

THE VERMILION



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To Protect and Improve Lake Vermilion

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Greetings, Friends and Neighbors. It is early October and I am hoping for a beautiful fall with some good walleye fishing. It is the time of year to reflect on our accomplishments as an organization and to look at what concerns we have for next year, and our direction to address them.



Terry Grosshauser
VLA President

I believe the quality of an organization is all about the people, and this year we have added many new people to take leadership roles in all areas. Through the hard work of Pat Michaelson, we have significantly improved our ability to meet with potential new volunteers and to fill identified needs for project leaders. I am very pleased with where we are currently. Even with this good news comes the sad news, with the passing of Mel Hintz. Mel was a past President, and a person who over the years had a significant impact on all areas of the lake association and had many contacts in the community and in government agencies. This edition is dedicated to remembering all that Mel accomplished.

Two board members, Rob Joki and Howard Ankrum, have retired from the board. I would like to thank them for their excellent dedication and support. We have added two new board members, Lori Ptak, newsletter and communications, and Jim Graham, west end resorts and business coordinator. They have both been very active in their areas over the summer, and we are excited to have them join the board. At the annual meeting, the membership approved increasing the board from 15 members to 18 members.

Our volunteers are the key to supporting several key functions and long-standing programs: shore lunch sites, navigation lights, sucker sales, water quality,

loon and cormorant counts, and expansion of loon nests. Several of these areas have new leaders this summer.

Under the direction of Dwight Warkentin, we are making a substantial effort to develop partnerships with local businesses. Educating the businesses about our projects to protect and improve Lake Vermilion will increase our support in the area.

On the fisheries front, the northern pike slot was changed to a limit of two pike with a new slot limit between 30 to 40 inches, and you can keep one over 40 inches. We continue to meet with the DNR annually to get updates and to understand whether or not the fall netting results are consistent with the Lake Management Plan. Please check out our website. We have added a collection of fishing videos and information mostly related to fishing on Lake Vermilion.

Kevin Kenow presented "Unraveling Mysteries of the Common Loon" at the annual meeting in August and he was well received. The British Petroleum fund will provide \$7M in funds to the state of Minnesota for loon restoration projects. New volunteer, Bob Pearson, will follow the progress of the funding. Lake Associations may apply for grants for BP funding, and we plan to apply. Please see more details on the annual meeting in a separate article. We have also added plans for How to Build a Loon Nest to our website.

With regard to AIS, we continue to improve each critical area. Our data indicates that 20-percent of the boats going into resorts are coming from infected lakes. Our work with resorts expanded significantly this year in improving the distribution of educational materials and in boat checking. We thank Bois Forte for expanding their boat checking at Fortune Bay. The sentry program (checking weeds at all public launch sites) expanded significantly with Mary McNellis coordinating our volunteer effort. The good news is that NO NEW AIS was found by our sentries or by an outside company that checked all of the weedy bays looking for new AIS. We are now

Continued on next page

VLA Honors Board Member Mel Hintz

On September 12, 2019, Mel Hintz passed away from an aggressive thyroid cancer. We will honor Mel with this edition of the newsletter.

Mel had been on the board since 2003 and was President for four years from 2009 to 2013. His accomplishments were many and included work on water quality, Take a Kid Fishing, AIS support, loon and cormorant counts, picnic sites, loon nests, fishery management plan, state park planning, and developing many contacts in government agencies. As you can see, Mel was an integral part of the success of the Vermilion Lake



Association in its efforts to protect and improve Lake Vermilion. His always thoughtful and supportive approach will be missed on the board, in the community, and as a steward of the lake.

Mel cherished his time with his

family, especially time outdoors, whether fishing or hunting. Speaking for our membership and many in the community, we send best wishes to his wife Ellen, their daughter Kristen and family at this very difficult time. Having grown up in Green Bay, he was an avid Packers fan and a Badger as well. Mel's Packer attire and fan loyalty will be missed by the board, especially other Packer board members. For Mel: GO PACK and ON WISCONSIN!

The Board of Directors - Vermilion Lake Association

President's Message....from page 2

scheduling boat checking at public launches based upon our traffic analysis using data from previous years and data from cameras at these locations. Almost all fishing tournaments required that participating boats were checked before fishing. In summary, we probably have the most comprehensive AIS prevention plan in the state with more improvements planned for next year.

We will also apply to MPCA (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency) for a water quality update of Lake Vermilion called CLMP+ (Advanced Citizen Lake Monitoring Program). This program trains volunteers to monitor a comprehensive list of data, including temperature and dissolved oxygen profiles, alkalinity, chloride, chlorophyll, color, nitrogen, phosphorus and solids. We will know in February if our request is successful for 2020. The last time this data was accumulated was in 2008, so it is time to get an update on our water quality.

The highlight of our volunteer recognition party in August was the opportunity to build your own pizza and bake it on a wood-fired oven at Camp Vermil-

ion. A great time was had by 60 volunteers. Our annual meeting in 2020 will be at Camp Vermilion on August 8. Save the date! More details will follow in coming newsletters. A big thank you to the board, volunteers, and membership for their continued support of the Vermilion Lake Association.

Cover photo



The newsletter cover photo by Cindy Mathais won third place in last year's photo contest. Cindy said her father introduced her and her husband to Vermilion in 1991, staying at Pehrson Lodge where they got married on the deck, and returned there every year until her father purchased a home on Fectos Point.

Cormorants on Lake Vermilion

by Terry Grosshauser, VLA President

Every year as part of our July Loon Count, we have the same volunteers count the cormorants. The problem with counting them is that they have a tendency to flush and possibly move to another territory covered by other people. We try to count only the birds that do not flush. The other problem is that it is very difficult to count the cormorants on Potato Island. We had two different groups count Potato Island this year and take pictures of the birds from their boats.

Our count this year was 353 cormorants. This reflects a continued decrease from 432 in 2018; 673 in 2017; and 810 in 2016. Most of the difference between 2019 and 2018 was due to a reduction in the count on Potato Island. The DNR count of nests

showed only 285 active nests at the end of June 2019, which is a reduction from more active times averaging 330. The herring gull population on Potato Island seems to be strong and can be aggressive toward the cormorants. Neither the DNR nor VLA have found any new nesting locations on other Vermilion islands.

