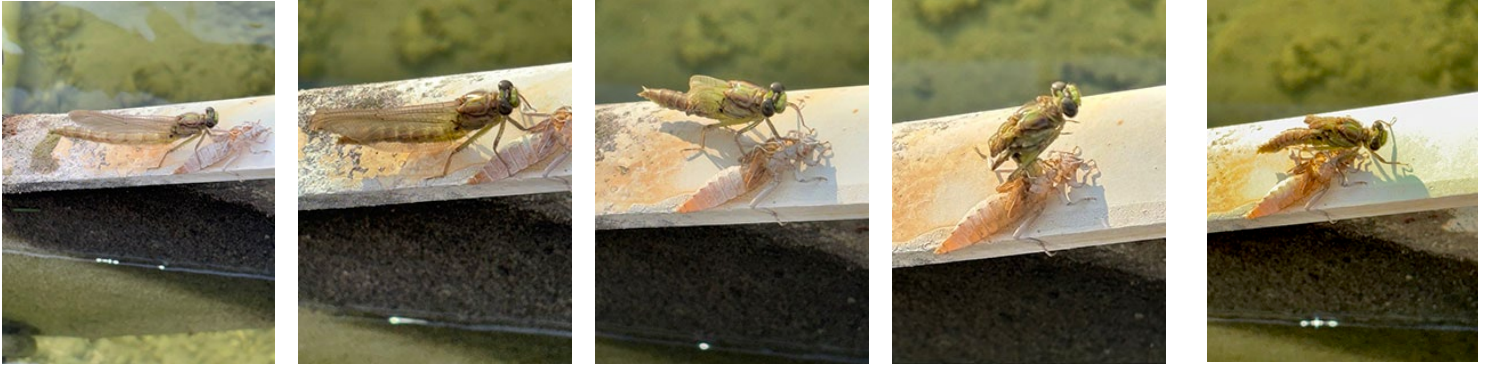


Loon Log 2025
Dick West
dnswest@netzero.net

7.5.25

Do you know what this is?



It is a dragonfly molting from its larva (aka nymph) stage into an adult. I took pictures of the process from 7:29 to 8:07. The larva had crawled out of the water up onto a boat lift. It would have taken several minutes for it to split open and the undeveloped adult emerge to get to the point where I spotted it and took that first picture. Notice that at the beginning it looks like just a head, a thorax and some legs. But that was soon to change as the subsequent pictures show. As the abdomen extended, drops of moisture dripped occasionally from the end. It sat for several more minutes as its wings dried in the morning sun...and then it was gone.

You may have seen discarded larval cases littering the lake after a fish fly hatch. They go through a similar process, but by the millions.

Another interesting morning...good loon news and a bonus dragonfly display. As always, I encourage all of you to get out to discover your own interesting moments. When you do, take a few minutes to tell me about them.

7.2.25

Liz and Kurt Hagemeister just reported seeing all five loon families on their cruise this morning.

The northernmost family has one youngster.

The Green's property family has one youngster.

The Gorham Beach family has one youngster. They had two but lost one.

The eagle tree family has one youngster. They had two but lost one.

And, the southernmost family still has two youngsters.

Thanks to Liz and Kurt for that all in one cruise update!

7.1.25

With Fourth of July week upon us, we expect a lot of boating activity on the lake, and we are certainly getting that. While that is fun and fun to watch, it is the wildlife action that interests me the most... and we are getting plenty of that too.

Unfortunately, I have to report that the eagle tree family has apparently lost a chick. An experienced loon observer, Sue Thomas, keeps a good eye on that family from her place in Recreation Point. She reported this morning that the last few times she spotted that family there was only one baby. Hopefully we won't have any more loon babies lost.

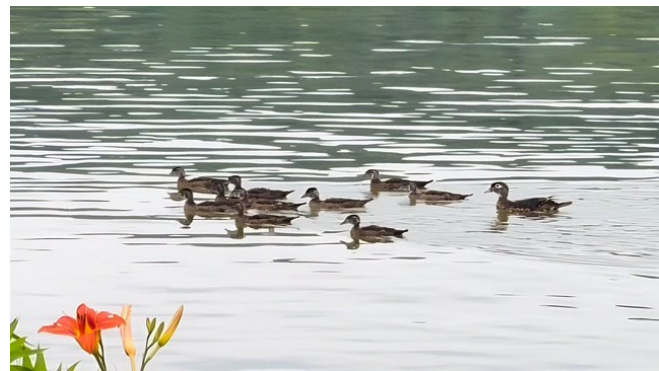
I haven't had recent eyewitness reports of the other families, other than my own viewing of the Gorham Beach bunch. I saw that youngster this morning with one adult and it appears to be doing well.

I have certainly seen a lot of other loon activity on the lake. Almost every morning I have spotted loon conferences, especially near the sandbar area. Nothing as dramatic as I reported on the other day lately, but plenty loons getting together. Six or seven of them at a time has not been unusual.

Yesterday morning while spotting for my water skiing friends, Christina and Greg Bellopatrick, we saw many loons in the sandbar area and down the east side heading south. Along with that there were two eagles in a dead tree near the launch site, some swans and at least three really big turtles... and I am talking bigger than a basketball hoop big! Those monsters could easily snap up a baby loon. I won't be dangling my toes in the water around that area.



Andy and Jan Hickman have been reporting a family of wood ducks hanging out around their place at Recreation Point. Jan



sent these pictures of that family this morning. I counted ten babies for that busy mom to keep track of.

There is a mother Mallard also with ten youngsters frequently in front of my place.

Please remind your family and friends to be on the lookout for and cautious around our loon families and all of the wildlife on the lake. We would certainly hate to lose any more of our young ones.

6.25.25

Concerned about the status of the Gorham Beach family, I was out in my kayak at 6:30 this morning heading to their nest area. I didn't see anything as I went by. I continued to the sandbar stopping to have a chat with Andy.

