



CAPTAIN OTTY'S LOG

OTTY LAKE ASSOCIATION • OCTOBER 2021

President's Message

from Kirsten Brouse



It's been another beautiful, hot summer on Otty. I hope you've been able to keep cool while enjoying everything our lake has to offer. I feel so lucky to have had a chance to play and connect with family and friends (safely!), and to enjoy some fleeting moments of quiet at the lake this summer (which can be hard to come by with two little ones around!).

In this new role, I've also been thinking about what we can do to ensure the lake continues to be a special place for all our Otty Lake neighbours - human and otherwise - for years to come.

The Otty Lake Association has always played an important role in the stewardship of our lake, and it is critical that that work continues, and grows, as new challenges present themselves. This year we have accessed funding through FOCA to help fight invasive phragmites in our watershed - which threaten our wetland ecosystems. I hope you'll visit our website to find out more and help us in this work. We are also continuing our water sampling work, our shoreline planting initiative, and organizing both land and water cleanups to keep our lake beautiful and healthy.

The OLA Board continues to explore what we can do to improve boat safety on Otty Lake. How can we make motorized and non-motorized boating safe for people and our shoreline? We are currently considering an initiative to mark some of the more dangerous shoals on the lake, and will continue sharing informa-



Photo: Iqbal Umar

tion about no-wake zones and the importance of boating 30 meters out to minimize shoreline erosion.

Finally, this year we're thinking more than ever about reconciliation with indigenous peoples and better understanding our collective history. What role can and should lake associations play in our national truth and reconciliation conversation? I'd love to hear your thoughts as we begin exploring this question.

Thanks, as always, to the many

vunteers who make the Otty Lake community so vibrant, including those who make this newsletter happen! We'd love for you to join us - you can reach out to ola@ottylakeassociation.ca to get involved.

Happy fall to you all, until next time.

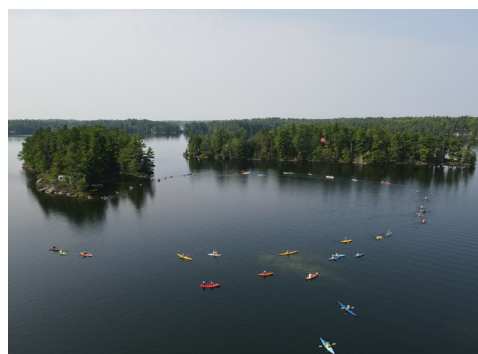


Photo: Doug Close

IN THIS ISSUE

2000 iNaturalist Observations	2
Paddle Power 2021	2
Loon Baby Boom	2
Shoreline Clean Up 2021	3
Garbage At The Lake	3
Butterfly Garden Looking For Help	3
Jebbs Creek Embayment Update	4
Otty Lake Levels	5
OLA Mapping Project 2021	5
Trumpeter Swans Passing Through	6
Around The Lake	7
Whos That Knocking At My Door	8
Our New OLA Board	8
2021 AGM	8

LARGE-LEAVED ASTERS, TIGER LILIES AND BEARS, OH MY!

We surpassed 2000 observations on the Otty Lake iNaturalist project by the start of September thanks to “charrob” posting many plant pictures. “Jennj” captured trail camera images of the three little bears and “parasitengona” continues to add new species almost daily, bringing the count to 994.

Fall is the time to document the last of the flowers, trees in full

colour, hatchling turtles and migrating birds including waterfowl. We still need to document common fish such as perch, pike and rock bass. Check through your camera roll for images you can upload from your summer on the lake. When will we reach 1000 species? Join us if you haven't already: <https://inaturalist.ca/projects/otty-lake>. *Kit Muma*

