

To Lake Leelanau Riparians,

On July 13th, Freshwater Solutions, (FS) trapped and removed 41 common mergansers from North Lake Leelanau at three different locations. Click on the following link to find where they were captured: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=18gczNLdnk0NObzfmfwU7wd1N-lc&usp=sharing>. We are making progress! The 41 mergansers that were removed will not be adding to the snail parasite load in 2017. However, removing mergansers this year will not automatically stop swimmers itch in 2017. Snails are already infected with the swimmers itch parasites from past years. It will take a couple years of trapping to rid the lake measurably from swimmers itch.

The merganser broods were moved to Lake Michigan. The hens' flight feathers were clipped so they cannot fly until the next molt this summer. The young will imprint on the new site as "home" and return there next year. Swimmers itch will not be a problem in the new location, because the snail (*Stagnicola emarginata*) which harbors the merganser parasite is not found there.

One disquieting fact is that FS crew encountered two individuals, one who shot at a brood of mergansers which the FS crew was preparing to trap. FS was close enough to the brood to see the bullet splash in the water. Shooting at mergansers is illegal this time of year. More importantly the shooter used a rifle endangering the FS crew and cottagers, if the bullet ricocheted off the water. The FS crew also observed a wounded male merganser. This bird likely cannot be captured and will remain on the lake adding to the parasite load even after the other mergansers have left at the end of summer.

Do not shoot at or try to scare mergansers. This illegal activity undermines our efforts to trap and remove mergansers. If anyone observes others shooting at mergansers, please report the incident to the county sheriff. If you see more broods, email Wayne Swallow at leelanaubound@gmail.com

REMINDER – REPORT SWIMMERS ITCH –Two Ways

- To our web site: <http://lakeleelanau.org>
- Or from your cell phone . Save this link as a favorite in you cell phone browser. It takes you directly to the report form. <http://lla-sirpt.questionpro.com>

Reporting swimmers itch cases is very important to our overall effort to reduce this problem. We have tried to make it easier this year by making the report form available on your cell phone. We encourage you to use it. Thanks!