

No 155

July, 2024

Calendar

BBLA Board Meeting
July 20, 2024

BBLA Annual Meeting
August 17, 2024

8:30 a.m.

St. Joseph's Catholic
Church

Grey Eagle

BBLA Board Meeting
September 21, 2024

Lake Detective guest speaker at annual meeting

Steve McComas aka "the lake detective" and owner of Blue Water Science will be the guest speaker at the BBLA Annual Meeting on August 17.

Published author, Outdoor News contributor with over 40 years experience and 1,000 lake studies logged, will present his study of Big Birch Lake at the annual meeting.

The board supported spending over \$2000 to get the report and presentation about the condition of Big Birch. It has been about 15 years since the board sought a study of the lake.

Steve McComas conducted his research on Friday, July 12. Deb Johnson and Craig Tweedale from the AIS Committee accompanied McComas on the inspection.

His plan was to go around the lake taking water samples.

In other reports you can expect to hear about the fundraising for walleye stocking that took place this past spring. Grant Niehaus will update the association on current funds available and how many pound of walleye fingerlings will be released in the lake in the fall.

Deb Johnson, who chairs the Aquatic Invasive Species Control committee will report on the committees work in the past year to battle AIS. In addition to looking for starry stonewort, water inspectors are looking for spiny lake fleas, which interrupt the food chain for fish.

Jeanne Niehaus will report about the success of annual ladies brunch and the annual golf outing. Both events are social events intended to help lake residents get to know one another better, and both are self-supporting.

Treasurer, Craig Tweedale will update the audience on the financial condition of the association.

The chairs of lake area safety and lake improvement will give an overview of their activities.

Members elect BBLA Board members at annual meeting Aug. 17

Five board members will be elected at the annual meeting on August 17, 2024. The board members whose terms expire are Grant Niehaus, Matt Everding, Jeanne Niehaus, Mark Erdmann and Adrian Johnson.

Johnson does not seek re-election to the board. Everding, Jeanne Niehaus, Grant Niehaus and Erdmann seek an additional three-year term.

The nominations committee places the following members, Bill Lieder and Stephen Konser as candidates for an open at-large seat on the ballot.

Association members have an opportunity to nominate candidates from the floor provided they comply with the association by-laws which state: "Nominations may be made from the floor at the annual meeting provided that notice of the intent thereof has been given to

the president or vice-president of the association
Members elect continues on page 2



Attend the annual meeting August 17

The annual meeting of the BBLA will be held Saturday, August 17 at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Grey Eagle. **The meeting begins at 8:30 a.m. with refreshments provided at 8 a.m. Invite a neighbor to join you at the meeting.**

Inside this issue:

Financial Report	2
Kutter's Column	3
Association Membership	6
Contributing Sponsors	7

BBLA Board of Directors

Names	Areas	Phone
Kevin Costello, Pres.	Area C Director	480-250-3698
Matt Everding, V. Pres.	Area F Director	320-492-5902
Craig Tweedale, Treas.	Area J Director	608-317-6647
Jay Anderson	Area I Director	763-482-1926
Mark Erdmann	Area G Director	612-386-9254
Blake Johnson	Area D Director	612-910-3871
Deb Johnson	Director At Large	320-285-5833
Adrian Johnson	Area A Director	952-939-0939
Brandon Kelly	Area E Director	320-491-6107
Hans Mische	Director At Large	320-250-9002
Grant Niehaus	Director At Large	320-583-4939
Jeanne Niehaus	Director At Large	651-757-7475
Gary Rothstein	Area H Director	320-290-7818
Mike Sadlowsky	Director At Large	612-366-5494
Steve Thelen	Area B Director	320-309-9881

bbla@meltel.net

The Big Birch Lake Newsletter is an official publication of the Big Birch Lake Association, Inc. PO Box 342 Grey Eagle, Minnesota 56336

Robert Kutter, Secretary and Newsletter Editor

Web Site: www.birchlakeassociation.org

Mission Statement: The purpose of the Big Birch Lake Association shall be to improve and protect water quality, to advance the propagation and habitat of fish and to protect the welfare of all wildlife in Big Birch Lake and adjacent areas.