It was about 730 when I headed north across the lake and saw four loons close to shore having a conference. It was a very dramatic conference to watch. They were diving, dancing on the water, scooting around with their wings and feet as if they were going to take off, but circling right back to the group...with a considerable amount of hollering going on in the process. This went on for several minutes and they moved to my left and further from shore. Suddenly, a fifth loon appeared. My thought was a loon from each of our five families had gathered to discuss territorial issues. But that thought didn't last long because soon there were seven loons in the group. I saw one fly away but a moment later there were eight. I was watching through my binoculars and didn't happen to see any of those arriving loons fly in, but there they were. They put on a show for over a half hour before starting to disperse. I saw three fly away and the others dove and just disappeared. Several minutes later, I saw four together on the other side of the sandbar. At that point, I decided to move on.

It was a beautiful calm morning, so I continued my ride all the way around the big part of the lake. After a quick pitstop, the lake was still very calm so I went back out, again heading down to the Gorham Beach area. This time I spotted the family...clearly with just one chick. That is the sad news. We have lost one of our young loons.

Even then, I was treated to another interesting scene.

Three swans were around the weed bed where that pair makes their nest. One of the loons dove and ended up over by the swans hunkered on the water like I had seen one do with the ducks. The swans apparently knew what that posture meant because they swiftly swam away from the area. Apparently that loon does not like any other waterfowl to keep them company. I'm glad he doesn't treat me that way.

It is sad to report our loss, but it is not an unusual occurrence. There is no way of knowing what happened to that young loon. We have large muskies in this lake and really big turtles, along with some hungry eagles in the area, all of which are part of the wonder of what we are privileged to watch.

6.24.25 PM

This afternoon at 1:00 Andy Hickman was gracious enough to pick me up for a loon spotting tour of the whole lake. On the way to my place he did not see any loons. I expected him to see the Gorham Beach family since the four of them were slowly heading that way at about 7:45 am. But maybe they crossed the lake.

After we left my place heading north, it didn't take long before we spotted our first loon youngster with one adult near the big log home. We couldn't be sure which family those two were part of. They were in Gorham Beach territory but there was only one chick. Maybe the other chick was with the other adult someplace and we missed them.

Moving slowly to keep a close watch along the shoreline, we spotted our next young loon with two adults just past Snowflake. Definitely the family from the Green's property nest!

Then it was just a nice slow cruise along the west side all the way north, around the last point before the campground. There we saw another youngster with two adults at the south end of the sanctuary area. Our northernmost family!

We wandered back along the east side, then crossed back over hoping to see the other Gorham Beach chick. No luck with that, but we did see a loon fly in to join the two loons near the log house. Hmmmmmm...now where is that other chick...

After the sandbar we proceeded south down the east side. No more loons were spotted until we were all the way down to the southernmost nest...and there was the southernmost family!...all four of them right at the platform. Very nice to see.

We stuck to the west side heading back.

Sure enough...there was the eagle tree family of four along the west shore in their usual nursery area!

We completed our tour just before 3:30 having seen seven of our eight loon babies.

At about 8pm, watching from my deck, I saw one loon heading away from shore near the middle of the lake. Then I heard a boater slow his engine near the log home. I guessed correctly that he had slowed down because of loons. There was an adult with one chick close to his boat.

The lone loon continued moving out, then turned around heading slowly back towards the two others. When he got behind a tree blocking my view I lost track of all of them. But, at 9:20, I saw two adults with one chick near that same area. I was afraid I was seeing a diminished Gorham Beach family but chose to think I was missing the second chick at such a distance in the fading light.

6.24.25 AM

The Gorham Beach family greeted me with a low wail as I came out on the deck to check conditions. Of course I was sure they were saying good morning to me. On the other hand, that wail may have been due to there being an eagle circling across the lake at that moment, eventually landing in a tree near the Green's property. Whatever the meaning of that wail, the loons came in close to my dock to chat for a minute. A nice start to an otherwise overcast and unpredictable day.



I continue to get good reports on our other four loon families...including this nice family portrait of the northernmost gang from Tom Senecal...

And this one of the Green's family taken by Kurt Hagemeister on the same day...

6.18.25

I have made a few short trips since the 15th but wind and weather have kept me close to home. That still allows for occasional visits to, and from, my buddies the Gorham Beach family. I am happy to report those two youngsters are now definitely more than a mouthful for a hungry Muskie.



This morning was a nice example of that family coming to visit me. I was out on our deck to watch the sun peek over the hills in the north-east at 6:08. The Gorham Beach gang was right out in front with the chicks having breakfast. I think they could hear me talking to them cuz they stayed in the same small area for nearly an hour.

At the same time a female mallard duck with seven babies was swimming slowly by along the shore minding their own business. One of the adult loons hunkered down with just the top of its head and a little of its back showing above the water. It was staring right at those ducks. Then it dove, in very shallow water, heading directly at the ducks. I could clearly see its path by the ripples it made while swimming underwater about fifty feet towards the ducks. It surfaced, resuming its threatening hunkered down posture quite close to the ducks, who picked up their pace and moved quickly away down the shore. The loon rose back up and calmly went back to the rest of the family that had been acting normally the whole time. I have no idea why that loon was intent on chasing those harmless, non threatening ducks out of the area. Maybe it was the female loon being jealous of that duck showing off her larger number of babies to me...what do you think??

While the adults were preening I got a pretty good look at three of their legs and bands on one of them. On the right leg it had white over red bands and on the left leg a white band. The other adult showed its right leg with no band. I didn't see its left leg.

6.15.25 PM

Karen was right!

The Green property pair was spotted by Kurt across the lake near Snowflake with one chick!

At the same time Andy had an eye on the northernmost pair with one chick so there can be no mistake about the two pairs with one chick each.

