



BALSAM LAKE ASSOCIATION QUARTERLY NEWS

Fall 2023 Edition



Photo credit BJC

OH DEER!

With colder weather coming, White-Tailed deer are on the move in search of both food and a mate. If you're thinking about setting up a deer feeder or topping up bird feeders, biologists and conservation experts generally agree that feeding the deer does more harm than good. Attracting deer to feeders causes a change in their natural behaviour. Feeders are often in populated areas and away from their natural food sources inviting deer to wreak havoc on property and gardens. Deer gathered at a feeder are more prone to transmitting disease and parasites to each other. A deer's digestive system changes with the seasons. A rapid change to their winter diet can cause longer term digestive and health issues.

Attracting deer to populated areas also increases the risk of vehicle-deer collisions and dog engagements. The MNRF "strongly advises NOT to feed wildlife removing them from their natural food sources and changing their digestive systems."

Enjoy wildlife from a distance and help improve their natural habitat. Remember a fed deer is a dead deer. Sources: MuskokaRegion.com, CTV news, MNRF

FROM THE BLA EXECUTIVE

"A fallen leaf is nothing more than a summer's wave goodbye" (unknown)

Where did the summer go? With boats safely tucked away for the winter and time at the cottage winding down for many, we can take time to reflect on the 2023 summer that was. August saw the return of the Balsam Lake Association's in-person membership meeting. We had an overwhelming turnout with over 150 joining to hear COKL Mayor Doug Elmslie, keynote speaker Dave Mowat (former Chief of the Alderville Band) and Jeff Berthelette (Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters). If you missed the August meeting and are interested, the recording can be found on the BLA website and is available via this link: [2023 BLA Membership Meeting](#).

Summer of 2023 also saw the 2023 Trent Severn Canoe Brigade crossing Balsam Lake, pausing on the north east shore of Grand Island to remember the 10 boys and their counsellor who perished on the lake in 1926.

Our heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers who participated in the 2023 water monitoring programs, and also to the volunteers who maintained the BLA hazard marks for another year.

If you'd like to know more about BLA activities follow us on the web at balsamlakeassociation.ca or on Facebook.

Barb Callander (BLA President 2023/ 2024)

Note: all wildlife photos were taken from a respectful distance.



Photo credit BJC

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES

Cottagers and full-time residents around the lake play an important role in protecting the lake from the spread of invasive species. As we winterize watercraft (boats and PWC's) we're often trailering, servicing and storing them. It's important to remember to clean all of the nooks and crannies of both boat and trailer. We're re-publishing Jeff Berthelette's (Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters) presentation from our August membership meeting with important information about OFAH's Invading Species Awareness Program



Jeff Berthelette
Invasive Species Outreach Liaison



440

invasive plants in
Southern ON



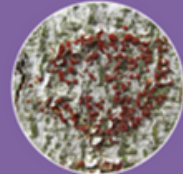
184

non-native/invasive
species in the G. Lakes



39

known invasive
forest insects

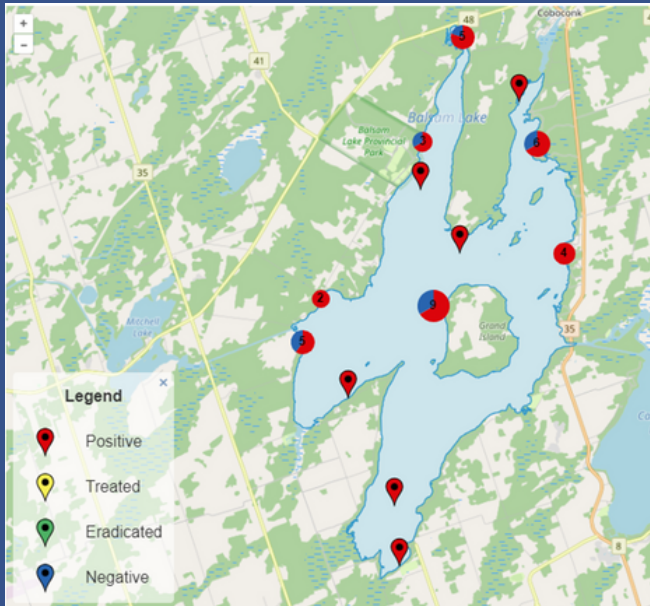


10

invasive tree
diseases

- Invasive species are among the most serious threats to Ontario's biodiversity and the wide range of goods and services it provides for our communities/industries, including fishing and hunting.
- Ontario has the highest number of invasive species in Canada
- Estimated impacts (annual) □ \$1.4 trillion globally □ \$3.6 billion in Ontario □ \$50 million to municipalities and conservation authorities