Counting the cormorants on Potato Island continues to be a question mark with regard to determining the correct number of birds. Our plan for next year will be to use a drone to take pictures of the cormorants and gulls on Potato Island to improve our accuracy. Thanks to all of our volunteers for their efforts to count both loons and cormorants.

Loon Nesting Project Updates

by Terry Grosshauser, VLA President

The loon nest project is relatively new for the organization, and this is the third year of deploying loon nests on Lake Vermilion. The first two years, we had two loon nests deployed but observed no interest in either nest. This year we had three loon nests deployed from Oak Narrows to the west end. One was given to us by Kevin Kenow, the federal biologist who spoke at our annual meeting.

Two of the three nests were used. The third received no interest; we will reevaluate that location. One nest had the loon abandon the nest, leaving one egg. After a discussion with the DNR, we removed the egg in hope of renesting, but there was no more activity. This location was plagued with a lot of black flies which can irritate the loon and result in abandonment. We also had people getting too close to the nest, but it is difficult to determine the reason for the abandonment. Plans for this nest are to move it closer to the dock of the volunteer who will deploy that nest.

The story on the third nest was in the August newsletter; the loon had two chicks and survived an eagle

attack. After the article was written, one of the loon chicks was lost and we are not sure what predator was successful. This loon chick was almost full grown, making it difficult to understand what could have taken it. Even so, this year was considered a large success, and we plan to improve eagle protection on the nests for next year. Other loon nests on the lake are managed by lakefront property owners who have had continued success for ten consecutive years.

We have recently added the Loon Watch nest building plans to our website. If you are interested in building a nest, go to our website and then click on OTHER PROGRAMS. In other programs, click on a category called LOON STEWARDSHIP. Click on the word [HERE](#) in the sentence about loon nest platforms. The Loon Watch nest plans were used to build all three of the nests that we have, and the plans are well designed for success. The process is not difficult, and if you have any questions, we can help. We will add more advice to the website in the future with regard to vegetation, nest material, and the eagle guard.

As mentioned in the president's message, we will

Continued on next page

2019 Loon Survey Report



by Claire Zwieg

On Monday, July 15, Vermilion Lake Association volunteers scanned the lake for their 37th annual loon count. Seventy-one volunteers found a total 195 loons, including 159 adults and 36 chicks. The total was down 40 from 2018, but year-to-year variations are common. The Tower (east) end of the lake had 104 loons while the Cook (west) end had 91.

The information is compiled and sent to the MN Department of Natural Resources. Minnesota has the

largest loon population in the lower 48 states. Thanks to hundreds of volunteers across the state, we now have over 20 years of loon data on more than 600 Minnesota lakes.

For counting purposes, Lake Vermilion is divided into 23 areas where volunteers are assigned to look for loons. Loon counting is usually done during the second week of July, at which time loon chicks are still small and will stay close to the parents.

Loon Nesting...continued from previous page

apply for a grant from the funds provided to the state of Minnesota from British Petroleum as a result of the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Funds may be available for loon nests, getting the lead out of fishing tackle, signage/brochures about protecting nesting areas on lakes, and possible land purchases to insure

long term nesting areas for loons. We will provide updates on progress with this project.

VLA Volunteers Recognized



The VLA gathered its EXTRAORDINARY VOLUNTEERS for an evening of recognition in late August. At Camp Vermilion, everyone enjoyed prepping their own personal pizza which was then baked in the 700° wood-fired oven by the staff, to produce tantalizing creations. New and veteran volunteers mingled and laughed as they told stories of their adventures on the

lake. Highlights of the many volunteer roles throughout the year were shared and sincere gratitude expressed on behalf of the board and VLA members.

This organization could NOT accomplish the significant projects and lake improvement initiatives it undertakes each year.....to protect and improve Lake Vermilion....without this group sharing

their enthusiasm, expertise and numerous talents. We hope you'll note our growing list of volunteers listed on the adjacent page, and THANK those you know when you see them next time. And, we can always find a spot for you to join our ranks.....just email Pat Michaelson, Volunteer Program Leader, plmichaelson@gmail.com.

Pictured: Clockwise from top left: Marilyn & Tim Johnson, West-end Resort Ambassadors visit with Pat Michaelson; Tom Forconi, Sucker Sales, learns the tricks to pizza crust rolling; Bob Ulseth, Shore Lunch Sites, has a prize pizza creation; Elaine McGillivray & Mary Walker, Loon Counters, prep their pizzas for the wood-fired ovens; Jim & Donna Graham, West-end Resort Ambassadors enjoy the Camp Vermilion deck; Colleen & Jerry Lepper, Treasurer, take a minute to relax; Terry Grosshauser, VLA President, shares board's gratitude.



Volunteer Opportunity

The VLA is seeking a volunteer to replace our “retired CPA” to work with our treasurer to assure 501c3 regulations are met and annual contracted audit services are appropriate for VLA needs. Volunteer remotely or locally...about 10 hours annually. This is a great opportunity to GET INVOLVED and share your volunteer skills. Contact Pat Michaelson at plmichaelson@gmail.com



VLA member Jaynee Yocum took this photo of Stuntz Bay when the red, orange, and yellow colors of fall were at their glorious peak. The area is now part of the Lake Vermilion-Soudan Underground Mine State Park.