This has been a great Father's Day for me and all you Loon Watchers...even to the point of retroactively adding another feather in Intermediate Lake's cap for having five successful loon pairs!

6.15.25 AM

A very important revelation!

I am excited to report that for the last two nesting seasons (2024 and 2025) we have apparently had FIVE pairs of loons nesting on Intermediate Lake!

"How can that be?" you ask!

I am scratching my head with the same question. But the facts now emerge that for the last few years, possibly since 2018, a summertime lake resident on the far north part of the lake, Tom Senecal, has been quietly watching a pair of loons going in

and out of a dense weed bed on the west side, very close to where the Loon Platoon put a nesting platform this year. He has certainly seen a loon family in that area regularly since buying their place in 2018. Tom has not been able to actually see the nest. He stays well away during the time the loons are nesting. Last year, and back in 2021, he reported seeing a pair with one chick near the bridge to the ILA but we didn't follow up on that. Not being at the lake to keep watch on that area often during the time of nesting he wasn't sure where the chick hatched. In 2024 I thought that pair may have come downstream from Hanley Lake but didn't investigate.

This year, after seeing the same possible nesting activity and then again spotting a pair of loons with a newly hatched chick close by that spot, Tom got back in touch with me with the details of his observations...and pictures.



I am confident to say we had five nesting pairs on the lake this year. At least four of those pairs have hatched chicks...two chicks from Gorham Beach, two chicks from the Southernmost nest, two chicks from the Eagle Tree nest and one chick from a Northernmost nest. The status of the Green Property pair has yet to be confirmed.

The Green Property nest has been vacated. We have a report from Karen Dyste, who frequently walks in that area, that she possibly saw that pair with a chick between them the day they left the nest. She was looking at them through the trees and without binoculars so isn't absolutely certain there was a chick with the adults, but she thinks there was. I hope she is right, but at this point we have not had a clear sighting of that chick. I urge anyone that spots a pair of loons with a chick or two near that big 90 degree turn nesting site to please try to get a picture and report your sighting to us as soon as possible.

Regardless of that outcome, we have had a very successful loon nesting season. Since I have not been able to be on the lake as frequently as usual I greatly appreciate the reports from other loon watchers...and the pictures!

In fact, Kurt Hagemeister sent this one he took of the northernmost family with the little one flexing its wings.

How cute is that!!

We certainly have plenty of loon families to watch this summer. And, we still have one loon family question to clearly answer. So, as I like to nag you to do, get out and see what you can see! And pass on any interesting observations you might make. Feel free to contact me any time by email to dnswest@netzero.net or, if more urgent, by text to 734-355-2248. Your eyes have proven how important they are in documenting the history of our Intermediate Lake Loons.



6.12.25

While our six babies are doing well, our fourth pair have not had a hatch. Kurt reported the Green property loons are still sitting as of this morning.

According to our observations those eggs would have been in the nest at least by May 8th or they wouldn't have been sitting. With normally 28 to 30 days to hatch they are beyond the due date. Not good. We have seen a pair in the south end sit on bad eggs for a month after the due date. Sad to watch.

I was hoping this pair would abandon the bad eggs and try again but it's probably too late for that to happen...unless they did that at some point without us knowing. The chance of that is also remote since when they do that they would most likely be off the nest for a noticeable few days and no one reported seeing that.

Another interesting part of loon watching...the mystery of it all.

6.7.25

More chicks!!

The southernmost pair AND the eagle tree pair have each produced a second chick!!

Andy sent this family portrait of the southernmost loons this morning.



So we now have six baby loons to keep an eye on.

I also heard from Meg Costello that as of 8am the Green's property nest still has a sitting loon with the second loon close by.

Hopefully that pair will give us two more chicks soon.

6.6.25

Kurt Hagemester reported a loon still sitting on the Green's property platform this morning with another close by.

He also spotted this lady slipper along the road. More non-loon beauty to behold. Andy paddled down to check out the Gorham Beach nest today. It was empty. I was hoping he would see an abandoned egg there. There must have been a third egg but we will never know what happened to it.



6.5.25

The Gorham Beach family is on the move.

I got reports and pictures from friends in Deep Water Point as the family was venturing along the shore.

This one from Dave Egert.



This one from Bill Bailey.



And this one from Chris Owen.



Later in the afternoon, Andy and Jan Hickman spotted them stopping in front of my place to say hello but unfortunately I was gone.

Jan got a picture of the southernmost family during the afternoon. One chick and still sitting.



6.4.25

Two more loon babies!

4:30pm...Sue Thomas reported she clearly saw one chick at the southernmost nest and one at the eagle tree nest. She was paddling well away from the loons and could have missed another baby at each place.

This is a fuzzy screen shot from a video she took of the southernmost chick.

Sue watched for quite a while near the eagle tree nest and only saw one adult with one chick in the water. The nest was empty.



It is also significant that this morning Dave Egert reported a loon was back sitting on the Gorham Beach nest. There must be another egg in that nest. It is rare for a pair to lay three eggs. I have not seen that happen in the eight years I have actively been watching the loons on Intermediate Lake.

However, Dave just let me know he has not seen a loon on the nest since this morning. My guess is that egg is not healthy, otherwise it most likely would have hatched at about the same time as the other two. With two hungry chicks to feed and take care of, the adults have probably abandoned that egg. But it would be nice to see that pair with three chicks...maybe Dave missed the third chick joining the brood...I'm always hoping for the best outcome...

We have experienced eyes watching the nest at the Green's property but no chicks sighted there yet.

6.3.25 1:33pm

The Gorham Beach pair has two chicks!

And very possibly a third egg.

As I sent my report earlier, I was quite sure I saw two babies and the loon was still sitting. Dave was able to confirm that with his spotting scope. No reason for it to still be sitting unless there was another egg.