Editor's Note: Ordinarily the minutes of the last annual meeting are published in the July issue of the BBLA Newsletter. Unfortunately, my computer got a virus this past February, and I lost all documents that were saved to my desktop. I apologize for the lack of annual minutes which were complete and saved to the computer. I will do a better job of saving documents in the future.

Editor of BBLA Newsletter

Members elect *continued from page 1*
or any member of the nominating committee at least 10 days before the annual general membership meeting.”

BBLA Financial Report

			May 31, 24
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Checking/Savings			
	1006 · Checking -Stearns Bank		2,504.98
	1060 · Certificate of Deposit		128,117.85
	1005 · Checking-CMCU		6,856.79
	1010 · Share Account-CMCU		35.90
	1015 · My Goal Savings		0.00
	1020 · Money Markey-CMCU		52,755.99
	1050 · Cert of Deposit-12 Month #1		0.00
	1055 · Cert of Deposit-12 Month #2		0.00
Total Checking/Savings			190,271.51
Other Current Assets			
	1080 · Initiative Foundation Fund		50,127.32
	1499 · Undeposited Funds		50.00
Total Other Current Assets			50,177.32
Total Current Assets			240,448.83
Fixed Assets			
	1200 · Building & Land		35,300.00
Total Fixed Assets			35,300.00
TOTAL ASSETS			275,748.83
LIABILITIES & EQUITY			
Liabilities			
Long Term Liabilities			
	2550 · Reserve		
	2551 · Aquatic-Invasive Species		100,000.00
	2552 · Future Buffer Strips		14,495.72
Total 2550 · Reserve			114,495.72



Donate to BBLA walleye fundraiser

If you love fishing BBL, consider a donation to walleye fundraiser. Go to the BBLA website, follow the prompts under "donate." Fingerlings will be added this coming fall.

Naturalized shorelines are good for the lake

Native plants are readily available for use in shore landscapes

I have been gardening for 50 years. That is long enough to have gained some useful knowledge about raising flowers and vegetables.

We gardeners learn from our endless mistakes and our numerous successes. Soil, water, sunshine, temperature all matter in producing a successful garden. Currently I have a raised garden in which the soil needs replacing. I plan to do that from the compost I make which includes biodegradable kitchen waste, leaves, weeds, and shredded paper. By the way, plants washed ashore makes good compost content.

For the past 20 years we have learned the value of using native plants along the shoreline to stabilize and hold the shoreline in place from the ravages of ice, high water, and wave action.

Many native cultivars have long roots that extend two and three feet below the surface and thus help the lakeshore soil stay in place. Another advantage of perennial natives is their ability to withstand the climate conditions without fear they will die because of weather conditions.

In 2022, we had our shore ripped with boulders. After getting a permit from Todd County for reconstruction of the shoreland, JK Landscaping replaced the eroded shore. Since that time the shore has withstood high water and ice movement.

Up the shore from the rocks, I planted native plants and grasses from a wholesaler of natives plants located south of Lake Minnewaska. Along with the expensive project to replace the shore, the plants weren't cheap either.

At annual meetings and other educational presentations by Todd County Soil

and Water Conservation personnel, I picked up packets of native perennials given away.

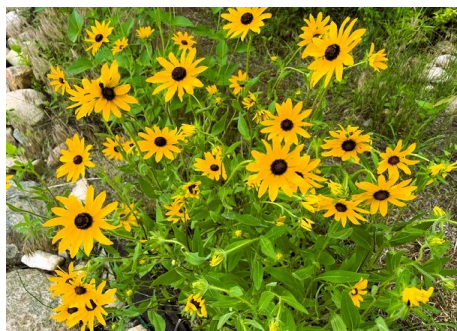
Being skeptical of little packages of seeds with hundreds of seeds that are to be broadcast on the soil and magically appear next year with glorious blooms, I set the packets aside.