Thanks to our 2019 Volunteers

Aquatic Invasive Species

Howard Ankrum
Craig & Carol Beveroth
Susan Bies
Barry Botruff
Rob Bryers
Larry Clines
Kim Goodwin &
Rita O'Reilly
Jim & Donna Graham
Gary Haugen
Dan & Corrine Hill
Byron & Penny Jackson
Marilyn Johnson
Steve Lindberg
Jeff Lovgren-Leader
Bob McNamara
Mary McNellis-Leader
Jim Mueller
Mark Schmidt
Frank Siskar
Wayne Suoja
Bob Ulseth
Dick Vohs
Gary Whitenack
Bob Wilson

Communications

Joanne Bergman
Terry Grosshauser
Penny Jackson
Erin Kennedy
Kim Kladio
Steve Lenertz
Jeff Lovgren
Pat Michaelson
Renee Pearson
Lori Ptak-Leader

Sheri Sawatzky
Dwight Warkentin

Volunteer Coordination

Terry Grosshauser
Jeff Lovgren
Pat Michaelson-Leader
Dwight Warkentin

Records Archivist

Renee Aro

Vegetation Management

Howard Ankrum

Shore Lunch Sites

Rob Bryers
Jim & Cathy Carlson
Jim & Ann Gribble
Tom & Sue Hartley
Mel Hintz
Richard Johnson
Ron & Bev Kmett
Karen & Eric Olson
Mike & Lori Ptak-Leader
Jeff & Nancy Stebbins
Scott & Terry Vagle
Al & Mary Williams
Bob & Judy Ulseth
John & Claire Zwieg-Leader

Water Quality

Craig & Carol Beveroth
Bob McNamara
Doug Wallace &
Peggy Hunter

Fisheries

Terry Grosshauser-Leader

Shoreland Restoration

Wayne Suoja-Leader

Sucker Sales

Jerry Bontems
Rob Bryers
Tom Forconi-Leader
Dick Johnson
Don Johnson
Oz Leciejewski
Jeff & Kathy Lovgren
Roy Peterson
Wayne Suoja

Annual Meeting

Liz & Rob Dahl
Jim Graham
Terry & Bonnie Grosshauser
Terrie & Jeff Heimann
Mel Hintz-Leader
Penny & Byron Jackson
Don Johnson
Jeff & Kathy Lovgren
Jerry & Colleen Lepper
Pat & Bill Michaelson
Bob & Renee Pearson
Lori & Mike Ptak
Sheri Sawatzky
Dwight Warkentin &
Rachel Rushing
Georgia Suoja
Al Williams

Navigation Lights

Jerry Korpela-Bontems
John Zwieg

Board of Directors

Howard Ankrum
Terry Grosshauser
Gary Haugen
Mel Hintz
Rob Joki
Jill Korpela-Bontems
Jerry Lepper
Jeff Lovgren
Eric Hanson
Pat Michaelson
Mary McNellis
Sheri Sawatzky
Wayne Suoja
Dwight Warkentin
John Yocum

Donor Volunteers

Jim & Patty Cownie
Denise & Mark Muhich
Lee & Anne Niepagen
Karen & Eric Olson

Loon & Cormorant Count

Territory Coordinators* & Platform Teams
Warren & JoAnn Anderson
Val Annen
Renee & Tom Aro
John Aro
Joanne Bergman
Barb & Gary Boutto
Cathy & Jim Carlson
Larry Clines
Rob & Liz Dahl
Tom Forconi
Bonnie & Terry Grosshauser
Mark Harelstad

Julie Hippe
Mel & Ellen Hintz
Florette & Al Hujanen
Mardy Jackson
Greta Jeske
Dan & Jane Johns
Don & Jane Johnson
Marilyn & Tim Johnson
Rhonda & Rob Joki
Betty & Dick Kerber
Jill & Jerry Korpela-Bontems-Leader
Mary Levy
Reany & Steve Lindberg
Kathy & Jeff Lovgren
Dorothy & Bill Marbaker
Peter & Elaine McGillivray
Norm & Heidi Nelson
Lori & Mike Ptak
Lauren & Sherri Sawatzky
Wayne Suoja
Jim Taitt
Shirley & Bruce Tode
Judy & Bob Ulseth
Ann & Warren Vollmar
Kern & Mary Walker
Dwight Warkentin
Mary & Allen Williams
Christine Woody
Jaynee & John Yocum
John & Claire Zwieg-Leader

*There are over 120 actual loon count volunteers

Celebrating 51 years protecting Lake Vermilion

The Vermilion Lake Association (VLA) hosted 175 members and guests at the Tower-Soudan Elementary School on Saturday, August 10 at our 51st Annual Meeting. The event started with a social hour where members mingled, purchased raffle tickets, and bid on silent auction prizes. A delicious buffet was catered by North Gate Café & Catering. We would like to thank members and local businesses from Cook and Tower who contributed door prizes.



Sheri Sawatzky
VLA Secretary

President Terry Grosshauser convened the meeting. We had a moment of silence in remembrance of Dale Lundblad, long-standing board member. A brief business meeting covered our achievements and projects to protect and improve Lake Vermilion. Business items were conducted, including approval of the 2018 minutes, year-end treasury report, and the election of new directors. Jim Graham and Lori Ptak are new to the board. Gary Haugen, Mary McNellis and John Yocum were reconfirmed at the meeting, as they were added during the year. Dwight Warkinten, Wayne Suoja and Jeff Lovgren were each re-elected for another three-year term. Terry recognized and thanked the 150 volunteers who worked throughout the year. These volunteers were honored at our appreciation event on August 27. Claire



Zwieg presented the 2019 Loon Census--195 total, down 40 from 2018. 159 adults and 36 chicks were counted.



The highlight of the meeting was the guest speaker, Kevin Kenow, USGS Research Wildlife Biologist. Kenow gave a very detailed and interesting program on Common Loons--migration and foraging patterns.

According to Kenow, 93-percent of the loon population live in Canada. Six-percent are in the U.S. with 35-percent of that number in Minnesota. Baby loons reach full size in 10 weeks, when they start to try to fly. Females usually lay two eggs. The male and female share sitting on the nest.

Loons have four basic calls: tremolo, to signal danger; wail, a three-note call which usually signals an eagle in the area; yodel, (males only) to defend territory; and hoot, which is used among members of a family.

Kenow discussed the Gulf oil spill that killed 93 different species of birds. There are \$7 million in grant funds to assist with acquisition or easement of lakeshore for loon nesting habitat, artificial nesting platforms, and reducing loon exposure to lead.



