

Lake Currents

Lake of the Woods Improvement Association

Mute Swan - Yes or No

Swans have long been a symbol of beauty and love.

Their mysterious and unattainable nature has been the subject of colorful literature throughout history, from legends and mythology to the story of the ugly duckling. They are even revered in some religions.

But the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is less than impressed with the mute swan. The Natural Resources Commission recently voted 3-2 in favor of an order prohibiting the release of mute swans back into the wild. The vote will assist a DNR plan to reduce the state's mute swan population by 90 percent over 20 years – from about 15,000 to about 2,000 by the year 2030.

DNR spokeswoman, Mary Dettloff is aware it's a controversial issue. "We understand people like to see swans on their lake because they are big pretty birds," she said. "They are also an invasive, non-native species and they tend to be a very aggressive, destructive bird".

Michigan is home to three species of swans – trumpeter, tundra and mute.

The trumpeter swan is native to Michigan and sports a black bill. The tundra is also native, but tends to pass through the state in a migratory fashion sporting a mostly black bill with some yellow below the

eyes.

The mute swan has an orange bill and bulb and is the most common swan in the state, although it's foreigner. Mute swans are native to Europe, Asia and northern Africa and were introduced into the United States in the late 19th century primarily for ornamental value. In recent decades their rapidly increasing numbers have become a problem.

A total of 756 trumpeter swans were counted in Michigan last year. By comparison, more than 15,000 mute swans are estimated to be in the state. The number of tundra swans is unknown as they relocate to rapidly to be surveyed.



Michigan State University operates the W.K. Kellogg Biological Station in Hickory Corners. According to Environmental Education Coordinator

Kara Haas, the station's bird sanctuary was instrumental in helping reintroduce trumpeter swans to the state in the mid-1990s.

"They seem to be doing OK, though it's not a stable popula-

tion yet", she said. Haas said trumpeter swans remain on the state's threatened and endangered species list, mostly due to the feral nature of mute swans.

Dettloff said the DNR has long had a plan to reduce the state's mute swan population. "They destroy habitat", she said. "They run ducks, loons and other species of swans off of wetlands and lakes. Mute swans destroy submerged vegetation in lakes. That vegetation is important to other water fowl as well as to fish. They destroy other nesting areas.

They have been documented in Michigan as having been aggressive towards humans".

Dettloff said the DNR's plan is to use conservation groups and duck hunting groups to help destroy mute swan eggs and nests over the coming years. Anyone wishing to kill a mute swan must first contact the DNR, which will verify the swan is of the mute species and will issue a permit.

Lake Associations can apply for permits on behalf of all lake residents.

"We have for several years been destroying mute swan nests and eggs because our goal in the next five years is to have zero population growth", Dettloff said. "We could completely eradicate mute swans in Michigan, but we recognize there is a social, aesthetic value".

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Reminder:

2011 dues renewal forms were sent out in January. If you have not returned your form with your \$10.00 dues please mail them to:

Lake of the Woods Improvement Association
P.O. Box 188
Decatur, MI 49045

Thank you for your support!

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Boater Safety Course Set for June 18, 2011

The Association is please to announce it will sponsor the Annual Boating Safety Course at the Webster Library in downtown Decatur on Saturday June 18, 2011, from 8:00 AM to 3:30 PM.

The course will be presented by the Van Buren County Sheriff Department in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. There is no charge for this course and successful students will be awarded their certificate at the conclusion of the class.

Michigan Law states: "Boaters born after

December 31, 1978 are REQUIRED to have a valid Boater Safety Certificate to operate a watercraft on Michigan waterways." The minimum age for operating a personal watercraft is 14. This course will fulfill that Michigan requirement.

Participants must be 12 years of age. PRE REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED by June 11, 2011 Contact: Bill Kiss. 269-423-6592.

Give your Name, Address, Age, Date of Birth and Telephone number. Students are to bring along a sack lunch, pencil and paper.

We encourage adult participation to brush up on the latest boating rules and regulations.

It is also an excellent educational opportunity for anyone considering the purchase of a boat or present boat owners that have never taken a Boating Safety Course and learned the simple rules of the waterways.

The Lake of the Woods Improvement Association is pleased to cooperate with Law Enforcement agencies in order to make the Boating experience safer and more enjoyable for everyone.

Annual Meeting and Picnic

The annual business meeting of the Association and member picnic will be held on July 16, 2011 at the Red Woolfe Park in Decatur, beginning at 1 p.m.

There will be three seats up for election at this year's Annual Meeting in July. The 3-year seats currently held by Andy Broekhuizen, Wayne Potter and Chris Schaap expire. All three individuals plan to seek re-election. Any member in good standing

is eligible to run for any of the three seats.

Following the annual meeting will be the picnic. Please bring a salad or dessert to share for the meal. The Association will provide the meat for grilling and beverages.

This annual gathering is a great way to meet lake residents you may not know and catch up with those you do. Hope to see you there.

Thought for the day...

Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass on a summer day listening to the murmur of water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is hardly a waste of time. ~John Lubbock

Michigan DNR

Everything you want to know about what's going on outdoors in Michigan is just a click away, visit www.michigan.gov/dnr

- Stay current on boating laws
- Get weekly fishing reports
- Purchase fishing and hunting licenses online
- Get answers to questions about:
 - o Boat registration
 - o Fishing and hunting regulations
 - o Find out about state parks:
 - o Locations and fees
 - o Activities—camping, fishing, hiking, boating
- Make campground reservations online

Stay up-to-date on new boating laws

- Call the Michigan Department of Natural Resources at **517-373-1230**
- Visit the Department of Natural Resources website

Annual July 4th Boat Parade

Last year participants had a common theme of the 30th anniversary of the Association and the traditional patriotic red white and blue.



This year lake residents are encouraged to creatively decorate their watercraft for an evening of fun prior to the fireworks display that begins at dusk. Help celebrate America's birthday by joining in on the fun. All those who enter are eligible to win one of four prizes for the best decorated watercraft.

Boaters should muster at the north end of the lake between 6:15 and 6:45 pm to receive a parade identification number .

The number should be displayed on the boat's port side.

Competition has been fierce in past years, with many "special effects" being added as the entries pass the judges' barge anchored near the public access landing on the lake's west side.



Last year's 1st Place: The Bathje Family boat from 86th Ave. Theme: "Decatur or Bust" featured a Conestoga wagon followed by a Native American in a canoe.





How Does Stormwater and its Regulation Affect Lakes?

Written By Ric Lawson
Watershed Planner
Huron River Watershed Council
Reprinted from The Michigan Riparian Magazine,
Spring 2011

Most readers of the Riparian live adjacent to or nearby lakes because they enjoy the serenity and recreational opportunities that lakes afford. Most recognize that the quality of a lake's source water often determines the quality of the lake water, as well as what is able to live in the lake. As we build and locate our homes around lakes creating more hard surfaces like driveways and rooftops, stormwater runoff becomes an increasing source of lake water. So, you have to ask yourself, do you know what is in that stormwater runoff?

The initial push of the Clean Water Act was to control direct pollutant sources from facilities like factories and industrial operations. Recent EPA studies confirm that over 70% of water pollution now comes from diffuse sources like our own yards, the roads, and parking areas. Pollutants on these surfaces get washed off into our waterways every time it rains. Polluted runoff gets to our streams and lakes through stormwater infrastructure that varies from simple roadside ditches to large underground pipes big enough to walk in.

The stormwater systems in larger urbanized areas are regulated by the state through federal law. Each municipality that operates a stormwater system is covered by a permit that requires it to engage in activities to reduce pollutants in stormwater released to lakes and streams. These activities include standards for new and renovated development, education, public involvement, illicit discharge detection and elimination, and requirements for municipal operations.

Many municipalities work together with their neighbors to coordinate efforts within a shared watershed or drainage basin. In the Huron River watershed, HRWC works to help coordinate stormwater efforts of communities in three counties; organizing water quality monitoring, joint educational materials and outreach events, public meetings, stream restoration pilot projects, and other compliance activities.

What can riparians do to help? There are a number of things you can do to help reduce pollution to your lake coming from runoff. If you think you may be in an urbanized area, find out what your municipality is doing to reduce stormwater pollution. Visit the stormwater section of DEQ's website to find out if the municipality needs a permit

and to get more information.

There are also many things you can do on your own property to reduce pollution.

- Seek alternatives to hard surfaces such as pavement in your landscape to allow stormwater to be absorbed into soil;
- Maintain natural lake and stream shore buffers. Avoid seawalls and instead plant areas of deep-rooted native trees and shrubs that will absorb and filter polluted runoff ;
- Capture water in rain barrels or rain gardens and direct gutters away from hard surfaces;
- Test your soil and minimize your use of fertilizers – phosphorus in lawn fertilizers will be banned starting in 2012;
- Properly maintain your septic system;
- Clean up after pets;
- Don't feed waterfowl; and
- Properly dispose of toxic chemicals and keep them away from shorelines.

You can get more information at our website: www.hrwc.org/take-action. Remember, to get the kind of lakes and streams we all desire, we have to work together, starting in our own back yards.

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The annual Michigan Audubon Society Conservation Director Tom Funke supports the DNR plan. He cited the Lansing society's more than 100 years of history protecting the state's native birds, including trumpeter swans.

"The ongoing effort to reestablish the trumpeter swan is threatened by the expansion of the invasive mute swan", Funke said. "At their current rate of expansion, it is estimated that there could be 1 million invasive mute swans in Michigan by 2040, an explosion that would likely eliminate trumpeter swans

from Michigan wetlands and impact other species of conservation concern, such as the threatened common loon".

From an article by Elisabeth Waldon, Greenville Daily News, February 26, 2011

Publisher: Where do you stand on the mute swan issue and DNR's plan to reduce their population? We would like to hear your thoughts and experiences so that we can better determine the level of support for or against the DNR plan. Email us at info@mi-riparian.org. Reprinted from The Michigan Riparian Magazine, Spring 2011

The Michigan Riparian

The Michigan Riparian Magazine and the Michigan Lakes & Streams Foundation have a beautiful new website: Please go to www.mi-riparian.org.

Most of the past issues of the Riparian Magazine (and all of the articles therein) are on the website now and all of the past issues will be on the website in the future.

MLSA's website, www.mlsa.org is a great resource for accessing Michigan's water law issues, current and future MLSA events and much more.



*Lake of the Woods
Improvement Association*

www.lakeofthewoodsmi.org

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*Servicing Lake of the Woods residents
since 1980!*



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