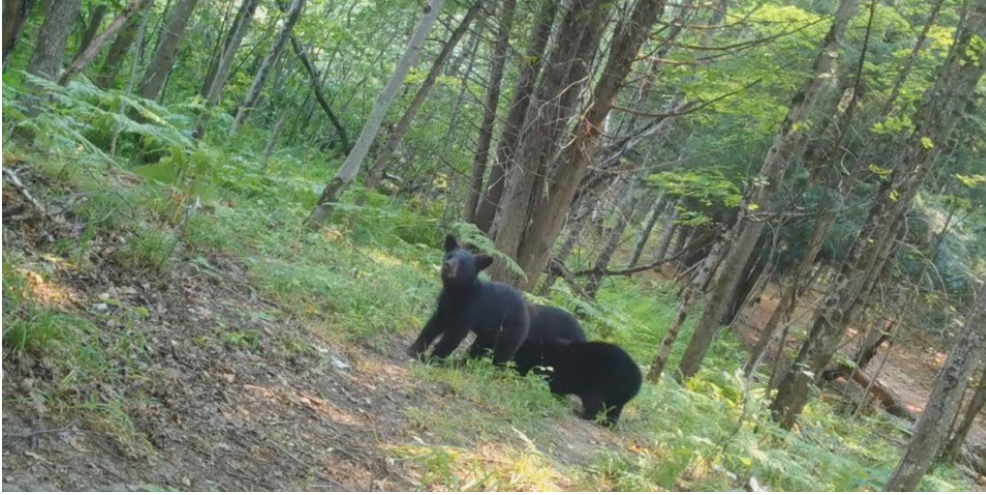


Photo: Jennifer Jilks (Stealth Cam)

LOON BABY BOOM

Otty Lake welcomed a bumper crop of baby loons this year, with four pairs nesting successfully! Three pairs produced single babies, and one lucky couple welcomed twins! This year there was a wide range in birthdates – some of the babies, born in early June, are approaching adult size, while others, born in mid-July, still have their fuzz.



Photo: Mary Brown

The babies have enthralled eager observers (from afar!) this year as they learned to fish and spread their wings.

At this point in the year, loons begin to gather as their long migration approaches. The baby loons will be left by their parents in the next few weeks, to fend for themselves. They'll need more time here to continue to grow and get strong enough to make the trek themselves. With three chicks still in their fuzzy feathers, it will be interesting to see if their parents stay here a while longer this year to help them fish and learn to fly. The current year's baby loons generally stay around until just before ice-in, and so there remain many opportunities to watch and appreciate these magnificent birds this year.

Kyla Haley

PADDLE POWER 2021

On Saturday, August 21st, Otty Lake paddlers assembled for the 7th annual event. This year we mustered at 44°49'59"N x 76°13'58"W, nestled amongst Ruby, Clegg, and Buck Islands. This beautiful location provided shelter from any wind and a wonderful cliff backdrop for our group photo.

Our best count is 56 craft and 65 participants in canoes, kayaks, stand-up paddleboards and children's small craft! Representation came from all areas of the lake on this sunny, calm morning to share in this peaceful gathering. We were privileged to be joined by a pair of loons and their offspring who shared new diving skills with excited onlookers!

Special thanks are extended to drone operators Doug Jones and Cory Read, tour leaders Kit Muma and Bruce Smith, and property owners Janet and Jim Coward who welcomed videotaping from their cliffs. The group paddle was well documented as paddlers wove their way among the Burns Way channel islands!

Please mark your calendars as Paddle Power is an annual event, falling on the third Saturday of August, next year being August 20th! Hope to see you there! [See some photos](#) of the event.

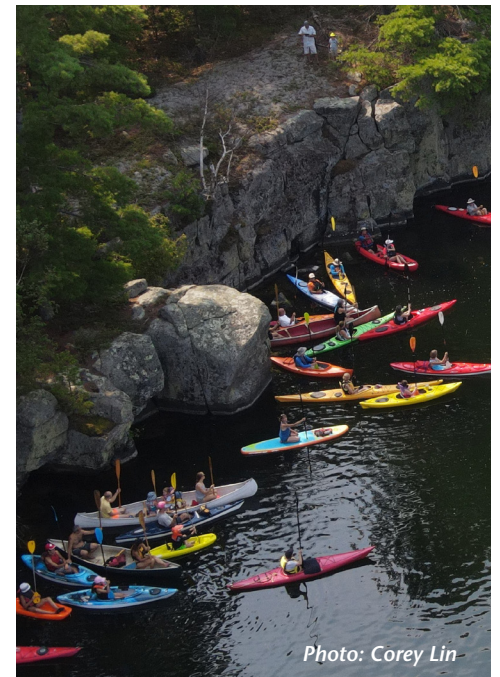


Photo: Corey Lin

OTTY LAKE SHORELINE CLEAN-UP 2021



In order to preserve the high quality of our lakewater environment, it is important to keep garbage from accumulating and then degrading in and around Otty Lake. In addition to being detrimental to water quality, trash can be hazardous to wildlife

and unattractive to the recreational lake user.