Lake Vermilion: Birding Destination

Related by Jana Whittle, edited by Lori Ptak, photos by Dana Nelson

When eleven birders from the Golden Triangle Audubon (Beaumont, Texas) decided they wanted to see common loons in breeding plumage and hear their calls, their Google search led them to Minnesota, which has the most loons in the lower 48 states. Further search led them to Lake Vermilion, which has the largest loon population in the state. When they accessed the Vermilion Lake Association website, they found an annual loon count led by Claire Zweig. With Claire's encourage-



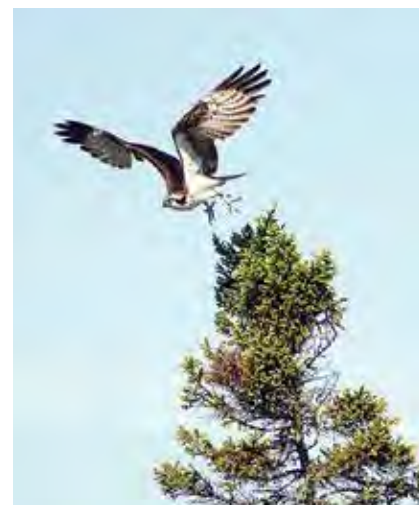
ment, they planned a birding expedition.

During the week of June 22-29, 2019, the group came to Spring Bay Resort on the west end of Lake Vermilion. They rented a pontoon and set out to find the loons. They found a baby loon chick on the back of one of its parents and a parent loon sitting on a nest. Another day they saw the baby learn to get on and off its parent's back, while one of the parents fed the one that had the baby on its back. Each day they saw bald eagle nests and baby eaglets. Along the banks they saw parents with baby common mergansers, goldeneye ducks, mallards, and gadwalls. They were excited to watch a bald eagle swimming while trying to pull a dead ring-billed gull it had killed to shore, something they had seen on



video but never in person. Each time they went out they counted close to 15 loons and 15 bald eagles.

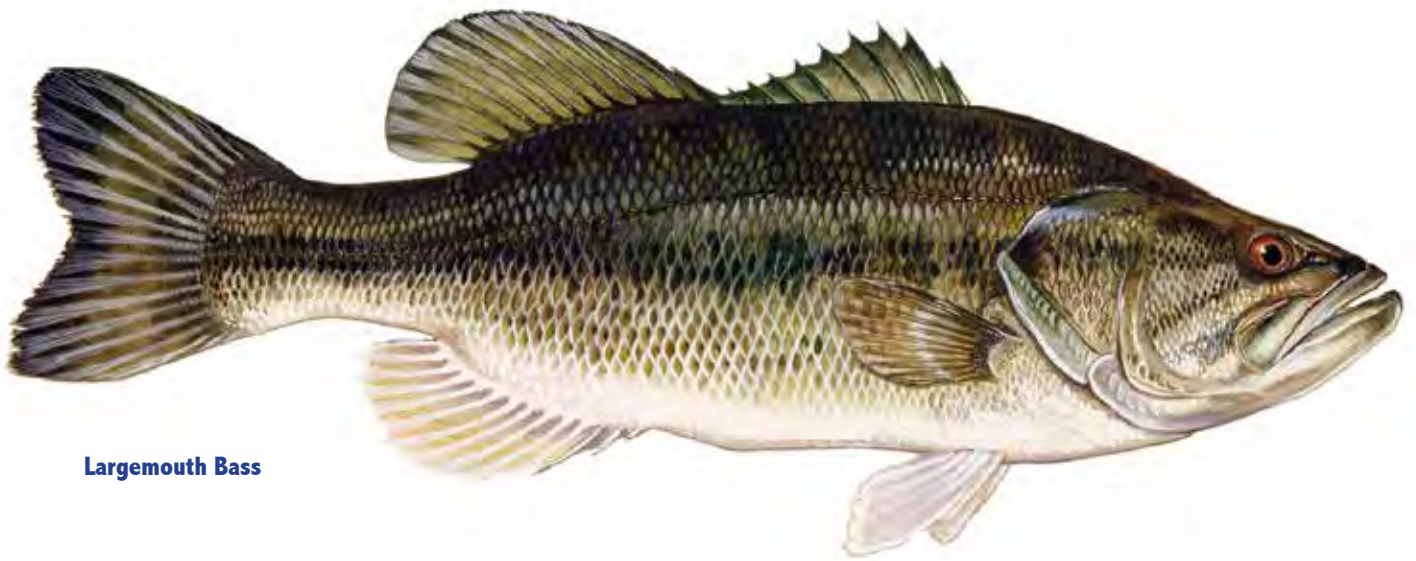
Claire put them in touch with Dee Kuder, who leads bird watches on Crane Lake. There they were able to see trumpeter swans with cygnets, and an osprey on the nest guarding its baby with open wings. The group also travelled up to the Rainy River area and 75 miles into Canada where they saw Canada jays and lots of ducklings. A stop at the Black Bear Sanctuary found several bird species that they had not previously seen. Another day was spent birding at the Sax-Zim Bog nature preserve.



The group enjoyed non-birding activities as well. One huge highlight was the Soudan Underground Mine State Park. The group also enjoyed picnicking at one of the lake's shore lunch sites.

In all, the group saw 138 species on this trip. Jana related, "Lake Vermilion was beautiful, and

seeing the loons in breeding plumage and hearing them call every single morning and evening was great."



Largemouth Bass

Lake Vermilion's lesser-known species

by John Yocum, VLA Member

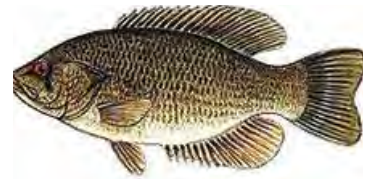
Sometimes when I think of the fish in Lake Vermilion, I think of them in the context of actors in a movie. The walleye unquestionably gets the spot at the top of the marquee. The muskellunge also has its name in lights, albeit at a distant second. The smallmouth bass and the northern pike would probably compete in the category of best supporting actor. But a whole host of other species inhabit our lake – the so-called “extras”; they get much less attention than the aforementioned four and are often overlooked entirely. This article is about some of them.

