banner contains the text: "Welcome to the Toddy Pond Association website!" and "Toddy Pond Forever!". There are "Join Us!" and "Get Started" buttons. Below the banner is a "MEMBER PHOTOS" section with a "Community Area" heading. Under "Community Area", there are links: "View My Profile", "Lake News (10)", "Lost and Found", "Events this Month", "Classifieds", "Image Gallery (1)", "Watch Lake Videos", and "Community Links". To the right is a "News & Events" sidebar with the date "5/12/2019" and a headline "The Alewives Are Coming!" with a small image of alewives. At the bottom of the sidebar, it says "Alewives have been spotted in Alamoosook."

To get started, click on Classifieds, in the Community Area (circled above). You'll be taken to a screen where you can pick a category (or add one), provide a description, contact information, a price (one quirk of this dialog is that you have to enter a price; if there is no price or it's free, enter zero), and a photo (optional; must be max. 1024 x 1024 pixels).

After you press Submit and the ad is accepted a shortened version will appear under the category you elected. Clicking on it brings up the detailed version with full description. You can edit or delete the ad at any time by clicking on it and selecting the desired option.

River Kayak



Seat needs repair. Otherwise in good condition and has served us well. Paddle included. Call Todd D. Ponder at 555-1234.

Seller: cdadian
Posted: 05/23/19

Price: \$25

The ad will remain up indefinitely, so please remove it when it's done its job. We also ask that you advertise for sale or rent only property that you yourself own or services that you will provide. No commercial postings, please.

It's really very easy, but if you run into difficulties send a note to toddymail@toddypond.org or call me at 469-0234.

Heroes of Toddy Pond?

Chris Dadian

As the newsletter goes to press the yearly alewife run up to Toddy Pond is underway. Last fall's issue described the annual convoy of anadromous alewives and blueback herring (together referred to as river herring) as "a gigantic food truck wending its way through numerous estuarine and riparian neighborhoods before parking for the summer at Toddy Pond, carrying the bounty of the sea to feed fish, birds, reptiles, and mammals – including humans, who harvest more than half of the run, primarily for lobster bait."

Last year we estimated, conservatively, that about 100,000 alewives entered Toddy Pond, about 25 tons of fish. When you add the small but numerous hatchlings (a female can produce 300,000 eggs, another significant food source), that's a lot of biomass, and it's hard to imagine that it does not burden Toddy

Pond in some way – there being, as we know, no such thing as a free lunch.

However, several studies conducted in Maine and elsewhere in recent years on waterbodies at which dams have been removed or alewives have been stocked indicate that an increase in alewife population does not coincide with any discernible decrease in water quality or desirable species, and that in some cases water quality might even have improved.

One concern was that alewives feed primarily on zooplankton, the tiny aquatic creatures – just above microscopic – you see wriggling about in a cup of water taken from the lake. These zooplankton are efficient predators of algae, so their decimation by alewives could be expected to contribute to algal blooms. But apparently alewives favor specific species of zooplankton, and in lakes where alewives have been reintroduced, the seasonal depletion of those species – populations recover after the alewives have left – stimulated their competitor zooplankton, who are unappealing to alewives but happy to consume the algae. This seasonal restructuring of the planktonid community also means that fish and other creatures that feed on them are not deprived by the alewives. In addition, the alewives are present in their largest numbers in mid-late spring, coinciding with the peak of zooplankton populations, and have as mentioned departed during the late summer and fall, when the planktonid populations are recovering.

We also worry about phosphorus, and since all living things carry that substance, necessary for life, the annual visitation of 25 tons of living things could be expected to add to the phosphorus present from other sources. But the young of the year alewives, which are born in Toddy Pond so bring no phosphorus in, consume and sequester the substance as they grow, and carry it with them back to sea before the end of summer, resulting in some lakes in an actual net export of phosphorus. This explains why there appears to be no degradation in the trophic state – which could result in algae blooms – of waters where alewives have been newly introduced. On a lake like Toddy Pond, which has low phosphorus levels and above-average water quality, the alewives may not make much difference, but on some lakes where water quality had been very poor before the alewives returned, studies showed a measurable improvement.

River herring may eat small fish of other species, but this is not their primary food, and there is no evidence of a significant impact on resident fish, for whom the alewives and their eggs are a major nutrient source.

Finally, we have the evidence of Toddy Pond itself, which has had an alewife run since time immemorial and has above-average water quality and a healthy aquatic environment.

And again there's that bounteous food truck. After counting the fish running up the ladder at the Toddy Pond dam yesterday, I looked up to see on the lake side of the dam a loon surface with an alewife in its mouth – maybe one I'd just counted – then turned to see a bald eagle perched in a tree just downstream of the dam, picking out its repast from the flocks of fish congregated in the spillway pool. About as close as you can get to a free lunch.

So it may be that our old friends the alewives should be acclaimed Heroes of Toddy Pond.



With Thanks

The Toddy Pond Association is grateful for the support of all our members, and want to acknowledge especially those who were able to contribute in 2018 as donors (beyond regular dues) and as volunteers in our on-going programs to preserve and protect Toddy Pond.

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Courtesy Boat Inspections, Invasive Plant Patrol, Loon Count

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Toddy Pond Association

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Barbara Leaf ☎ 802-734-4102

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