To this end I initiated an effort to identify and remove garbage from Otty Lake. Lake users were encouraged to identify shoreline waste and its location. With the help of Kevin Terrion, Jim Coward, and Doug Brown, trash was removed from Crown lands and the shoreline of Otty Lake in July and August. Several property owners and visitors to the lake also helped by collecting or identifying trash as they camped on or paddled around the lake. They advised us of location, removed the trash themselves, or delivered their collection to me for disposal.

In all, we removed a total of 130 kg (287 lbs) of material. We collected nine tires, one sailboard, an electric

blanket, and an assortment of plastic, metal, and glass trash. This filled a 4 x 8 trailer for the trip to the Drummond/North Elmsley (DNE) Code Road waste disposal site, commonly referred to as "The Dump".

With thanks to Cathie Green, from DNE Public Works, we were able to dispose of the waste at no cost. There is no charge for tires or metal and DNE waived the tipping fees for the other materials we collected.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their help and support in making our lake a more beautiful place.

David Murray

GARBAGE AT THE LAKE – KEEPING IT CLEAN

Trash Tips and Tricks

The best summer job I ever had was with the District of Muskoka lagoons and landfills division. Most of the job was cleaning up garbage bags that had been ripped open by raccoons and bears (a smelly job, but hey, I was outside all summer, and I had my own truck!). Here are some tips to avoid this messy situation around Otty Lake.

- Follow the garbage and recycling guidance from your township
 - a. [Drummond/North Elmsley](#) (some curbside pick-up)
 - b. [Tay Valley](#) (guidance re: recycling and garbage depots)
- Provide renters with clear information about how to manage waste (e.g. how to keep animals out of waste on your property; where to take their garbage and recycling; when and how to put waste out for collection)
- Put your waste out on the day of collection (instead of the night before when possible)



- Use **animal-proof bins** on your property AND when putting garbage and recycling out for collection in wildlife areas
- As a last resort, **throw an old blanket over your garbage** to fool the crows (though I'm not sure if that would fool those savvy raccoons!)
- Finally, make it easy on yourself and have your garbage collected at your dock! A student-run service provided dock-side garbage collection each Sunday in August on Otty Lake. Stay tuned to the [OLA Facebook page](#) for future opportunities.

Kirsten Brouse

BUTTERFLY GARDEN LOOKING FOR HELP

A news release about the Butterfly Garden at the Perth Wildlife Reserve generated several new volunteers, including one from Otty Lake. Their first task will be a fall garden cleanup and restoration of one of the overgrown beds on Sept. 25th. Karen Hunt, a former Otty Lake resident, is one of a dozen core volunteers who have been nurturing the butterfly garden since it was installed at the conservation area in 2005. Several beds are in need of an overhaul in the next few years, and the group will need help to get it done. To learn more or to volunteer, email murkarhunt@gmail.com or goodlife@myhighspeed.ca. For more information about the Perth Wildlife Reserve visit <https://www.rvca.ca/conservation-areas/fee-required/perth-wildlife-reserve-ca>



OTTY LAKE LEVELS 2021



I am sure you noticed that Otty lake levels were higher this summer than in 2020. In fact the lake was 13 cm higher in May, 14 cm higher in June,

and 18 cm higher in July. At the end of August the lake was still slightly higher than last August, even after several weeks of intense heat and drought.

Otty Lake drains out through Jebbs Creek. One of the reasons that the levels were high was the construction of a beaver dam at the southern side of the Rideau Ferry bridge which completely eliminated flow down Jebbs after June 13th (see photo). The dam was partially breached by the County on

July 2, but there was no flow out of Otty after July 18th as the channel became choked with aquatic vegetation. This is still the situation as I write this note on September 1.

OTTYLAKE ASSOCIATION 2021 MAPPING PROJECT

The new 2021 Otty Lake Association map was produced in May to replace the earlier 2011 version. The many updates include showing locations of rock outcrops, shoals, no-wake zones and updated PIN numbers.

A huge thank you to our Area Counsellors who were our prime distribution agents during their annual spring and summer visitations to residents in their neighbourhoods. Thanks to all members and purchasers for their support of this initiative.