The Largemouth bass (pictured above) is North America's largest member of the sunfish family and is the big star of freshwater gamefish in the southern states. They closely resemble the smallmouth bass. The easiest way to quickly tell them apart is that the jaw hinge extends beyond the eye in the largemouth. A great place to catch largemouth on the east end of Lake Vermilion is in shallow, weedy bays like Everett, Greenwood and Stuntz, using artificial lures like spinnerbaits, jigs and plastic worms. On the west end, try the weedy areas of Norwegian and Dago Bays.

The world record for largemouth bass is 22 pounds 4 ounces, and was caught in Georgia in 1932 and tied by an angler in Japan in 2009; the record for Minnesota is 8 pounds 15 ounces and was caught in

Auburn Lake in Carver County. In Lake Vermilion, a largemouth bass has probably never grown larger than about 5 pounds. They grow slowly here due to occupying a primarily weedy habitat, where acquiring prey is more difficult, and being under the ice for 5 months.

Rock bass are similar in appearance, but smaller than smallmouth, with a maximum weight of 3 pounds. They are almost always caught in Lake Vermilion while targeting other species, usually near rocky shorelines on live bait like minnows, crawlers and leeches.



Yellow perch are almost always caught by anglers seeking walleyes. I estimate that in almost 40 years



of fishing on Lake Vermilion, every fifteenth or so fish I catch when walleye fishing is a perch.

I've also caught a fair number of them when bass fishing. They'll hit just about anything from artificial lures like crank baits, spoons, jigs, spinnerbaits and plastics to natural baits like leeches, minnows and crawlers. When they reach a size large enough to be caught on hook-and-line, most anglers refer to them as jumbo perch.

Yellow perch minnows are an important forage species for other gamefish in Lake Vermilion, particularly walleye. The record for yellow perch in Minnesota is 3 pounds 4 ounces caught in Lake Plantagenet in Hubbard County in 1945. The largest perch ever caught from Lake Vermilion is probably less than 2 pounds.

Black crappie inhabit a vast range across North America. In Lake Vermilion, the west basin holds a much higher percentage of black crappie than the east basin. Black Bay and Norwegian Bay are well-known crappie hotspots. Most are caught on small jigs fished vertically or small minnows fished under a slip bobber. Stores that sell bait around Lake Vermilion will have the smaller crappie minnows segregated from the larger walleye minnows like rainbows and chubs. Occasionally, one will catch a larger crappie while slip-bobber fishing for walleye with minnows.



Bluegill and other species of **Sunfish** are found in just about every freshwater body in North America. About the only time I hear about people fishing for sunnies on Lake Vermilion is when they have a boat-load full of restless kids or grandkids looking for action, and the walleye and bass bite isn't happening. One very good way to fish for sunnies



is to use an ordinary earthworm for bait on a #10 hook under a slip bobber with one or two split-shot sinkers using an ultra-light spinning combo. Some folks recommend using small leeches or a small piece of crawler; but using leeches and crawlers for sunnies gets kind of expensive. I just take a coffee can out in the woods, move away a few wet leaves and gather some earthworms. Like crappie, bluegills are more abundant in the west basin of Lake Vermilion and are found around submerged vegetation.

Besides the bluegill, there are other species of sunnies in Lake Vermilion. One of them is called the **Pumpkinseed**; another is



the **Green sunfish**.

There is also a hybrid between the Bluegill and the Green sunfish, commonly called the **Hybrid sunfish**.



The Brown bullhead is an omnivorous, bottom-feeding catfish that is not popular with fishermen. The world record of 7 pounds 2 ounces was caught in New York in 2009. In Lake Vermilion, they probably don't exceed 2 pounds. They can be caught on natural bait like worms and chicken liver fished on the bottom.

Whitefish can be caught on rod and reel in deep water in the summer on spoons and jigs, but more typically are netted in the fall. The DNR opens a short sport netting season in late October through mid-November, when whitefish enter the shallows to spawn. A whitefish netting license is required. Very



stringent and highly-specialized rules and regulations govern this activity; details can be found on the DNR's website.

The Tullibee (Cisco) is a member of the Salmonidae family. It is an important forage species for many of the gamefish like walleye in Lake Vermilion. Tech-savvy anglers often look for schools of tullibee, which appear as "clouds" on their fish finders, because they know walleye will be lurking nearby. In addition to gamefish, tullibees also provide an oil-rich, high-energy food source to other wildlife such as loons.



Not mentioned in this article are various suckers, shiners and minnows which also inhabit Lake Vermilion. Nor did I mention other species like Lake Trout and Sauger, which possibly inhabit Lake Vermilion in extremely low numbers, but are more likely absent entirely.

CLMP+: What is it and Why is it important?

Terry Grosshauser, VLA President

What is CLMP+? CLMP+ is “Advanced Citizen Lake Monitoring Program”. Currently for Lake Vermilion, the MPCA (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency) coordinates with volunteers on an annual assessment of water clarity using Secchi disks. The CLMP+ program is also coordinated by the MPCA and includes additional monitoring including temperature and dissolved oxygen profiles, alkalinity, chloride, chlorophyll, color, nitrogen, phosphorus, and solids. Vermilion Lake Association volunteers last completed this testing in 2008 and we believe that it is time to complete this study again in 2020. Increased building on the lake and environmental changes all may impact some of these measurements and it would be important to understand the impacts, if any, on the lake’s water chemistry. It also helps the MPCA assess the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of lakes to determine if the lake meets quality standards for aquatic recreational use.

In 2008, eight sites on Lake Vermilion were tested by volunteers and MPCA personnel. The MPCA will train the volunteers on proper monitoring and sam-

ple collection techniques. Volunteers are required to provide a boat, and will perform monitoring activities from May through September, complete necessary paperwork, and ship samples for laboratory analysis.

The MPCA will provide all necessary monitoring equipment and will pay shipping and laboratory analysis fees. The MPCA will enter all data collected into the statewide water quality database and compile a report summarizing the data.

