



News Release

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Bird Deaths Along Lake Ontario Shoreline

The Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority has received numerous phone calls from concerned citizens regarding the number of dead birds, in particular Common Loons, that have been washing ashore over the past few weeks. Initial reports came in from homeowners in Port Darlington, just south of the Bowmanville/Westside Marshes Conservation Area, on October 22nd. Since then, dead loons have been observed at Darlington Provincial Park and most recently along the beach at the Gold Point Marsh. This latest report included gulls, cormorants and waterfowl among its dead.

Authority Staff have been in close contact with the Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre (CCWHC) in Guelph, and have sent in a number of specimens for analysis. Although a final diagnosis has not yet been made, CCWHC staff suspect that the deaths are the result of Type E Botulism. This type of botulism affects fish-eating aquatic birds, particularly on the Great Lakes, and is not a cause for concern to humans.

It is expected that the number of deaths will begin to decrease as the colder weather sets in, but for the time being, waterfront residents and visitors to the beach should not be surprised to see some bird carcasses along the Lake Ontario shoreline.

Residents are advised to refrain from picking up any of the birds. Any citizens wishing to report bird deaths may contact Ms. Jackie Scott, Terrestrial Resource Technician with Central Lake Ontario Conservation at (905) 579-0411, ext. 104. Additional information on botulism may be obtained from the CCWHC website at http://wildlife1.usask.ca/wildlife_health_topics/botulism/botulism.php or by contacting them directly at 1-866-673-4781.

What we do on the land is mirrored in the water.