

“Our Glimmerglass”



A Newsletter from the Otsego Lake Association

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Dear Friends of the Otsego Lake Association,

The summer of 2014 was a great time on Otsego Lake! Our first annual boat parade was a huge success and great fun for participants and onlookers. Plans are already in the offing for next year’s parade that promises to be bigger and better than ever. Keeping with the theme of boating, our annual meeting in August was a nostalgic look back at historic navigation on the lake with a timely update from our expert board members on the health of our waters and fishery.

This summer also was a time of continued concern for environmental threats. Paul H. Lord addresses the battle against invasive species in his informative article in this newsletter. Following the mandate from our membership, we have also urged the county board to pass legislation that would prohibit the transportation of live material from one body of water to the next. We also have supported the lake steward program and have made significant advances in recruitment and inspection at both Lake Front and Springfield launch sites. OLA continues as well to be a major supporter of the Biological Field Station’s volunteer dive team.

Another matter of great personal concern to many members, and of significant environmental concern, is the DOT pin #916637 construction project on Route 80. Keeping with our mission of supporting the implementation of the Plan for the Management of the Otsego Lake Watershed, the OLA Board of Directors has taken a strong position requesting a sustainable, long-term solution to the road repair which

addresses drainage, utilizes alternative technologies to repair the roadway, and does not rely on rip rap to stabilize the lake embankment. We have also shared our experience with plantings at the buffer strips that have provided aesthetic natural vegetation that has reduced the amount of storm water runoff and sediment entering the lake.

During the upcoming year, we will continue to monitor and advocate for these important issues while planning for a fun and informative 2015. Although membership forms go out in the Spring newsletter, they are always available on our website, and donations are welcome throughout the year. Thank you for your support of OLA and for joining our efforts to preserve and protect our Glimmerglass!

Sincerely,
Mickie Richtsmeier, President

Lake Stratification

By Kiyoko Yokota, Ph.D., CLM (Professor, SUNY Oneonta and Biological Field Station)

I am relatively new to central New York and I constantly hear from my colleagues at the Biological Field Station (BFS) and my neighbors that winters have been unusually cold. I take them as words of encouragement that next winter will be kinder to a newcomer who has spent countless hours this past winter staring at firewood, emitting only smoke and no tangible heat, inside a wood burning stove in her new home.

Most lakes and ponds that I pass by on daily basis over much of the winter, including Otsego Lake, are covered by solid ice. This past winter my recently adopted 1-year-old dog, a German Shepherd mix named Niko, was reluctant to go outside in the morning without wearing his orange winter dog jacket. He enjoyed exploring the rural neighborhood in Westford with his 3-year-old big brother, my neighbor's yellow lab, and the dogs occasionally ventured out onto the nearby frozen pond.

One of the courses that I teach at SUNY Oneonta's main campus and the BFS is on limnology (limno = lake, -ology = study of). One of the questions that I pose to my students early in the semester is, "Why do lakes not freeze bottom-up?" Any ideas? Water is a unique substance that has the highest density as liquid at 4 °C (39 °F), not when it freezes and becomes solid at 0 °C (32 °F). Most people intuitively know that ice floats on the surface of the lake, just like ice cubes in a glass of water. However, scientifically speaking, this is because ice is less dense (lighter per unit volume) than liquid water. The video link cited below shows a clever demonstration of how this unique property of water contributes to thermal stratification lakes, where you observe warmer water under ice in winter and warmer water on top of colder water in summer (Part one: <http://youtu.be/XExQ6uaDEJQ>, Part two: <http://youtu.be/DIT51AosbcA>). In the winter on Otsego Lake and other waterways that freeze, we observe water that is warmer than 0 °C between the ice cover and the lake bottom (see the temperature vs. depth graph at <http://www.oneonta.edu/academics/biofld/otsegolake.asp> under "Otsego Lake Water Quality Data"), supporting overwintering populations of phytoplankton (microscopic algae), zooplankton such as water flea, and larger aquatic animals such as

fish that feed on the plankton. Otherwise the lakes would experience massive die-offs of the vast majority of organisms as the lakes WOULD freeze bottom up if density of water were NOT the greatest at 4 degrees C and ice (below 0 degrees C) was heavier than liquid water. Fish populations, for example, would have to start over every year from migration from elsewhere or by stocking.

But even without dramatic die-offs, fish populations fluctuate from one year to another, as many anglers would certainly know by their experience. The next time, I will write about what happened to “Otsego Bass” and its current status.