The Vermilion Lake Association board has agreed to apply for a 2020 project. We have identified Doug Wallace as the project leader and he has considerable experience in this area. The MPCA only has funds to support a few lakes in their budget so there is no guarantee that our application will be approved for 2020. The application will be submitted prior to the due date, 1-31-2020, so we may not know the outcome of our application until February or March. If approved, we will be looking for approximately 18 volunteers to work on the project.

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facebook for regular
updates, links to articles,
and more...*



Is your Membership current ???



You can check your current enrollment status off the newsletter mailing label. We want to make it easy for you to know if your membership dues are up to date. The first line indicates your status.

For example, “Member 2019” indicates our records show you’re paid through calendar year 2019.

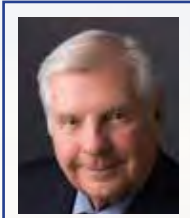
Please email or call me with mailing address or email address changes.

Sheri Sawatzky, Chair Membership Records
sherisawatzky@gmail.com or 218-780-8178

Beauty and the Beast

Inspired by golfing pal Charlie B.

"The Wilderness", a world class golf course, carved from the ledge rock and majestic pine. Swooping along the southern shore of Vermilion's Everett Bay, skirting the reaches of tamarack swamps, fairways rolling down to picture perfect greens.



Tom Aro
VLA member

Natural beauty every where, boulders define the many pond's banks running-up to a green's edge, stands of pine, like sentinels, tower over the beauty, and futility below. All gently enhanced by man's hand; flowers abound to soften the north country hard scape. The simple beauty of it all....worth the price of admission.

What could possibly jar this bucolic setting? What Neanderthal could push this beauty aside? What earthly force could shatter this moment?.... Pogo gives us the answer...."We have met the enemy and it is us"!!

Us, the golfer, old men, some known as Bogey Boys, trying to relive a day when they belonged in this picture. This is the dark force that can shatter it all! Hacking, cursing, temperatures rising. No "smellin' the roses" here, man, this is hand-to-hand combat.... against oneself. No siree, no surrender!

The holes go by, and for me any saving grace is found on the green. Not completely blind yet, on occasion I can still read a putt! However, my nemesis remains alive and well. Alas, all too often I find myself poised to launch that little white orb, a mighty swing, my head pops-up to capture every inch of flight, meanwhile the

club head clipping the top of the little bugger, advancing it ten yards at best. From the skies comes down a commanding voice that only I can hear, "dummy, keep your head down!" Sadly another example of bad golf form... standing too close to the ball.....after I hit it.

And so it goes, one hole piling-on to the next, energy draining, questioning my sanity and then...then somehow....I par seventeen! Redemption? I can still play this game? I'll be back next week!!

I step boldly to the tee box of the final hole. In front of me the fairway tumbles gently down to the final green, a small pond on the left trimmed by cat-tails provides refuge for a gaggle of geese. Tempo returns and voila, a decent drive of 175 yards and....I can see the ball! Remembering the 17th, confidence grows, next shot....reality returns....once again I fail the "keep your head down test". Two more whacks at it with two putts I close the day, and the year, with another double bogey.

Golfing, like fishing, encourages exaggeration. I mutter to myself, "but for X, I could have easily parred the final hole and that would have been two in a row"!Thank God winter is coming!

Tom Aro, Fall 2019

For Early Detection Work, Zero is Good News

When survey teams and lake association volunteers spend all summer at Lake Vermilion and find nothing, it may sound uneventful ... but that's the way we like it in the early detection world.

Board member Mary McNellis expanded our sentry project – a vegetation early detection effort – to all 17 public accesses in 2019. Volunteers agreed to “adopt” a specific public access and visit that access once a month during June, July and August to look for invasive vegetation. Sentry Jill Korpela-Bontems brought one suspicious sample – found in East Two River – to the Tower DNR to confirm it was a native plant. Overall, no new invasives were found at any public access.



One new AIS Detector was trained in 2019, keeping our crew at four to provide coverage on both ends of the lake. Fortunately, we did not keep them busy investigating vegetation discoveries. No reports from property owners or lake visitors this year. AIS hotline reports are still possible as docks and lifts are removed this fall.

RMB Environmental Labs returned to Lake Vermilion in late July to check for undiscovered Eurasian and hybrid watermilfoil and for starry stonewort. They spent two days on the water at weed-friendly bays and high-traffic accesses. Mary McNellis and 1854 Treaty Authority technician Matt Santo joined the RMB team during part of the survey. No new infestations were found.

RMB's report is posted on the VLA website.

DNR AIS Specialist Rich Rezanka checked our



known curly-leaf pondweed infestation in Everett Bay in June. While the two-acre infestation changes shape a bit each year, it is not expanding geographically and not overwhelming native vegetation. No chemical treatment is planned.



In 2020, we will be working with our resort, campground and marina partners to extend sentry coverage to our lake business community. Some businesses are already covering their dock areas; others may choose to have an AIS Detector stop by three times each year. We envision this to be similar to the sentry program that is working well at our public accesses.

Above: Rake recovers a variety of native plants in Wolf Bay.

Below: Chara, a starry stonewort look-alike, in Everett Bay. Photos courtesy of RMB Environmental Labs

See Something? Say Something!

In our battle against AIS, the more eyes we have on the lake, the better. Here are a couple real situations which occurred at Vermilion recently:

Taking Action #1: An out-of-state boater arrived at a Lake Vermilion resort on a Saturday. The resort owner noticed the boat was heavily encrusted with zebra mussels. Before launch, the resort owner helped clean the hull and eventually directed his customer to trailer his boat to the nearest Decontamination Station for a more thorough cleaning. Boater returned to the resort for an enjoyable week at Vermilion.

Taking Action #2: A Vermilion property owner mentioned to an inspector while launching his boat at a public access that he had noticed some unfamiliar weeds by his personal dock. The inspector asked the VLA to investigate. One of our four AIS Detectors arranged a visit to the property, gathered samples, and asked the DNR for a final determination. Outcome: Native vegetation.

Our thanks to those who took action when they saw something! When you see something, contact our AIS Hotline at AIS@VermilionLakeAssociation.org or 218-288-1080.