Since I grow almost all of my plants from seed beginning as early as March 1, I decided to try the seeds from the free packet. Here is an example of the results from the package of seeds.



There are about 65 plants in this flat from free seeds, and that represents a small portion of the number of seeds in the package.

Some of the native species included are little bluestem, butterfly milkweed, purple prairie clover and black-eyed Susan. The photo below is of black-eyed Susan that is currently blooming along the shore.



I know most don't want to bother growing their own plants from seed. It is time consuming and a bit tedious, but the results can be fulfilling.

My goal is to start more seeds and add the plants to my shoreline. Over time I should have a colorful mixture of flowering plants and grasses.

Another thing to like about naturalizing the shoreline is low maintenance once the plants have matured. On a trip



Kutter's Column

around the lake just the other day, I noticed many properties where the native plants have matured and look beautiful on hillsides too steep to mow.

I understand that some property owners don't like the appearance of a naturalized shoreline. They think it looks messy or unkempt. It becomes a matter of aesthetic appreciation to change one's attitude about the appearance of lakeside property.

There are many properties on the lake that simply don't lend themselves to adding native cultivars because the area is already covered with natural trees, shrubs and grasses.

The older I become, the more I plant perennials on my property because they return year after year and don't require the maintenance or expense of annual flowers.

That is not to say perennials are maintenance free. They require some deadheading of spent blossoms and cutting back in the spring when they are ready to regenerate. I leave perennials in place through the winter to add structure, texture and interest to the winter landscape.

Since many of the plants are pollinators, growers get the advantage of seeing butterflies, birds and other insects that visit blooming plants.

I encourage you to consider the use of native plants along your shore. If you want to stop in (I live on the North Shore.) to see what I have done, I will give you a tour. You just have to let me know you are stopping by.

As you cruise around the lake this summer, take note of the places that make use of plants to create a naturalized shore. I think you will be surprised at the number of properties with natural pollinators.

Keeping our lakefront attractive is just one more reason heaven seems a little closer in a house beside the water.



Starry stonewort now in 30 bodies of water in MN

A mailing with pictures of starry stonewort and Eurasian water milfoil was sent to property owners on BBL this past spring.

The mailing also provided descriptions of these two AIS and warn BBL property owners of their dangers.

Recently the DNR confirmed the presence of starry stonewort in Pokegama Lake, near Grand Rapids.

Specialist from Itasca County and the DNR found the starry stonewort interspersed with native plants around a boat ramp on the southwest end of the lake.

Follow-up studies are being done to determine if the starry stonewort has been distributed to other areas of the lake.

Starry stonewort has now been confirmed in 30 bodies of water in Minnesota. It was first confirmed in Minnesota in 2015. It is an algae that looks something like native plants. You can find information on how to identify it on the DNR website.



What might loons be telling us about a changing climate on the planet?

By Robert Kutter

The common loon is an ancient bird, so it is closely observed as climate change is upon the planet. Observers are watching the species to see what it might be telling us about its chances of survival.

Within the next 30 years, there may be few if any migrating loons in Illinois, according to Walter Piper, a researcher and professor of biology at Chapman University in Orange, Calif.

We have known for a long time that Minnesota hosts the most loons in the lower 48 states. Usual estimates are around 12,000 loons in Minnesota.

Piper, who has studied the birds in Wisconsin for years, says fewer loons are raising chicks successfully in Wisconsin.

“Increased rainfall associated with climate change is washing organic matter into northern Wisconsin lakes, reducing water clarity, and making it harder for adult loons to find food for their chicks,” said Piper.

Loons need clear water to see the fish they feed upon. Nine or ten loon pairs on Big Birch has been common as long as anyone can remember. There are few loons on southern Minnesota lakes because the water is shallow and not as clear.

If you have ever spent time in the Park Rapids area when the black flies are at their peak, you know how miserable it is trying to exist with them. Well, extra moisture increases the population of black flies, which can disrupt the nesting of loons.

We know there are more nesting pairs of loons in Canada and Alaska than anywhere else. Unfortunately the breeding range of loons could be changed by the climate.