This 2021 map was created and produced with two main goals in mind, one being to promote safe boating on Otty Lake by showing and encouraging the use of "No Wake Zones" located 30 metres off mainland and islands, the various rock outcrops, and underwater hazards that could damage watercraft and

motors. The second goal was to produce a map as a guide, especially for new residents to Otty Lake, to the many island names and bays, road names along the near shore, and PIN numbers.

To date, approximately 400 of the 550 maps produced have been distributed. One free map to each resident with an OLA membership and a \$5.00 cost for additional maps including to non-OLA members. We are mindful also of the OLA members who could not travel to their cottages this year due to COVID restrictions, and several maps will be held for distribution once these restrictions have been lifted.

We held a successful one-hour pop-up map and membership event in the parking area at Otty Lake Sideroad and Kenyon Road. A wonderful story was shared by two young ladies who

High water levels raise at least four issues. First, it is the policy of the Conservation Authority and the Municipality that beaver dams cannot be removed before July 1 in case lowering water levels would negatively impact bass nests in very shallow nearshore areas of the lake. Second, Jay Hendry, who has a science background and is a very avid observer of the Otty loon population, informs me that high water inundated several preferred loon nesting locations this summer. This caused loons to delay nesting, so chicks were born later in the summer than usual. Hopefully they have had sufficient time to mature before the weather turns cold. Third, there has been a historical controversy that people with fixed dock elevations or other shoreline structures preferred a lower, more natural water level. And fourth, some people prefer higher lake levels. I, for example, believe that high water has a positive impact on lake water quality. I have sampled the lake monthly since May for nutrients and bacteria, conducted the Lake Partners program, and monitored the physical limnology of Otty Lake weekly since March 28th. I will submit these databases and a short summary report to the OLA when monitoring is completed in early October.

Derek Smith, Lake Steward

were awaiting our arrival to purchase four maps: one for their parents with a cottage on the south shore, one for a neighbour, one for grandparents who lived down the lake and had purchased a new boat, and the last to be carried by the girls. In using the boat, they would take their map and a cell phone to report their travels. This family fulfilled both OLA goals: safe boating and the use of the map as a location guide!

Additional maps can be purchased by contacting Ian McDonald at india.mike51@gmail.com.



TRUMPETER SWANS PASSING THROUGH THIS FALL

October and November is the time of year when we will be seeing trumpeter swans passing through on their way to their winter homes. These beautiful birds are the largest native waterfowl species in North America and the largest swan in the world. And what is even more amazing is that they were once almost extinct in Canada.

There are three wild swan species that breed in Canada. The trumpeter swan (*Cygnus buccinator*) is entirely white, has a long neck, a black bill with black facial skin in front of the eye, and black legs. The males can weigh almost 14 kg, have a wingspan of more than 2 m, and can reach 1.2 m. in height. Their nests are huge too - they can be up to a metre tall and two metres across. Each clutch is three to eight eggs, and the little cygnets are grey for their first year. Their average life span is 12 years, and they begin to breed in their third or fourth year. Usually the trumpeters mate for life.

Because the swans are herbivores they enjoy shoreline vegetation and feeding on aquatic plants in open, shallow water. They have been spotted on Otty Lake in the spring and fall (you can see photos on the OLA Facebook page), but not usually in between, usually no more than about 12 at a time. Sometimes they are spotted in harvested agricultural fields. A large flock of 94 was spotted in the open water at Chaffey's Lock mid-December last year.

The trumpeter swan decline began in the 1700s as they were hunted for their meat. Europeans also used their skin for powder puffs, and their feathers for writing quills and hat adornments. After 1886 there were no wild trumpeter swans to be found in Ontario, and they were put on Canada's list of endangered species in 1978.

There is an interesting link between trumpeter swans and muskrats and beavers as well, as trumpeters sometimes nest on top of those dens



Photo:
Kitt Muma

and dams. So it is thought that overhunting of those animals also reduced the swan population.

But in the early 80s, thanks to the efforts of Harry Lumsden, a biologist with MNR, a restoration project began. Trumpeter swan eggs were brought in from Alberta and later Alaska, the hatched swans were protected for two years then released at 52 sites in Southern Ontario. Lumsden continued to lead the program after he retired, establishing a volunteer tagging and banding program. Twenty to 40 percent of Ontario swans have been banded with a metal band on one of their legs and a yellow tag with a three digit number on their wing. If you see a swan with one of these tags, you can report it [using this link](#).