Buying a Used Boat Lift?

Q: I need a used boat lift for my cabin next spring. What are the rules for moving it to Lake Vermilion?

A: To minimize the chance of moving aquatic invasive species (AIS) between lakes, a lift needs to be clean and out of the water for a minimum of 21 days to allow the interior cavities of the lift to completely dry. If it's raining or the cavities are full of debris, 21 days are probably not going to be enough. The longer the better.

Pro tip: Buy your lift during the fall or winter from a dealer servicing Lake Vermilion. The dealer will be a trained lake service provider (LSP) who understands the risk of AIS. He'll assure the lift is clean, in good working condition, and has dried over the winter. And he can deliver it to your cabin in the spring.

Board of Directors and Officers 2019 - 2020

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Donations

The Vermilion Lake Association has qualified as a tax-exempt, non-profit organization under IRS Section 501(c)(3). Your charitable gifts and membership dues are generally tax deductible for federal income

tax purposes. Please consult your tax professional.

To accommodate a wide range of donor interests, the Vermilion

Lake Association has three funds to which gifts may be directed. Any size gift is appreciated and acknowledged.



General Fund: Gifts to this fund are used for a broad range of lake association activities.

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention Fund: Gifts to this fund are used to prevent new AIS infestations and to manage infestations already present.

Shore Lunch Site Improvement Fund: Gifts to this fund are used to improve and maintain Lake Vermilion's eight shore lunch sites.

How to Make a Donation

If you'd like to send a check, please make it payable to the "Vermilion

Lake Association, Inc." and mail to the address below. If you wish, you may direct your donation to a specific fund.

All gifts are appreciated and acknowledged. Please include your name, email, and mailing address.

If this is a memorial gift, please let us know who the gift is in memory/in honor of.

Vermilion Lake Association, Jerry Lepper, Treasurer, P.O. Box 696, Tower, MN 55790

Donate online at <https://www.vermilionlakeassociation.org/get-involved/donate/>

VLA Caps make a great present!



They're here! Wear your new caps proudly to show your support for your lake association. The price is right: \$15, plus \$3 shipping for any number of caps to one address. Free local pickup. Check out the three style choices at our website VermilionLakeAssociation.org/caps.

For more info, contact Sheri Sawatzky at 218-666-5512 or email sherisawatzky@gmail.com.

Help protect Lake Vermilion by using Amazon Smile, Part II



Jerry Lepper
VLA Treasurer

Since we asked our membership to participate in Amazon Smile and to designate the Vermilion Lake Association as their selected charity, participation has increased over 400-percent - we have gone from six to 29 members using the program. With over 1,300 members imagine the potential!

When you shop at Amazon go to the Smile.Amazon.com website, designating The Vermilion Lake Association as your charity.



If you have started to shop at Amazon.com and then remember you want to use Smile, leave everything in your shopping cart, log off Amazon and then log back in using Smile.Amazon.com. Your purchases will still be in your shopping cart and Vermilion Lake Association will receive the Amazon 0.5-percent donation on qualifying purchases.

Thank you for helping the Vermilion Lake Association protect and improve Lake Vermilion.

Vermilion Crappie Tips & Tricks

Over the past few years, the crappie fishing/population has been steady on Vermilion. Some of the best spring and fall fishing entails crappie fishing in the shallows. A few things stay the same in the spring and fall, so here's a few things to keep in mind when targeting slab crappies!

Location, presentation, and weather are key components.

Tackle examples at right:

Locations: bays with weeds or weed edges... spring time as the weeds are growing in, and the fall when the weeds tip over... fish shallow crappies 1-9 feet...try your favorite spring time spots in the fall!!

Presentation: everyone likes live



bait..ie crappie minnows under a bobber, but crappies love soft plastics and artificial baits in many different varieties:

gulp minnows- 2" minnows- white, chartreuse, pink, orange

helgremites- jig and bobber

tubes- small jigs or tube jigs (1/16 or 1/32): pink, white, chartreuse, orange

beatle spins- tipped with 1/16 oz jig w/ 2" gulp minnow casted or trolled 1-1.5 mph in 4-8 ft of water 6 ft behind a clip on bobber. ..the bobber acts as a planer board

willow spoons- can be trolled or casted, tipped or not tipped with gulp

small crankbaits- trolled 1-1.5 mph in 4-8 ft of water...some deeper diving crankbait trolled 6 ft behind a clip-on bobber can produce some of the best fish of the season, especially in the fall. ..the bobber acts as a planer board

Weather: I always get asked the Million Dollar Question... "When is the best time to fish?"... and I simply respond with, "Whenever you can, the weather trumps all!" When picking fishing times, one can go by moon phase, feed schedule, or simply any random time to fish, but in all reality, weather will win the vast majority of the time! For crappies on

Vermilion, wind is the killer in my opinion, and can shut down a hot bite in minutes! Calm days with overcast or sun seem to produce the best crappie days.

Take a look at the tackle selection above and give these presentations a shot!

Steve Amundson, VLA Member, Spring Bay Resort & Guide Service, 218-780-5941



Deer Tick Disease: Anaplasmosis

Sharon Sterle

We returned to our summer cabin in later May 2018, anticipating another summer on Lake Vermilion. At some point after our settling the cabins and some light yard work I abruptly felt fatigue, to the extent I had no energy. I had no interest in being active in the warm late spring.

I recall the first sign of being ill on a beautiful early June Saturday. We were enjoying one of the first warm days to enjoy a late breakfast. I had no energy to prepare breakfast. I was sitting on the deck in full sunshine covered in a jacket while family members were in short sleeves.

It wasn't much later I excused myself, going to sleep away most of the day. I had no appetite. I was gently reminded to drink water. Typically I would prepare dinner but that wasn't the case today. I remember going back to sleep, perhaps into Sunday. Sunday was going to be a repeat of Saturday. I was exhausted to the point of wanting to sleep the entire day.