When I came down to check at 11:30, the two adults and two chicks were in the water close to the nest. At about 1145 one adult was clearly heading back towards the nest. I watched it crawl up expecting it to tend to an egg and settle down. But it simply went to the nest, poked at it a bit and grabbed a large piece of what I think was eggshell. It carried that large piece 20 or so yards away from the nest and appeared to be breaking it up. I had often wondered why the nests were so clean a day or so after the family had abandon it. Now I know. The first time I had seen that.

While that was going on, the chicks had climbed up on one of the adults back. By 12 o'clock both adults had their heads tucked back...everyone taking a nap.

At 12:10, the loon with the the chicks was still sleeping. The other loon appeared to be still sleeping, but also moving slowly towards the nest against a southerly breeze. at 12:15 they both woke up remaining very inactive. At 12:25 both chicks are awake on the adults back for feeding time. Both adults are feeding the chicks...so all looks normal. Time for me to head downstate.

Hopefully, other loon observers will keep us posted for the next few days.

6.3.25

The Gorham Beach pair has a chick!

I spotted it this morning at about 8:20. I had been down to check them out on my paddle boat about an hour before that. I saw a loon sitting and the other loon in the area as usual. This time I came down a little closer and parked my paddle boat to get a better look. There was definitely one chick sitting right in front of the white chest of the sitting adult!!

I have officially awarded the First Chick Award for 2025 to the Gorham Beach pair!

Unfortunately, I have to head home this morning. Luckily, Dave and Kay Egert have a good view of that nest with their spotting scope and will keep us posted.

Hopefully, we'll get similar news from the other nests soon.
Keep your eyes open and keep us posted on what you see!

6.2.25 9am

After sending the "All Eyes on Deck" email I took a kayak ride. There was a chilly breeze from the south, but it was sunny and warming up nicely.

As I passed well away from the Gorham Beach nest the sitting loon stayed calm enjoying the sunshine. The other loon was well away from shore, diving a couple of times heading my way. I sat at the dropoff and waited to see what it would do.

Well, it gave me another moment to remember.

While almost 100 yards away it dove. In practically no time at all I saw a few bubbles hit the calm surface on a path right towards me...then I saw the loon a couple of feet under water circling my kayak. That is always a thrilling sight! But then even more thrilling...it popped up right next to me not more than five feet away!! It was perfectly calm and quiet as I spoke to it softly...then it dove, circled again twice and came up a little further away...floating quietly as I asked about its eggs...then dove and circled one more time.

I moved on as it surfaced further away towards the nest. A great start for a kayak cruise.

Continuing around the sand bar I was heading down the west shoreline. Then I saw a guard swan feeding near the swan on their nest in the weed bed. I decided not to test its temper and changed course to the east side of the weeds.

My timing was perfect. A loon was on the nest and another loon nearby. Staying a couple of hundred yards away, I saw the loon leave the nest. It joined the other loon and was stretching and preening. The other loon started slowly toward the nest...went to it and scooted up on it. A changing of the guard! Another typical loon activity I love to watch. It stood up bending over the nest to check and turn an egg or two then settled down. After thirty seconds or so it stood again to tend to the eggs or the nesting material then settled down again.

I let the southerly breeze help me head back to home port.

Another fabulous morning on the water.

And I hope many of you will be enjoying trips around the lake with the improving weather.

6.2.25

All Eyes on Deck!

I know, the command is usually "All Hands on Deck!", but this time we need eyes...and sharp eyes...preferably aided by binoculars to be sure what they are seeing.

We know all four of the active loon nesting sites were occupied by May 8 this year. We don't know when the eggs those loons are setting on were laid. We also know it normally takes 28 to 30 days for healthy loon eggs to yield chicks. We don't know how many eggs were laid or if they are healthy eggs.

Given those knowns and unknowns we need to be on the lookout for our first loon chick since one lucky loon pair could earn the coveted First Chick of the Year Award any day now.

I will be heading downstate tomorrow, June 3rd, and not returning until June 8th. The first chick will most certainly be hatched by that time so it is important for all of you that are able to keep an eye on our four nests and report a chick sighting promptly! We like to give that First Chick Award to the proper pair.

I especially urge all of the fisherfolk on this email list, or any that you may know, to report any loon chicks they spot. People fishing see a lot of details as they move slowly around the nesting sites so those eyes are very important in catching a newly hatched chick.

We would like to have the date and time any new chicks are spotted...and a picture if possible. Just remember to keep an adequate, respectful distance from the loons and the nest. One chick is usually in the water before a second hatches so the job might not be done for a pair with one chick.

Please send any loon chick sightings to me at my email address dnswest@netzero.net or by text to 734-355-2248 any time...or report the information to a fellow Loon Platoon member or ILA member to pass on the information.

We will have loon chicks to watch very soon! Thanks for your help.

5.30.25

Checked the two nests near my place with my binoculars on my paddleboat without getting anywhere close. A loon was sitting on each. The second Gorham Beach loon was way out away from me but hollered at my paddleboat one time to make sure I knew I was being watched and not to get any closer.

5.28.25

Nice calm morning for a kayak ride around the big part of the lake.

A loon was on the Gorham Beach nest with the other one close by. They remained calm and quiet as I stayed well away.

As I neared the sandbar Andy came out to say hello. On a pontoon ride over the weekend he had seen all four nests occupied with a second loon close by at each.

I stopped near the Green's cottage and could see a loon on that nest also with another loon in the area.

In the afternoon I took a walk to Gorham Beach to check the nest and socialize with humans there.

On the way back I heard a loon frequently giving out that long wailing call. I hustled to the shore at the cottage near the nest and sure enough there was an eagle sitting in a tree near the nest. Both loons were in the water, one close to the nest, the other close to the eagle. They were both giving the warning call. They kept hollering until the eagle finally flew off to the south.

I moved out onto the dock as the closer loon headed back to the nest. This was the closest I have ever been to a loon climbing back onto a nest. With my binoculars it was like I was two feet away! It did its usual checking of the eggs and settled down. I couldn't see the eggs so I don't know how many there are.