Loon reproduction is declining across southern Canada according to Canadian Lakes Loon Survey, which has tracked the breeding habits for 40 years.

Factors that may be contributing to the problem are rising temperatures, an increase in mercury pollution and acid rain.

“The number of breeding loons in southern Canada is also starting to decline. This is what we’ve all been dreading,” said Doug Tozer, director of water birds and wetlands for the conservation organizations Birds Canada, which coordinates the loon survey.

Source: Star Tribune 4/28/24

BBLA Ladies’ Brunch held at Shattuck’s Hub Supper Club June 8

The BBLA Ladies Brunch was held at Shattuck’s Hub Supper Club on Saturday, June 8th.

Fifty-eight members enjoyed a morning of socializing and a wonderful meal.

Door prizes from Opatz Metal and Recycling and Midwest Screen Prints were given away during the event.

A big thank you goes out to the organizing committee for making this event a fun way to meet old and new friends from around the lake.



Brunch organizers: Ann Castello, Vicki Sadlowsky, Deb Mies- Niehaus and Elaine



2024 BBLA Golf Outing

Sixty-seven BBLA members enjoyed a morning of golf followed by lunch at the Meadowlark Golf Club in Melrose on June, 21st.

The first-place team award went to the Bohlig's this year. Bob Bohlig also placed for the longest putt.

Other super stars were, Adrian Johnson Men's closest to the pin, Mary Kay Ersland, Women's closest to the pin, Ryan Elfering Men's longest drive and Kris Dickhaus, Women's longest drive.

Thanks to the following generous donations everyone went home with a gift to remember the day. Midwest Screen Printing – BBLA apparel, Opatz Metals – Yeti mugs, Central MN Insurance – All Stars gift certificates, Niehowes – Birch centerpieces, Guy Waymore – Concert tickets, Manning Family – TaylorMade golf items.

Put Friday, June 20th on your calendar for next year's event for a morning of golf, food and comradery with old and new neighbors from around the beautiful lake.



First place team award went to Bohlig's. Bob Bohlig also placed for longest putt.



Sadlowskys and Thelens



Kris Dickhaus, women's longest drive.



Adrian Johnson, men's closest to the pin.



Mary Kay Ersland, women's closest to the pin.



Ryan Elfering, men's longest drive.