Our weekend guest left mid-afternoon. At some point after that I wanted my husband to close up the cabins and take me to our home in Nashwauk. I had the wherewithal to rationalize that we needed to be within easier reach to medical assistance as opposed to reaching out to the fire department services crossing the lake to shore and perhaps an ambulance. At some point after our return to our Nashwauk home we went to a local urgent care. The medical staff started IV fluids as they determined I was dehydrated. I was discharged with advice to consult my primary physician as needed. I thought I had the flu and it would relent. I had no appetite, wasn't thirsty, wanted only to sleep and be left alone.

I was taken to urgent care again. My husband stressed with the physician that "my wife is never ill." My husband asked the physician to order a Lyme disease test. The physician wasn't inclined to do so based upon there being no typical bull's eye rash. My husband provided an in-depth history of what I had



been experiencing. Reluctantly, the physician ordered the Lyme disease test, and called the following day to report it was negative for Lyme disease.

I became even more fatigued, had not eaten for days, fought to drink water. My body temperature fluctuated from 102.7 to normal. I was so weak. Headaches weren't relieved with over-the-counter medication. Imagine it being a flu that didn't relent.

On June 21 I returned to my primary care physician. She picked up right away that I was not well. She ordered a Lyme disease test as well as expanding on what was done previously. She ordered a draw of two vials of blood. One of the results was being kept at the local clinic. The second vial was being sent to Mayo Clinic. Two days later the local test result was "reactive". Two days later the Mayo Clinic vial report was "anaplasmosis". My primary care physician prescribed tetracycline. Within two days, I was feeling thirsty and the fatigue wasn't as severe. I was recovering.

I do not remember much of the month of June 2018. Thankfully, my family advocated for me.

As I do reflect on the first days of being ill, I did not find a tick. I did not have a typical bull's eye rash. I have learned from that day forward that symptoms of what is thought to be the flu in the summer in northern Minnesota may be something else. It may be anaplasmosis. Anaplasmosis is treatable. Be your own advocate.

Fisherman's Corner : Fall Fishing

The Antique Angler continues to learn how to fish walleyes in the fall. I rarely had much time to fish in the fall before I retired. Fall fishing is quite different from the rest of the year, and it can be exceptional. The good thing about the fall is that a lot of fish move toward deep holes in search of bait fish and are more concentrated. I had a friend come up to go fishing last October and he, too, had little experience fishing at that time of year. So he was learning from me and that was concerning since I do not often fish for walleyes.

Last October my neighbor and I found some walleyes on a drop off in Niles Bay. This was a unique area; it was a drop off going from 19 feet to 31 feet. The fish were consistently hitting at 25 feet. The drop off was not in a straight line and moved in and out, and we tried to follow it with the electric motor. I was watching the electronics and could see clouds of bait fish from time to time and sometimes we would see a tell-tale larger mark indicating a walleye or other predators. If we saw bait fish or we had a hit, I would put on the electronic anchor. Basically, the electric motor uses its GPS to stay in one spot or area. This process was exceptionally productive since even in high winds it kept us in a very productive spot. We were fishing vertically, which seemed to be the key. Several other boats were in the area and not catching a fish, but they were either too deep or too shallow. You had to be right on that break.

Presentation is always important, and we were fishing very simply using a 3/8 oz. jig with a minnow, usually a rainbow or red tail chub in a smaller size. What we found was that the walleyes in the live well would spit up a three-inch perch, so these were the bait clouds we were seeing on the electronics. I was using a short 10 lb. fluorocarbon leader before the jig. I am not sure that had any impact, but it made sense to me. The bite was subtle. You would feel a weight on the line, no hard hits, just the feeling of weight. If you were not using braid, you had

to hit them pretty hard because of the depth, and you seemed to always have a few come off on the way to the surface. Jig color did not seem to make a difference. The weather was cold, in the 40s, and it seemed the fish hit very well in the middle of the afternoon.



The Antique Angler

So how did we do? We ended the afternoon with eight walleyes, one was in the slot at 22 inches and was released and the rest were all eaters. We had a 19, two 18s, two 16s and two 13s. Wow, what a nice pile of filets and, needless to say, my friend was very happy to have a couple of walleye meals. Also, there was a kicker, two 11-inch perch, which may have been 1 lb. each. I cannot ever remember catching a nice mix of different size keeper walleyes at one time.

An interesting observation was that a couple of the walleyes did not survive in the live well even though they were not hooked deeply. It was probably due to coming up too fast from deep water even though 25 feet does not sound very deep. I do believe it is important to not sit on a spot in deep water and catch 10-inch walleyes. A lot of them, if released, will not survive. If you see the air bladder in the throat of the walleye, move to another spot.

I believe that if the walleye opener has very cold water, using the techniques described here will work in the spring as well because some walleyes will still be in deep water. Remember, as bait fish change depths going deeper or shallower, the predators will follow, so check out different depths to find which is the most productive. Good fishing!



Vermilion Lake Association

PO Box 696

Tower MN 55790

Volunteers Make the Difference

The Vermilion Lake Association has been fortunate over the years to have a dedicated group of leaders and volunteers to staff our important activities. We are grateful for their help.

Please consider joining this team. We have needs for both workers and leaders, for those with only a few hours to spare, and for those who can make a larger time commitment.

If you think you may be interested, please contact Pat Michaelson, VLA Volunteer Program Leader, at 612-306-7702 (cell) or plmichaelson@gmail.com.

Vermilion Lake Association

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Membership year runs from Jan 1st through Dec 31st

☐ 2020 New Member ☐ 2020 Renewal

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Please clip or copy this form and send to the address above.

Become a Member

Join those who love Lake Vermilion as much as you do. Help us continue the many activities you've just read about.

Not sure? Check us out at our website VermilionLakeAssociation.org. We're pretty sure you'll like our vision for the future and the work we have underway now to make Lake Vermilion even better.

Please mail a check with the form on this page or join at our website using PayPal or a credit card.

The Vermilion Lake Association is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Do You Qualify?

Trick question. Anyone can join the lake association whose mission it is to protect and improve Lake Vermilion. No need to be a property owner. No need to be a fisherman or a kayaker. Just someone who cares about our great lake and wants to protect her for the next generation.