BALSAM LAKE INVADERS



Species Name	Count
zebra mussel(<i>Dreissena polymorpha</i>)	11
banded mysterysnail(<i>Viviparus georgianus</i>)	7
starry stonewort(<i>Nitellopsis obtusa</i>)	6
European frog-bit(<i>Hydrocharis morsus-ranae</i>)	6
rusty crayfish(<i>Faxonius rusticus</i>)	4
spiny waterflea(<i>Bythotrephes longimanus</i>)	2
Eurasian watermilfoil(<i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i>)	2
pale yellow iris, yellow flag iris(<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>)	1
coltsfoot(<i>Tussilago farfara</i>)	1



CONDUCTING INVASIVE SPECIES CHECKS



Clean: The hull, below the water line, transom, rear trailer, and watercraft interior

Drain: Ensure transom plug has been pulled, lower motor to release excess water, drain the live-well, drain other water holding containers.

Dry: Dry, and disinfect the watercraft, physically drying using rags and sponges is ideal.

- Allow sun-drying afterwards for 5 days
- Alternate disinfection includes
- Pressure washing with 1,000 psi
- Rinsing with hot water
- Steam

BLA AT WORK ON LAKE HEALTH *E. COLI* MONITORING

For the third summer the Balsam Lake Association has funded water sampling for *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) in the Lake. In 2023 there were seven shoreline sites sampled around Balsam on five dates running July 4th to September 5th. Seven Balsam volunteers participated in the sampling program or acted as couriers driving the samples to the registered analytical laboratory in Lakefield, Ontario.

Balsam is contributing to a long term study of *E. coli* in the Kawartha Lakes by partnering with the Kawartha Lake Stewards Association. The objective is to monitor short term results and long term trends and build a dataset across the Kawartha Lakes. The number of lakes involved in the project over 21 years ranged from 14 to 17 lakes. Balsam has historically participated in earlier years and rejoined in 2021.

Why sample *E. coli*? This specific bacteria is used by government agencies, municipalities and public health as an indicator of fecal contamination in surface waters. The fecal matter can be of a human or wildlife source and several strains of *E. coli* can cause illness in elevated concentrations. We often hear media report of closed beaches during summer months and this water test is a primary source for closing public shorelines. It should be noted that *E. coli* occurs naturally in fresh waters with many strains of little concern. Currently, both provincial and federal objectives for *E. coli* are set at 200 *E. coli*/100ml. Above this level advisories would be issued.

Results:

<i>E. coli</i> / 100 ml	Number of Sites	%
< 10	24	70
11 - 19	4	12
20 - 60	6	18

This table shows that the results for 2023 were good. All samples were below the water quality objective of 200 *E. coli*/100ml by a considerable margin. It should be noted that site locations have been chosen as potential problem areas using the criteria mentioned above. The Kawartha-wide program does watch sites with repeated results exceeding 50 *E. coli*/100ml. Few sites have repeated high levels. Most sites are lower on repeated testing. There are remedial options that can be taken to improve water quality if poor results continue.

All samples were below the water quality objective of 200 *E. coli* / 100 ml

Going Forward:

Potential problem shorelines are being sought to include in the sampling next year. Busy shorelines with lots of human activity, boating, and shoreline runoff can contribute to elevated *E. coli* contamination. We encourage individuals or road associations to join the project for their own interests and also to broaden the coverage of the Lake for the long term dataset. The cost in 2023 was \$70/site for the five sample dates. All results are coded for privacy although detailed locations are preferred. Anyone interested in further information can contact the BLA through the [Balsam Lake Association website](#).

WHAT IS THIS?

Collection of foam along the shore of Balsam Lake is a regular and natural phenomenon. It tends to last longer in cool weather and when autumn winds are pushing the foam to shorelines so residents see more of it right now.

Here's what is happening beneath the waves:

Step One: creation of small bubbles that are created naturally in the water column or by agitation with wave action at the surface.

Step Two: involves dissolved organic matter (molecules from decaying plants, animals, bacteria) collecting on the surface of these small bubbles as they rise to the lake surface. This key process of attachment creates an organic film on the surface of these bubbles and it acts to stabilize bubbles letting them survive longer. Reaching the surface these bubbles either rupture or collect as foam.

Step Three: moves the surface foam with wave and wind action to the shorelines. The foam that collects can look different depending on the time of year, wind conditions and temperature. The colour varies with the source of the particles and molecules trapped on the surface of each bubble. Besides carrying decaying organic molecules very small particles of sand, dirt or wood can be caught up in the sudsy feature.



Photo Credit: Dean Michel

Keep in mind. It won't last long. On warm summer days it will quickly dissipate. With cool autumn temperatures it stays a bit longer. It is 99% natural and not a neighbour doing their laundry or washing their boat in the lake. With all these organic molecules trapped in the foam, it does make a great natural fertilizer. Just remember to bucket it up and drop it away from the shore or it will wash back into the lake.