MEMBERSHIP AS OF JULY 2024

Althaus, Kurt & Lori	Froehling, Ronald & Lisa	Loehr, Jim & Renee	Schiemann, Chuck & Ellie
Anderson, Chadyenne	Fuchs, Brian & Lori	Logan, Guy & Suzanne	Schiffler, Dean & Carla
Anderson, Jean	Gagne, Bob & Christine	Mack, Murray & Sue	Schlangen, Brad & Angie
Anderson, Stephen & Lisa	Gangl, Dale	Malm, Scott	Schlough, Thomas & Joyce
Anderson, Todd & Debbie	Gasow, Ralph & Lori	Marshall, Karin	Schmid, Judith
Arulfo, Michelle	Gerads, Dale & Mary Lou	Martland, Richard & Marge Anderson	Schmid, Ted & Julie
Atkinson, Dan & Jan	Gerding, Dewayne & Alvina	Matchinsky, James & Roselyn	Schmidt, Jane
Atwood, Duane & Jody	Gerner, Robert & Charlene	McConnell, David & Ann	Schmidt, Thomas & Joann
Auger, John & Karen	Gordon, Brian & Kristen	McQueen, Kathy	Schmit, Nick & Karen
Austing, April	Goulet, Evan & Emily	Mehr, Mike & Lori	Schmit, Nick & Karen
Austing, Dick & Jane	Grutsch, John & Jan	Mehr, Ralph & Mary Ann	Schnettler, John & Jan
Baywatch Villas Association	Hammerstrom, Malia	Meyer, Barry & Denise Langer	Schrive, John & Lezlie
Becker, Isaac & Nancy St. Pierre	Hatton, Rene & LuAnn	Meyer, Glenn & Dianne	Schwantes, Mike & Amy
Beckermann, Fran & Linda	Helget, Ron & Becky	Meyer, Juel	Schwartz, Dick & Ellen
Beehler, Robyn & Roxanne Olsen	Hendrickson, David & Colette	Meyer, Ken & Sherry	Schwartz, Steve & Joann
Beekhuizen, Steven & Julie	Hennemann, Kitty	Meyer, Virg & Joyce	Schwieters, Charles & Beatrice
Benning, Ken & Mary Pat	Hinman, John & Kathy	Miley, Rod & Nancy	Seitzer, Jim & Belinda
Benolken, Sue	Hinnenkamp, Ben & Pam	Mische, Hans & Julie	Sexton Family Cabin
Berg, Dwaine & Louise	Hoeschen, Larry & Elaine	Moening, Lee & Judy	Shafer, Tom & Bonnie
Berg, Ken & Bev	Hoffman, Dan & Janell	Mohr, Marilyn	Sieben, Kevin & Beth
Bergmann, Ken & Marilyn	Hotzler, Mark & Jane	Mohs, Dean & Sandy	Sieben, Russell & Mary
Bergquist, Randy & Missy	Howe, Michael	Molitor, Chick & Karen	Silbernagel, John & Marie
Bertram, Steve & Pam	Hughes, Bob & Sally	Molitor, Jon	Sinclair, James & Carolyn
Beuning, James & Judine	Hughes, Dan & Liz	Moser, Helen	Sinclair, Ken & Jan
Blommel Family	Hughes, John & Susan	Moser, Helen	Spanier, Eric & Jana
Blommel, Leroy & Marilyn:Member	Hughes, Parry & Kathy	Moser, Jean	Spears (Moening), Heather
Bondhus, Adam	Hughes, Tim & Kristine	Mueller, Jerry	Spence, Jim & Christine
Borgerding, Clarence	Humbert, Rick & Lois	Nathe, Julie	Stalboerger Family, Lorraine
Braegelman, Pat & Sandy	Huseby, Robert & Christina	Nathe, Mark & Ann	Starfield, Glenn & Katy
Brattensborg, Ruth	Ingold, Kirk & Mandi	Nathe, Mike & Laura	Steinbring, John & Sandy
Brixius, Bernard	Ingold, Linnea	Neville, Steve	Stomberg, Chuck & Nancy
Broman, Brad & Charlene	Iverson, Ron & Jennifer	Niehaus, Anthony & Carol	Strack, Bob & Laurie
Broman, Mark & Marcia	Jacobs, Dave & Diane	Niehaus, Bob & Deb	Studniski, Adam & Jolene
Brunner, Paul & Lauri	Jacobsen, James & Laura Carpenter	Niehaus, Grant	Tanner, Lucy
Bruyere, James Jr	Jansen, Jeff & Teri	Niehaus, Jeanne	Tembrock, Henry
Bruyere, Scott	Jarsko, Judy	Niehaus, John & Mary	Thelen, Steve & Amy
Bullock, Lou & Debbie	Jepperson, Craig & Mary	Olson, David & Cathy	Thielen, Marvin & Judy
Bushman, Wayne	Johnson, Adrian & Kay	Orth, David & Linda	Thompson, Rod & Sally
Bussmann, Scott & Andrea	Johnson, Blake & Ruth	Osendorf, Phil & Gail	Timmermann, John