5.15.25

A beautiful morning for a kayak trip to the south end of the lake.

Heading toward Gorham Beach I could see a loon on the nest and another past the dropoff...very hard to see in the sparkling glare of the sun on the water. As it moved out of the glare it turned out to be two loons. They were circling, head dipping and diving slowly toward the nest. As they got to about the dropoff, the sitting loon slid off the nest and joined the other two, continuing the communication routine. After a few minutes one of them ran across the water and took off to the east. I expected one of the remaining two to head back to the nest. But after a few minutes of wing flapping and minor preening, they also ran across the water and flew off to the east. I don't know who was chasing who. I was tempted to go check the nest but knowing we should stay away from an active nest site I headed east too.

Nearing the eagle tree platform it was easy to see a sitting loon with another fairly close by. There is also a swan nesting in the weed bed with its mate standing guard nearby.

Passing west of them and the big island I saw a swan well away from the island with its wings up in an aggressive posture. Then I spotted a swan nesting on the island. My route took me between the nest and the aggressive looking guard swan. I nervously kept to my course at a steady pace and as I passed the nest the guard swan relaxed its pose. I breathed a sigh of relief, continuing south, and admiring the structure of the swan nest as I passed. It is an engineered work of art.

There was a loon sitting on the southernmost platform with its mate fairly close by. They were both calm and quiet so I turned back to the north.

Staying to the east of the big island I noticed three swans flying south on the west side. The guard swan wasted no time taking off and chasing them all the way to the south end, turning back north in hot pursuit until they were north of the island, where it landed and triumphantly ruffled its feathers.

At that point the guard swan at the weed bed took up the chase and escorted them around Recreation Point and out of sight.

I proceeded north along the east shoreline. I keep looking in the thick undergrowth there expecting to see a bear...but after fifty years or so of looking I still haven't spotted one.

Crossing over to the sandbar I passed a lone swan heading north. Continuing past the sandbar I heard the loud flapping of that swan taking off behind me. Turning to see if it was coming after me I saw two swans on the far shore...that swan was flying after them. They took off to the north with the chasing swan right behind them. They continued north out of sight while the chasing swan abandoned its mission after a quarter mile or so. It seems like the waterfowl spend a lot of time chasing each other.

I didn't see any chasing going on as I approached Gorham Beach but I did hear a loon making a long wailing call that I recognized as a warning call. It kept repeating it every thirty seconds or so. Scanning the shoreline, sure enough, there was an eagle in a tree nearby. The loon was not happy about that. With the loon still wailing occasionally I passed by well beyond the dropoff. As I got nearer, the eagle turned on its branch and took off. That really got the loon wailing! It kept wailing until the eagle circled into the hills and soared higher and higher, eventually going out of sight to the east. In the meantime the loon went back to the nest, tended the eggs and settled down.

This whole trip took about four hours and covered seven and a half miles...it was worth every paddle stroke. Other than a few fishermen I was the only boat on the lake.

Where the heck were the rest of you nature lovers??

5.13.25

Another calm morning...perfect for a paddleboat cruise around the big part of the lake.

The Green property pair were off the nest but not far away. One of them slowly headed toward the platform so I waited to watch it get back to sitting. It had other ideas. It got close to the nest, then just stopped and tucked its head back to take a nap. So I moved on.

When I got to the sand bar I could see an eagle sitting in the eagle tree. Probably waiting for a fisherman to throw back a stunned fish for it to grab.

As I got close to Gorham Beach, turning well out away from the nest, the sitting loon slipped into the shallow water, staying under water with just its head and back showing. It was being quiet but I could tell it was pouting about me coming within a quarter of a mile of the nest on my paddleboat. The other loon was at the dropoff way ahead of me. I was well beyond the dropoff, but sure enough, that loon dove, quickly covered at least a hundred yards under water, popped up close to me and started squawking at me to get that paddleboat out of there. Even my friendly conversation wouldn't shut it up. It moved around behind me as I slowly moved away, and confident it had chased me away it soon quieted down. The two loons came together at the dropoff watching me leave...probably gossiping about how rude it was of me, their supposed buddy, to come by in that nasty paddleboat. You can be sure I will take my kayak on my next visit.

5.12.25

It was a sunny calm morning so I took advantage of an accommodating friend in Deep Water Point, Tim Green, who already has his boat in the water, to put out the six warning buoys....two buoys at the southernmost platform, two at the eagle tree platform and two at the Green's property platform.

The loons had requested the buoys be in place before Memorial Day and thanks to Tim's boat and help that request has been satisfied. Thanks Tim!

As we left Deep Water Point there was a loon hunkered down on the Gorham Beach nest and two loons together beyond the dropoff. We watched those two circling each other, head dipping and diving for a few minutes until one disappeared. The other loon calmly headed back towards the nest and watched us go by, its territory once again clearly established.

There was a loon on the eagle tree nest. It sat calmly as we placed those two buoys, head up, seemingly not at all disturbed by us.



The southernmost nest was empty with no loons in sight. But as we slowly moved into position, a squawking loon came flying in and landed close to the platform. It saw what we were doing and even as we placed those two buoys, quietly and calmly circled the platform, went up on it, checked the egg or two and settled down.

The weather was still perfect for our task so Tim and I loaded up the last two buoys and put them in position at the Green's property platform. There was a loon on the nest and another loon close by taking a nap. The dozing loon had its head tucked back against its wing and wasn't alarmed as we woke it up and went about our business. It stayed close by and smiled in appreciation as we pulled away...or at least I think it did. Tim might have a different opinion about that observation.

Anyway, the buoys are all in place and the Loon Platoon has another Second Lieutenant willing and able to step in and help accomplish our goals. Thanks again Tim for a productive morning on Intermediate Lake!

