

LOONEY

September, 2009

I'm looking at the depth sounder, cruising up the lake at the narrows. Ivory is on the bow, looking like a hood ornament. We are both hunting fish. The hump and the trough near the speed limit sign have my attention. Walleyes are in the trough today. Out of the corner of my eye a white streak rockets - left. Ivory has left the boat...like a missile out of a silo. At not quite two years old, the retriever training and instinct trumps all and she is on a mission.



October 24, 2013

The Newsletter of Plum Lake Association



It's early fall and a young loon has surfaced 20 feet off the boat. At the sight of this approaching white meteor, it turns away and paddles until it knows the dog is faster and then dives. Dog circles, ready. Adult loon comes up in her face not 5 feet away and

starts her funky chicken dance, wobbling away, *just* ahead of the dog. Young loon surfaces to the right. If you know dogs, you know that Ivory is now in dog heaven. This is the definition of too much fun.

Every time Ivory turns to the young one, the adult pops up closer and sucks her away. This goes on for a couple minutes. I think the loons are having as much fun as the dog.

For those of you who are appalled that I am torturing loons, I assure you I have done my best to get this increasingly irritating puppy back in the damn boat – and I am now calling it the

“DAMN BOAT!!”

at the top of my lungs. Finally, the loons dive together - man catches dog and yanks it back in the boat, attaching a *SHORT* leash to a seat.

It is now 4 years later and Ivory has learned she can't catch loons. Boat "*launches*" are less common. That day, proximity allowed me to notice green over silver bands on the right leg on the adult – the Plum West Bay male. I saw that loon a couple of weeks ago, before I left Sayner. I have been back for a day now, October 7 and heard a call last night. I toured the lake today. One young loon remains and its calls are unanswered. The adults leave before the kids and our nesting pairs have gone. It is about that time.



The Starlight Bay family

Today, Ivory is an observer and if I read her body language right, she is thoroughly disgusted. Like all tuned-in hunting partners, we read each other pretty well. I know what she's thinking.Come ON, boss...it's October !!.... it's **DUCK** season for crying out loud and what are **WE** doing? **WE** are playing with these big dumb loons. **WHATEVER HAPPENED TO FAT MALLARDS??**

AJR

Fifteen or so of our North Country loons have satellite telemetry devices in addition to their leg bands. The closest to Plum is a Star Lake loon. Others are on Manitowish, the Flambeau Flowage and some lakes in the eastern UP. Like many of you, the loons are snowbirds. But, unlike you, they own their own airline and take the scenic route. I thought you might like to have a look at the itinerary of a couple of our loons.

Loon #107227:

Her breeding lake is Star Lake (so let's call her Star). She spent the summer on Star Lake and started moving around to West Plum and Trout and Big Muskellunge in late August and September, probably "workin out" for the big trip that was coming any day. In October, she moved down to Big Saint, and Pickerel and on November 14, she left the Northwoods. Moving south, on November 21 to 29 she spent some vacation time on the east shore of Lake Michigan near Ludington. Rested, she started the big push and did not stop until December 2, in the Gulf, off the Florida Panhandle near Destin.....then on December 12, the satellite found her near Orlando (taking the kids to Disney) and then on December 16, Lake George, west of Daytona. On December 19th, she moved off-shore and she was home for the winter, 150 nautical miles south of Apalachicola, Florida in the big water of the Gulf of Mexico.

It was in the deep open water of the Gulf that Star molted, ate seafood, dodged oil slicks and maybe drank margarita's until early April. Suddenly anxious for the home turf, she left on April 16th and made the trip without changing planes, arriving on April 18th at Shawano Lake. She was home, on Star Lake, the next day.

Loon #107262

His breeding lake is Frenchman lake, in the Upper Pennisula. "Yoooper" left the UP in late October and putzed his way south through Green Bay, Michigan and Huron to Lake Erie by November 17th. He left the next day and on November 20, he was in Albemarle Sound on the Atlantic, in northern South Carolina. This was his wintering ground, where he ate tidal run fish pushed through the gap for 5 months. He left April 2nd and with a layover on Lake Erie on the 3rd, he pushed north to his Frenchman Lake home (in time to vote) on April 6th.



The Starlight Bay Pair

10/21/2013
Wind NW 20-30
30 degrees
Snow



Tree Drops

Eleven new trees hit the water today on Plum, completing our second phase of this project. The habitat provided is badly needed and will shelter our young of the year fish this winter.

SHORT CASTS

- On October 21st, there was still one loon remaining on Plum.
- Early reports of fall shocking, measuring this years Walleye reproduction were not encouraging on Plum. Walleye young of the year numbered around 15 per mile. The minimum acceptable is thought to be 15 to 20 per mile. Plum has reportedly often been in the 50 per mile range. More on this later as we follow up with WDNR.
- The next issue of **LOON HOOTS** will discuss our plans to give our resident loons some support. Nesting success was down this year and we are working with WDNR on options and opportunities.

Forgetful?

27 members have not paid dues.

It causes us extra work.

There is a lot to do.

We don't need the exercise.

So, as lovingly as we can state it, it would be really nice if you 27 would **GET THE LEAD OUT....**

PLEASE SEND US A CHECK!

\$50.

PLA

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If you don't know if you are on the list, write me or Cheryl and we will let you know.

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