



Dominic and Members of the BLIA:

Ruth Ann and I got up to Bay Lake a little late this year: June 1, 2015. As the Loon Watcher for the Minnesota DNR, we took the pontoon around the lake several times. On June 3, for example, we counted only 8 loons. On June 7, we counted 7 loons. On June 11, we counted 19 loons.

Last night, Wednesday, June 17, the lake was like glass--very quiet indeed. It turned out to be a perfect night for counting our beloved loons. But this time, we had 4 adults and 2 children on the pontoon watching for loons. My son, Andy, was superb in spotting loons some distance away.

*On this perfect night for spotting loons, we saw loons everywhere. In all the years that I have been counting loons, the most I have seen is like 27 or 28. Last night, believe it or not, **WE ACTUALLY COUNTED A TOTAL OF 38 LOONS.** I never dreamed that Bay Lake had that many loons.*

If any of you have tried counting loons, you know how unscientific it is. It is very difficult to cover the entire lake. Last night, we covered most of it. In counting 38 loons--with one chick spotted--I have never counted that many before. You have to assume that we missed at least a few. I am sending a copy of this email to Kevin Woizeschke, the Minnesota DNR Nongame Wildlife Specialist.

I think most of you know how very special the Loons of Bay Lake are to everyone on the lake. The state of Minnesota has only 12,000 loons. This is such a small number compared to the millions of ducks and geese that we see every year in Minnesota. Who knows? If the global weather systems are changing as some scientists believe, in 50 years there might not be any left in most of Minnesota. I hope that is not the case because we understand that the loons on our lake are central to the beauty and quality of life for Bay Lake.

Most people in America have not seen a loon or even heard of the loons. But we know how basic and special they are for all of us living on Bay Lake or one of the lakes of central and northern Minnesota. Let me put it to you this way: if for some reason or another, there were no loons left on Bay Lake, **OUR LAKE SIMPLY WOULD NEVER BE THE SAME. PERIOD. AMEN. GOODNIGHT.** So we have to do everything we can to preserve the quality and cleanliness of our lakes to preserve the loons wanting to live on Bay Lake.

Six or seven years ago, I wrote a paper on the loons of Minnesota entitled "THE MOST MAGICAL BIRD IN THE WORLD: THE COMMON LOON." Jack Ruttger decided to buy about 300 for people to buy at his stores and they were all soon sold out. Any monies went to the BLIA. I only have 2 or 3 left.

Let me reaffirm the last paragraph in my paper on the loons: "The truth is, wherever the Common Loons are, they are revered and loved. Whether they live in Minnesota, New Hampshire, or Canada, the Common Loon is the flagship bird. What other bird has four calls that remind people of a long forgotten pristine wilderness? What other bird is looked upon as both peaceful and mysterious and as both profound and enigmatic? What other bird leaves people with a feeling of awe and wonder? People have been connecting with loons for thousands of years. We can only hope that connection will continue for years and years to come."

Finally, in their book, IN LOVE OF LOONS, Kate Crowley and Mike Link sum up the feelings that so many people have of this bird with a poem from Sigurd Olson: "Each night we sat there looking down the waterway, listening to the loons filling the darkening narrows with wild reverberating music. No one spoke. We sat there so removed from the rest of the world and with a sense of complete remoteness that any sound would have been sacrilege."

All the best,

Jon Wefald
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