As the Memorial Day weekend is almost here, please keep in mind to watch out for our wandering loons, give them plenty of room and stay well away from their nests. Of course get out and enjoy the lake, while at the same time respecting the wildlife and reminding your guests to do the same.

5.11.25

At about 8am I took a somewhat choppy paddleboat ride to check on the status of things at Gorham Beach. As I stopped at Deep Water Point to take a look, I saw a loon flying in from the south circling to land. It landed close to two other loons just past the dropoff by the nest. There was no loon on the nest. The three loons did their usual head dipping, circling and diving for a few minutes. Then one surfaced ten yards or so away from the other two and moved slowly away, dove and disappeared. The other two watched it leave, staying together like a pair does. After the intruder disappeared one of them went right back to the nest. On my return trip about a half hour later one was on the nest with the other close by keeping an eye on me.

Later in the afternoon we took a ride around the lake on our way to Gaylord. Nothing going on at the northernmost nest. One was sitting on the Green's property platform and one on the southernmost platform.

5.10.25

A chilly breeze so no ride this morning. At about 11am I walked down to Gorham Beach to see a loon sitting on the nest, high and dry with very choppy water. (The lake level is at 7.11 feet. Two feet below the peak level of 9.11 on April 3.)

5.9.25

It was a beautiful sunny morning but very chilly. I waited for it to get close to 40 degrees before I left at 8:30 for a calm two hour kayak ride.

As soon as I left shore one of my Gorham Beach buddies was at the dropoff and stopped to chat for a minute. I tried to find out if they are the same pair that nested there last year but got no clear answer. In fact the loon was just listening without answering. But it did stop diving for a few minutes and stayed close by so I'm sure it was one of the regular pair.

As I rounded the point near Snowflake I met another loon diving along the dropoff. I'm guessing that was one of the loons from the Green's property platform. It stopped to chat too but didn't come nearly as close since we aren't all that well acquainted.

Continuing across the lake towards the Green's property I could easily see a loon sitting on that platform. With my curiosity satisfied I stayed way out in the lake and headed east along that shore, eventually turning across the lake towards Gorham Beach. Just as I hoped, there was a loon sitting on a nest there. It was spread out and hunkered down with its beak almost in the water.

This evening I took my first paddleboat ride of the year...a short sunset cruise to check on the nest at Gorham Beach. There was a loon hunkered down flat on the nest. No other loon in sight. I have not yet seen two loons together in that area. I stayed way out away from the nest cuz I know they don't like my paddleboat. The loon slid off the nest but stayed close to it. A few minutes later on my return trip the loon was still near the nest, hunkered low in the water but diving occasionally. It stayed quiet the whole time. As I moved further away the loon went back on the nest and appeared to tend to an egg or two before settling back down.

5.8.25

We returned to the lake this afternoon with high hopes for a good update to send out to all you loon fans. And here it is!

It actually started yesterday morning at 7:58 am when I got the following texts from fellow loon observer Kurt Hagemeister. You will recall geese had nested on the platform at the Green's property, which was very disappointing...until Kurt sent this...

"Dick,
I'm right at the bend and can see the Green property platform. Good news - there's a loon hanging by near it within a few feet and no sign of geese."
And then immediately...
"Now the loon is ON the platform!"
"I see the 2nd loon now."
"No geese in sight."
"She appears to be just sitting there, as if incubating. Not fiddling with nesting material. Head up."
This was very exciting news!!

Kurt's place is on the lake just north of the curve and he walks that area frequently so I asked him...

"Have you walked by that platform and seen anything there before this morning?"

He replied...

"No. I'm only here for a few days and was tied up yesterday."

"There WERE a couple geese down our way yesterday squawking up a storm like they were agitated about something. So who knows."

One of the first things I did this afternoon was to drive over to check that platform. I was a little disappointed to see the platform empty but there was a loon close by and it was warm and sunny so the loon could have simply been taking a snack break. The geese are definitely gone. Time will have to confirm it, but at this point it appears the loons are nesting on that platform again this year.

My wife and I checked out the other nesting sites on our way to the cottage...and like I already said...lots of good news...there were loons sitting on both of the platforms in the south end and a loon was on a nest on the little island at Gorham Beach!

And so, my loony friends, we appear to have four nesting pairs of loons on Intermediate Lake again this year!!

As always, I encourage you to get out and see these amazing things for yourself. Just be sure to take your binoculars and stay well away from any loons and the nest sites.

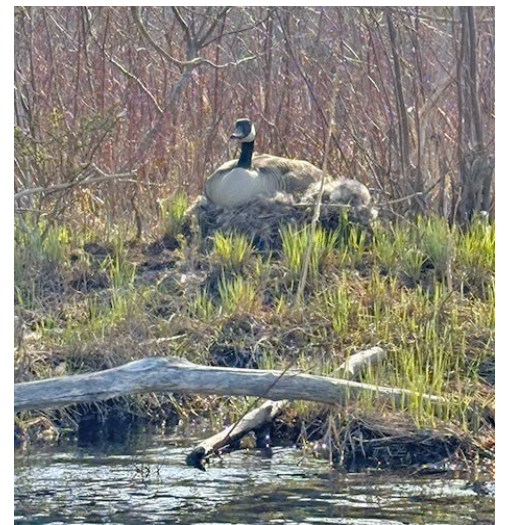
4.28.25

It was windy on the lake but a sunny morning so I took a kayak ride below the dam to check on the eagles nest. It is still there but I didn't see any eagles. I don't know how that skinny tree survived this winter with that huge structure up at the top.



