



## CRYSTAL LAKE & WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

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### Board of Directors

### PRESS RELEASE

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## CRYSTAL LAKE & WATERSHED ASSOCIATION SUSPENDS DUCK RELOCATION

#### President

May 4, 2022

David Wynne

The Crystal Lake & Watershed Association regrets to announce the cancellation of its 2022 swimmer's itch control season at the direction of the Department of Natural Resources. Due to the epidemic of "highly pathogenic" avian influenza (bird flu) in Michigan, the DNR has suspended all permits for the trapping and relocation of waterfowl including common merganser ducks, the procedure that facilitated the program.

#### Vice President

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This development is deeply disappointing to the CLWA, as it surely is to all Crystal Lake friends who enjoy water sports. The merganser trapping and relocation program began in 2017 and has shown both measurable and anecdotal results in reducing the incidence of swimmer's itch. From the first trials carried out by Swimmer's Itch Solutions (SIS) to the refined operation taken over by the CLWA's own local trapping team in 2019, the CLWA gained confidence in the value of the process, well worth its high cost.

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Scientific analysis of the snail infection rate in Crystal, carried out by SIS in 2018 and 2020, demonstrated a 99% reduction since the original baseline study in 2016. CLWA has also used the annual data on SI cases recorded at the Congregational Summer Assembly beach, which also reflected a significant decline. This work has also provided more knowledge about the behavior of the swimmer's itch parasite. Full reports on these studies are available on the [Swimmer's Itch page](#) of the CLWA website.

CLWA will continue this data collection in 2022, including another study of the snail infection rate. Although the public has no need to report merganser broods for capture this year – as has been so helpful in previous years – **the CLWA is still requesting that those affected by cases of swimmer's itch report those on the CLWA website.** This can be done on the home page of the CLWA website beginning in June.

CLWA recommends that swimmers consult its [SI brochure](#), also found on the CLWA website, which provides current information on the best ways to avoid acquiring swimmer's itch. Effective strategies include swimming late in the day, in deep water if possible, and avoiding onshore winds.

Although avian flu is a fast-spreading and deadly virus that can devastate domestic poultry and has been detected in some Michigan wildfowl, there is no current evidence that common mergansers are a carrier, or pose a hazard to humans. We hope that the current outbreak will be brought under control so that CLWA can resume its control program in 2023.

#### Past Presidents

Joel Buzzell

Bob Appleford

Ed Hoogterp

**Report cases of swimmer's itch: [www.CrystalLakeWatershed.org](http://www.CrystalLakeWatershed.org)**

*"Protecting Crystal Lake Now for Generations to Come."*