Butte, Rick	Johnson, Craig & Debra	Ostendorf, Lenore	Tomsche, David & Molly
Campbell, Mel & Sherry	Johnson, Dan & Julie	Ostendorf, Mark & Lisa	Tomsche, Dr. Ed & Theresa
Carpenter, Todd & Laura	Kadri, Abdu & Janice	Ostrem, Justin & Amy	Trierweiler, Corey & Julie
Carstens, James	Kalgren, Rick & Ann	Pakola, Howard & Barb	Tschida, Wayne & JoAnn
Caspers, John & Allyson	Kappes, Mike & Jannie	Patch, Bruce	Tweeddale, Craig & Mary Lou
Cavello, Butch & Amy	Kemper, Jeff & Linda	Pavlikev, John & Kathryn	Uphoff, Jim & Lee
Cebuhar, Charles & Mary	Kerfeld, Cheryl	Pelo, Rod & Phyllis	Van Beck, Chad & Brenda
Chaput, Larry & Bradley Johnson	Kerfeld, Donald & Diane	Peterson, Dr Thomas & Virginia	VanDrehle, Donald & Helen
Chmielewski, Daniel & Barb	Kerfeld, Glenn	Phillips, Rosemary	Vener, John & Corinne
Citrowske, Cheri	Klaphake, Deb	Piersak, Jeff & Kim	Vener, Mike & Kim
Collins, Jim & Crystal	Klaphake, Florian & Doreen	Piersak, Thomas	Viere, Kevin & Ann
Collins, Joyce	Klaphake, Steve & Pam	Pladson, Dr & Mrs Terence	Voigt, Kenneth & Joan Zirbes-Voigt
Collins, Margaret	Klapperich, John & Suzy	Plombon, Roger & Gloria	Von Wahlde, Cody & Denea
Comfort, Jeff & Julie	Klasen, Kyle	Poganski, Rock & Marcia	Von Wahlde, Dan & Brenda
Costello, Kevin & Ann	Klasen, Vern & Marlene	Powers, Robert & Kathleen	Vowles, Willm & Dawn
Coulson, Brad & Jane	Klocker, Barbara	Provinzino, Chuck & Jannine	Waldvogel, Dennis
Damrow, Paul & June	Kloos, Mike & Becky	Pundsack, Craig & Lisa	Walker, Tom
Davis, Scott & Marjo	Kluempke, Cathy	Rahn, Dave & Lisa	Walters, George & Sue
Denne, Marv & Mary Beth	Kluempke, Cathy	Rasmussen, Steve	Wander, Dave & Joan
Dickhaus, Bob & Kris	Koch, Bob & Connie	Refsland, Curt & Mary	Ward, Rick & Missy
Dinndorf, Don & Vi	Konsor, Stephen & Karen	Richardson, David & Anna	Warnert, Ron & Lee Meyer
Dobesh, Jeff & Jill	Kotsmith, Randy & Karen	Rieger, Joel & Pamela	Weber, Tom
Dubiel, Marvin & Pam	Kotsmith, Terry & Sharon	Rieland, Chuck & Lucy	Wehlage, Mike & Julie
Duevel, Jerome & Kim	Krig, Gary & Peg	Rieland, Matt & Shari	Weitzel, John & Mary
Duncomb, Bruce & Vicki	Kuehne, Robert	Rieland, Mike & Mary	Weitzel, Michele
Elfering Family, Evelyn	Kuehne, Ron & Midge	Rieland, Shirley	Welle, Larry & Rose
Enneking, Gene & Cheryl	Kuhlmann, Mary	Ritter, Greg & Barb	Westbrock, Bruce & Linda
Erdmann, Mark & Summer	Kunkel, Phil & Rose	Roe, John & Janet:Member	Worms, Steven & Shirley
Erickson, Russell	Kutter, Lee & Gay	Rolfes, Chuck	Zaborski, Tom & Julia
Ersland, Mary Kay	Kutter, Robert & Nancy:Member	Rothstein, Gary & Ruth	Zachman, Jeff & Linda
Everding, Matt & Missy Kotzer	Kutter, Wayne & Sherry	Rudolph, Jerry & Deb	Zackoski, Michael & Kimberly
Eveslage, Steve & Sarah	Lafayette Resort	Russell, Jim & Mindy	Zaczkowski, Marie
Falk, Jeremy & Jennifer	Larson, Brendan & Debi	Rutherford, Peter & Lourel	Zehrer, Bill & Pam
First, Pete & Nicole	Larson, Maxwell & Brenda	Rutherford, Tyler & Amy	Zezen, Art & Marilyn
Flanders, Josh & Stacy	Lemieux, BJ & Rachel	Sabrowsky, Gary	Zimmer, Chris & Sarah
Flaws, Michael & Marilyn	Lilligren, Kirk & Cathy	Sadlowsky, Mike & Vicki	Zimmerman, Lowell & Kris
Fox, Thomas & Laurie	Lind, James & Maryellen	Sand, Daniel & Mary	
Freeman, Dave & Sue	Linn, Mike & Denise	Savage, William & Sharon	
Frerichs Frank, Jane	Linz, Curtis & Mary	Schanhaar, Tom & Deb	