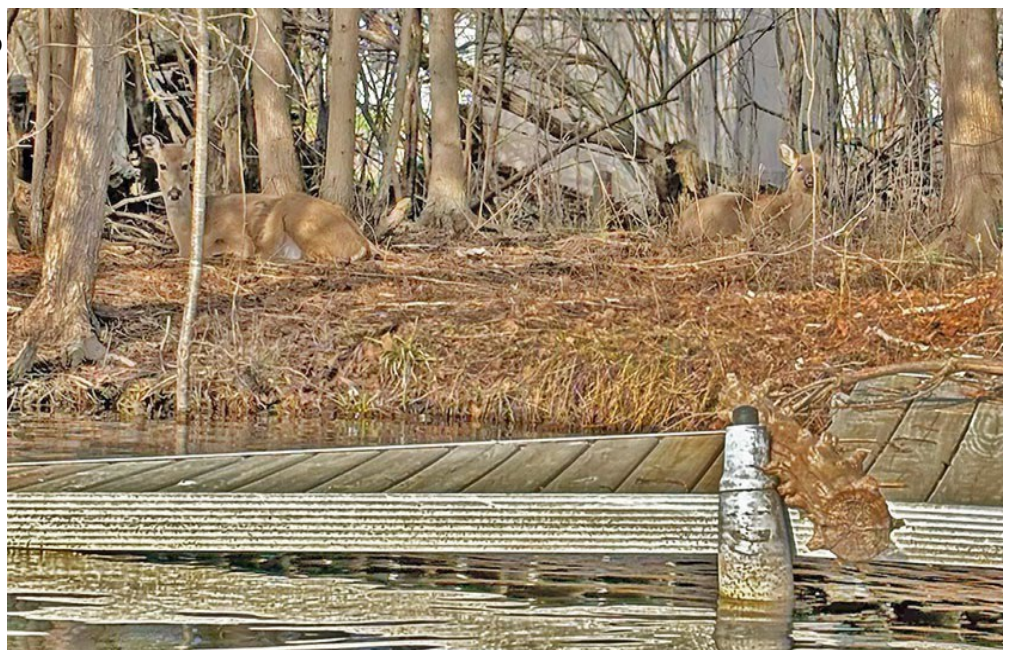
I hung around in the area for about a half hour hoping to see an eagle or two. I did see a Canadian goose sitting on a very well constructed nest.

You can see they built a round mud base about seven inches high then added nesting material and lined it with goose down feathers. How cozy is that!?



On my way downstream I drifted close to two deer resting at the shore. I tried to get a decent picture but they are very well camouflaged in the brush. See if you can zoom in and spot them.

They were still there on my return trip but one stood up and stretched as I paddled by.



After my kayak trip, I stopped off at the Maples to check on the southernmost nest. One loon was very close to the nest. I spotted another loon a little south of the big island. The loon by the platform stayed close by for a while and then moved off to the north a bit. As I walked back to my car, I turned to look at the platform and both loons were right there. One of them hopped up on the nest! The other stayed close by. After about a minute the loon on the nest waddle across it and slipped back in the water. The loon in the water dove and disappeared. The one that had been on the nest just dove a couple of times moving to the south not coming back to the nest. So I moved on.

When I stopped along M 88 to take a look at the eagle tree nest I could not see any loons in the area . It appears a swan is nesting in the weed bed. Another swan was close by. Four cormorants circled around, landing close to the platform and the weeds. But they didn't stay long. I lost track of one cormorant, saw one fly away and two were on the west side of the weed bed. I then saw two loons very close to the platform. A couple of minutes later the cormorants were gone. I couldn't see the two loons in the choppy water, but at least they are guarding that platform.

Not much going on with our loons at the moment but it is still always rewarding to get out and see what you can see.

So, what are you waiting for??

4.25.25

As I walked to the shore this morning I saw one loon in the Deep Water Point area. Probably my Gorham Beach buddy. Deciding not to take a kayak ride I went up to our second floor balcony with my trusty binoculars to spy on the sitting goose across the lake...when, what to my wondering eyes should appear, but an empty nest and a loon very near! I often see what I want to see so to be sure about what was going on, I decided to take a drive around the lake to check that, and all the platforms.

My first stop was at the platform in the north end. It was empty with no loons in sight.

Then on to the Green's property...and I was right. No goose on the nest and a loon very close to it. That is a good sign. Two geese were on land by the trailers, squawking at me. The loon was just hanging around close to the nest, diving occasionally but not getting up on the platform as I hoped it would. Then it dove and disappeared. I didn't see it anywhere for at least five minutes and the lake was very calm. Suddenly I saw it again, very close by the platform. Then one of the geese left landed heading towards the nest. The other goose stayed on land. The loon was on the surface between the goose and the platform but not doing anything about it. The goose slowly went back on the nest. The loon kept diving and just hanging out. End of story for now I figured so I continued my drive around the lake.

I went down Walleye Lane for a good view of the southernmost platform. It was empty. The only loon I spotted was near the big island.

Continuing my drive I stopped along M88 to check the eagle tree platform. Empty. And no loons in sight.

Later in the day I took a walk to Gorham Beach. Nothing going on there but again I saw one loon in the area. I'm afraid one of my Gorham Beach buddies is among the missing. There should be the usual pair back together there by now in my opinion. But let's keep hoping...

4.24.25

Got up at 6:15 to grab a kayak and catch the sunrise. Ended up going seven and a half miles over the next three and a half hours. Saw a pair of loons as soon as I shoved off. I thought they were the Gorham Beach pair but they didn't come real close to say hello like they should have after not chatting for six months. Since they weren't being talkative I headed off. As I neared Gorham Beach a single loon came in from deeper water to say hello. My guess is that loon is one of the Gorham Beach pair with no mate yet...possibly the male cuz it looked quite large. Hard to say though without another loon there to compare it to. It was more friendly and came fairly close. We chatted about the lack of a mate and the status of the nesting site...with me doing all of the talking. Not getting any worthwhile information from that loon and not seeing another loon in the area I headed on toward the sandbar.