According to Gary Lane, who tabulates the swan sightings, the swans arrive at their wintering sites in November and begin to leave in March for their summer nesting spots, predominantly in central and southern

Ontario wetlands.

Trumpeter swans were removed from Canada's endangered species list in 1996, but they still require protection. The biggest threat to the swans is lead poisoning from lead sinkers from fishing lines and lead shot from waterfowl hunting. Additional threats are habitat loss, poaching, harassment by humans, and collisions with power lines.

Much of the above is taken from "[Trumpeting a Victory](#)" by Patricia Hluchy, in the summer 2021 issue of "ON nature" magazine. Other good sources of information are [All About Birds](#), where you can also hear a recording of their calls. For more on restoration programs in Canada, see [The Trumpeter Swan Society](#). If you want to report or look at specific sightings, consult [eBird](#) or [iNaturalist](#).



Photo:
Jennifer Jilks

Otty Lake Clothing. We would still welcome a volunteer to oversee the sale of Otty Lake polos, T-shirts, sweatshirts, hoodies and ball caps, and potentially investigate other promotional items. There has been very little activity lately on this front as previous sales tended to be in person at the AGM. This might be a good way for someone to contribute to the Otty Lake community without going to meetings! Email ola@ottylakeassociation.ca if you would like to explore the possibility.

Phragmites Removal. By the time you read this newsletter, our first phragmites removal project will have taken place. A group of Otty Lake volunteers will be removing a stand of invasive phragmites on Loon's Way the morning of October 13 (or October 14 if it rains!) The resources for this project were made possible with a grant from the Green Shovels Collaborative. Some of you may have participated in the Invasive Phragmites webinar on April 22, a partnership of the OLA and the Friends of the Tay Watershed. Phragmites are here in Lanark County! Early detection of small stands and their removal is essential to keeping this very aggressive invasive plant from taking over. Read more on our [Invasive Species page](#). We will let you know how it goes in our February 2021 issue.



Phragmites on Wildlife Road by Karen Hunt

Fire Permits. Just a reminder from Drummond/North Elmsley Tay Valley Fire Rescue that a permit is required for all open air burning, and they have moved to an online permit system. Residents who registered for a permit prior to June 1, 2021 need to re-apply and should do so by November 30, 2021. Complete your permit application online at dnetv.burnpermits.com or call 613-267-2596. All open-air fire permits are FREE. When you register you can choose to receive notifications regarding risk level and fire bans by text, email, or phone.

Lake Links 2021. Lake Links is celebrating its 20th anniversary! Register for the online workshop taking place Saturday, October 23rd at 10 a.m. to “Take the Challenge!” Guest speakers will focus on connecting what we say and actually do in order to protect our lakes and rivers. Registration is free, but donations are welcome. Use this link: <https://watersheds.ca/lake-links-2021/>. This is an important annual event organized by Watersheds Canada, and up until 2019 was an all-day event held at the Perth Civitan Club. Several representatives from the OLA usually attend, but it is open to anyone.



Lanark County Plastic Bag Ban. Lanark County is encouraging local businesses and residents to voluntarily participate in a single-use plastic straw and bag ban, which started July 1. The initiative is part of the county's Climate Action Plan and aligns with the federal goal of eliminating plastic waste. “Bring your reusable bag” window stickers are free for businesses to display at their entrances. Develop some new habits so you can say no to plastic: leave your reusable bags near your front door or in your car, invest in reusable bags you like, have foldable bags you can keep in your purse and search your home – you probably have lots already!

Membership Renewal. We are happy to report we have had at least 241 OLA membership renewals in 2021, including 79 families who had not paid the year before. It is never too late to pay your \$25 membership if you haven't got around to it. When paying by e-transfer, please make a point of using the message line to indicate your lake address. If using a cheque that does not have identifying information printed on it, please attach a note.

Freshwater Stewardship Community. Watersheds Canada has organized a virtual community of lake and river associations, individuals, and other organizations to connect and work together to protect freshwater and shoreline areas. Launched in January 2021, the community already involves 900 Canadians. Recordings of their monthly webinars, on topics such as invasive species, plastics in our waterways and family activities for exploring watersheds, are available [on their website](#).