SPONSORSHIP AS OF JULY 8TH 2024



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Melrose Plumbing & Heating Services Inc	Melrose
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Hennen Lumber Co Inc	Freeport
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Update Buiding Supplies, LLC	Grey Eagle
Becky's Salon	Grey Eagle
Nancy's Bait & Tackle	Grey Eagle
Grey Eagle Electric Inc	Grey Eagle
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Tekela observes rare loon event

In a recent edition of the Outdoor News, regular columnist, Stan Tekela wrote about a phenomenon in his study of loons.

For 20 years he has been photographing, and studying the common loon's nesting, egg laying, chick hatching, and raising.

The common loon nests once a year, usually lays two eggs, which it incubates for a month.

On Big Birch it is common to see a pair of loons with two chicks. After a few days or week there may be only one due to predators like turtles, eagles,

even large fish. About 50 percent of the hatchlings will make it to one year of age

according to Tekela.

Sometimes a chick separated from its

parents will take up with another pair of loons. However, the offspring of the adults don't accept the newcomer and it has to stay on the periphery, lose out on getting as much food as the others and will be smaller.

What did Tekela see this year? A family of six loons. Two adults and four chicks the same size. This is an extremely rare incidence.

So keep your eye open on Big Birch for any unusual event of nature.

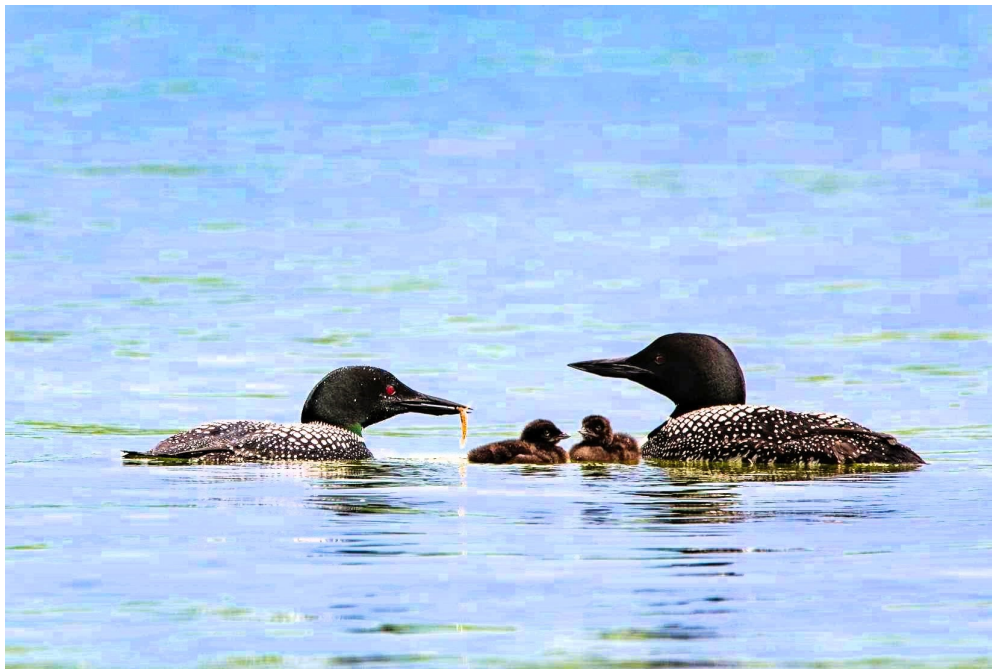


Photo from Richard Ward. Loon family photo taken by his daughter Mikayla Ward on Memorial Day 2024.