I didn't get far past Gorham Beach when I spotted the head of something swimming toward shore. My first thought was a muskrat, which used to be commonly seen in that area. With my fancy binoculars I could see a very large head...of a beaver! As I paddled quickly towards it, it confirmed its beaver status with a slap of its tail and a dive. I paddled closer knowing *that big guy couldn't stay under water too long. Sure enough it soon surfaced close by, but heading back out to deeper water.* For some reason it kept circling out and back giving me time to get a tail slap video. (Click picture to see video)



I continued down around the sandbar and got out of the chilly breeze. South of Recreation Point I was greeted by a pair of loons. Probably the eagle tree pair. They came over quite close to chat a bit. One of them even stood up to wave.



The clouds had moved in and the wind picked up so I decided to head back. It was a chilly choppy trip back to my place. But as I was about to call an end to this trip the wind died down and the clouds thinned out. Not having anything urgent on my schedule I headed over towards the Green's property. I circled to the north to avoid getting close to the platform. When I neared the area another pair of loons came out to greet me. They were obviously the pair from the Green property nest cuz they didn't disagree when I talked to them about it. Unfortunately, they were not taking occupancy of that platform since there was a goose already nesting on it! Canadian geese are far from being my favorite bird but they are another interesting lake dweller and very good parents...as long as they teach their kids to poop on somebody else's beach! 🐦 Anyway, after the loons came over close for this [nice video](#)...

and we agreed that I shouldn't chase the goose away and remove the eggs, I wandered just north of the curve to see if my friends there (you know who you are!) had breakfast ready for me. I guess they saw me coming, and I think I saw them duck down behind their couch, so no breakfast for me.

But the adventure continued. As I paddled back south, staying well away from the platform, the goose left the nest and went very close to shore and quietly headed north. I didn't see another goose in the area and this one wasn't squawking at me like they usually do even at a distance. That made me wonder if that lone goose was just resting on the platform and not actually nesting. So, with the goose already past the curve and still going calmly north I went to take a look...



Goose eggs alright!! No mystery about that, but it seemed strange that I only saw one goose and it moved quietly away with me in the area. I overcame temptation and left the eggs and nature to take their course...waved goodbye to my loon friends and headed home.

4.23.25

Came back up north. Stopped at The Maples at about 3:30. No sign of any loons in the south end. The eagle tree nest was also empty. A swan was doing something in the middle of the weed bed with another swan near the north edge of the weeds. One loon was spotted a little further north of the weed bed. At about 4:30 I took a walk along our shore and down towards Gorham Beach. A single loon was along the dropoff north of my place. Another loon was at the dropoff fairly close to the little island.

4.19.25

On our way back home we stopped to check the south end platforms. No loons in sight in the choppy water or on the platforms. Bill, who lives on M88 and lets us launch the eagle tree platform from his property, said he and his wife saw two loons moving straw around on the eagle tree platform. That is good news.

4.18.25

I took a late morning stroll down to Gorham Beach. The lake was calm so I was able to see that the little island definitely has dry places to nest. And sure enough, a single loon was there checking it out. No sign of a mate and I didn't get an answer when I asked it about that.

As I walked the shore by our place at just after 5pm I saw two loons very close to shore suddenly start hollering and dancing on the water. Then they started flapping and running across the calm water, one clearly chasing the other. The front one dove and quickly resurfaced with more hollering and dancing followed by another long chase. Then they came close together with head bobbing and diving. After some loud wails they both dove and disappeared. After a few minutes one surfaced in front of me and slowly moved east along the dropoff. I finally spotted another loon way out to the north diving occasionally. That display took over fifteen minutes. I returned to the shore about a half hour later. The lake was still calm and I spotted three loons together calmly in one spot, two together acting like a pair way out to the north and two other single loons spaced out. I'm hoping all of this activity will result in pairs starting to nest and mate.

4.17.2025 WELCOME BACK LOONS AND LOON WATCHERS!

I have been getting reports of loons being back on Intermediate Lake since before the ice was gone. The reports started on April 3rd and the ice was gone on April 10th.

April 3rd was also the date the water level was at a record level of 9.11 feet according to the gage at the bridge in Central Lake. While the water level is still high it has been on a slow, steady decline since that date. The gage reading was 7.75 at 7pm today.

With the high water threat decreasing and some decent weather, the Loon platforms. Andy Hickman and I were joined by three others to get the job done. They were a great help and now know the routine used to get the platforms in place.

Yesterday there was a stiff northerly wind but the area at the Green's property was protected so we put on our waders and got that one in place.

Andy also put a platform out at his place near the Recreation Point sandbar yesterday.



This morning it was chilly but calm so we started from the Maples and rowed the southernmost platform to its spot. As we neared the usual weed bed a pair of loons was spotted in the area. They soon came over very close to us and both dove down as if to show us the spot they wanted the platform! It was so exciting to see that pair once again watching closely as we delivered their nesting platform. I'm sure they knew exactly what was going on.

We then moved to our launch site along M88. As that platform was towed to its location a pair of loons was also very close by watching the action. Again, it's just amazing that these birds are waiting in their spot for us humans to deliver the equipment they need.

The wind was building a bit but we decided to take the last platform to a spot in the far north end of the lake. Dover Corporation now owns the old De-Sta-Co property south of the campground and gave us permission to put a nesting platform along their shoreline. We get a lot of loon sightings in the north end so it makes sense to put a platform there. We will see if any loons like the accommodations.

Andy took this picture of Rich, me, Bill and Duane as we wrapped up the operation.

This afternoon I walked down to check out the little island near Gorham Beach. I was pleased to see the main weed bed and one sturdy bush survived the thick ice and high water. It is probably still too wet to nest on but there does appear to be a solid weed bed for the loons to work with soon.

So there you have it! The nesting platforms are in place...I have seen my first loons of the year...and you are getting the first loon report of 2025. Our loon watching season is underway!

I hope all of you are able to get out and do your own loon watching soon.