Exotic Jellyfish Now in Otsego Lake

By Paul H. Lord (Instructor, SUNY Oneonta and Research Biological Field Station)

Intermittent reports from around the Otsego Lake this summer indicate yet another exotic species is in our Lake. This one is nothing to be alarmed about EXCEPT that it demonstrates that safeguards in place to prohibit the exotic species introductions into Otsego Lake are not adequate.

Originally, in June, grade school children noted small jellyfish like animals near the outlet to Otsego Lake. On September 3rd, a reputable source reported freshwater jellyfish (*Craspedacusta sowerbyi*) in Otsego Lake to the Biological Field Station (BFS). These freshwater jellyfish are originally from China, but have invaded every continent except Antarctica.

The BFS Volunteer Dive Team investigated, on September 7, 2014, the downwind side of Otsego Lake in hopes of increasing chances of a jellyfish encounter. Moving north from Fairy Spring to approximately half way to Point Judith four snorkelers (Dunn, Skinner, Diaz, and Bernard), one free diver (Lord) and one tender (Wood) snorkeled a total of 4:52 and free-dived for 1:22 with no success. No jellyfish were located. Since that time, all BFS Volunteer Diver activities in the lake have included a jellyfish search component. However, on September 13th, an OLA family located about five and a half miles up Route 80 from Cooperstown reported that their attention was focused on a freshwater jellyfish by "10 – 15 seagulls" attempting to eat it on September 10, 2014. This family notes this is their first sighting of jellyfish in Otsego Lake and that they regularly kayak and boat on the Lake. On October 4, Luke Gervase, a BFS Volunteer Diver and a BFS Lake Management graduate student, saw a *Craspedacusta* in Otsego Lake by the lake water intake for the BFS Main Lab. He was unable to capture it.

On September 14, 2014, the BFS emailed a request for jellyfish sightings notifications to our OLA membership. The BFS is still interested in collecting some of these jellyfish. The jellyfish can be easily caught in a container and kept in a refrigerator. Their stinging capability is too small to pierce human skin. Please call Paul H. Lord at 607-435-4989 or email him at (paul.lord@oneonta.edu) if you see or capture a jellyfish.

Recent History of Otsego Lake Bald Eagles

By Becky Gretton

There is a favorite spot that is visited by Bald Eagle enthusiasts while boating on Otsego Lake. Everyone knows where they can be seen, and if you aren't sure, just focus on the shoreline. Eventually you will see a bright white head and tail, a massive dark brown body, orange feet, and a big orange bill!

This pair of Bald Eagles has been at their current site since the autumn of 2010, when they built their nest. At the end of March 2011 they were bringing nesting material, and eggs were laid. Two eaglet heads were visible by May 9. The eaglets were fledged by the Fourth of July and remained in the area with their parents for the summer.

In mid-February of 2012, the pair was seen mating and they worked on the nest. By mid-March, they were incubating eggs. On April 22, both birds were off the nest at the same time, which means there was hatching. Unfortunately, all activity stopped on April 24. The nesting failed. They do not lay new eggs when this happens.

The nest was active in late January of 2013, with suspected incubation in mid-March. Hatch day was 35 days later, right on schedule! Two strong, active, and well-fed eaglets fledged by early July.

Another successful nesting occurred this year, with two eaglets fledging by the Fourth of July.

We are fortunate to have a secure nest site that is well respected by our lake community. Occasionally I hear from someone who reports a Golden Eagle sighting, and 99% of the time it is a juvenile Bald Eagle looking large and dark with some lighter markings in the wings and body or on the head.

Golden Eagles may be sighted in our area during the winter and I will comment on this topic another time.

Get outdoors and look up: you've got to be there to see them!!! Shortly before writing this article (October 5), I spotted nine Eastern Bluebirds on the wire just up the road from my home. We are indeed fortunate.

Glimmerglass Film Days, November 7-9, 2014

The Glimmerglass Film Days program, sponsored by Otsego 2000, will take place in Cooperstown on November 7-9, 2014. The film festival reportedly will include several award-winning video productions, including local videos, as well as other events such as local food tastings, trail hikes, and bike tours, all scheduled to celebrate the Cooperstown area's incredible natural and historic resources. The theme for the 2014 festival is "water." The OLA is one of the film festival's supporters and the video production that the OLA is supporting is entitled "Watermark." For more information on the event see the website: (<http://www.glimmerglassfilmdays.org>).



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