Barb Hicks

WHO'S THAT KNOCKING AT MY DOOR?

Thank you for the warm welcome that the Otty Lake Area Counsellors received this year! We started with an email that included your full Spring Information Package of articles pertaining to life on the lake as well as information about membership payment and the date established for our Annual General Meeting. While we continue to be safety conscious, Area Counsellors made visits and phone calls, trying to contact every resident in their neighbourhood to reconnect, answer questions, identify concerns, and update contact information.

All relevant data was submitted to the OLA spreadsheet manager in early July and financial information was added by the treasurer where applicable. A second subset was then released to each Area Counsellor in August for a final review and visit to residents to complete this year's update.

Area Counsellors play an important role in the communication link between the Otty Lake Board and the residents. They provide friendly solutions to problems when possible and seek further details on your behalf when needed. They welcome new residents and review current issues.

We have three Area Counsellor openings for the spring of 2022. Prospective counsellors should be friendly, engaged, understanding of resident concerns, and have a keen interest in our lake. If you live in areas 1A, 8, or Maple Glen and are interested in further information, please email me at read2read@outlook.com. (See your new map for area locations!) We thank you for your involvement in the life of our lake and hope that you will feel free to contact us should a concern or question arise.

Need contact information for your Area Counsellor? [Check this link](#).
Gail Read

OLA BOARD

Kirsten Brouse is the OLA's new President! She was elected at our July 8 Annual General Meeting. This is great news! Over the past year we had taken the interim measure of operating with a leadership team of Kirsten, Rachel Roth and Barb Hicks. Other board positions were established at a board meeting at the home of David and Susan Murray on August 2.

Keith Desjardins will be our new First Vice-President, and **Jen O'Donoghue** will be our new Treasurer. Keith and Jen, a married couple, are relative newcomers to the OLA Board, having joined February 20, 2021.

Linda Cuthbertson has agreed to be our Recording Secretary for meetings, and **Barb Hicks** will continue to act as Communications Secretary. Since that meeting, **David and Susan Murray**, who also joined the board Feb. 20, 2021, have agreed to look after our membership data.

Kevin Terrion will take over as Lake Steward from Derek Smith effective next year. We will miss the wisdom and historical knowledge of Ian McDonald, who is retiring from the OLA board. He and his wife, Gail Read, will both continue to be involved in various Otty Lake projects.

A quick count will show that we have 14 board members. According to our constitution, we can accommodate up to 15 members, which means the door is open for anyone else who would like to join the team. Please send an email to Kirsten if you would like to explore the possibility.

2021 Board Members

Kirsten Brouse – President
Keith Desjardins – Vice-President
Reid Kilburn – Past President
Jen O'Donoghue – Treasurer
Linda Cuthbertson –
Recording Secretary
Barb Hicks – Communications
Secretary, Website and
Log
David and Susan Murray –
Membership
Members at Large:
Robert Cosh
Kyla Haley – Loon Survey
Cathy Kari
Anne Scotton
Kevin Terrion
Rachel Roth

If you would like to get in touch with any of these Board Members, please send an e-mail to ola@ottylakeassociation.ca identifying who it is you would like to reach and it will be redirected.

2021 AGM

Our 2021 Annual General Meeting went off without a hitch on July 8, thanks to the careful planning of our AGM Committee of Kirsten Brouse, Kyla Haley, Reid Kilburn and Keith Desjardins. In addition to OLA activity reports, financial and elections, we voted on a few tweaks to the constitution. The most important of these was allowing for an alternative officer structure should no one be available to take on the presidency of the OLA Board. And while two signatures are still required on cheques or financial agreements, only one person must be an officer of the board. The other person can be anyone else designated by the board.

Jenn Lamoureux from the RVCA gave us an update on the Jebbs Creek Embayment Project and we had updates from both Noelle Reeve and Brian Campbell of Tay Valley Township and Steve Fournier from Drummond / North Emsley Township. OLA members Kit Muma and Bruce Smiths gave a demonstration of how to use the iNaturalist website to post and browse observations from the natural world.

With any luck, we will be back to an in person AGM in 2022. Various documents related to the AGM are posted on our [meetings page](#).