



Short Ears, Long Tales

Courte Oreilles Lakes Association

Issue #53 June 3, 2022

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Angry Mother Bear Instinctively Defends Yearling Cub and is Killed by Couple Who Shouted at Her

By Allison Slavick

You've likely heard about [this incident with a bear](#), with headlines such as Bear breaks into Medford home through window and attacks a couple; Medford couple recovering after killing bear that attacked them; Wisconsin couple fight, kill bear that broke into their home; and so on. So rare was this bear behavior that even the national media picked up the news story.

LOCAL

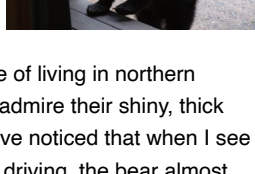
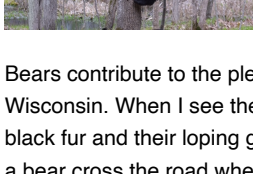
Bear breaks into Medford home through window and attacks a couple, but they fought back with a kitchen knife -- and a gun

Rebecca Loroff Marshfield News-Herald
Published 8:03 a.m. CT May 23, 2022 | Updated 8:20 a.m. CT May 24, 2022

The couple saw the bear at their birdfeeder late at night and yelled at it to scare it away. I can imagine the bear's initial thoughts: "These nice people left food for me, but I wish they'd keep the noise down so I can eat my snack in peace." Typically, it doesn't take much noise at all to scare off a bear. Shouting, hand clapping, banging pots and pans – those are all methods that work. According to news reports, upon being shouted at, the bear charged at the shouters' house, climbed through a window, and immediately attacked them. The woman defended the man from the bear with a kitchen knife, the man eventually shot the bear, and the bear died. The couple had unspecified injuries.

An aggressive attack is abnormal, rare behavior for a black bear. Typically, bears want to avoid humans as much as we (should) want to avoid an unpleasant or scary bear encounter. We live in bear habitat and territory, and here are pointers on how to cooperate there:

- Store away things around your home that attract bears. Like humans, bears like to eat. Bring your birdfeeders (both seed and suet) to an indoor location each evening and return them outdoors in the morning. Likewise, keep your garbage in a secure place (bears may be able to open unlocked doors), and keep your outdoor grill clean or stow it away. If camping, put your food in a locked car, hang it (the food, not the car) at least ten feet in the air (look for guidelines online), or use the "food lockers" that are provided at some campgrounds. Never take food in your tent.
- If you're worried about encountering a bear outdoors, make noise as you hike. Their senses of smell and hearing are keen and bears likely will know you're approaching long before you see them; they are shy and will run away. Their eyesight? Not so good. If you've seen a bear stand on its hind legs (Endearing!), appearing to be peering at something and sniffing the air, that is exactly what it is doing: trying to determine what is going on around them.
- If you do startle a bear in the wild, normal bear behavior is to run away. If it doesn't (again, this is extremely rare and unusual), it may bluff even before it gets truly aggressive. Bluffing might include snorting, huffing, and mini-charges to scare you off. Bears want you to retreat, and you should. Don't run, but calmly back away. Make yourself tall, and clap your hands or shout. Give the bear a clear escape path. Everyone knows this: do not approach a bear with cubs. If you see a bear with cubs, retreat. If you inadvertently find yourself near or amidst a black bear with cubs, survey the situation to see where everyone is, and slowly back away. The DNR offers more information about the natural history of bears and how to avoid [conflicts](#).



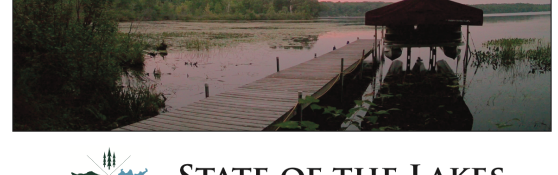
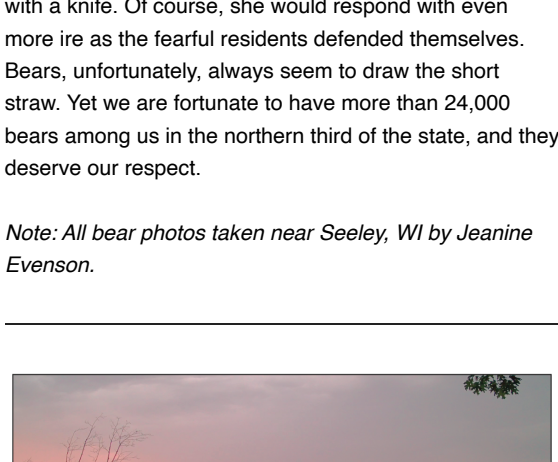
Bears contribute to the pleasure of living in northern Wisconsin. When I see them, I admire their shiny, thick black fur and their loping gait. I've noticed that when I see a bear cross the road when I'm driving, the bear almost always stops in the woods and looks back at me! Many people have a fun bear story or two. My neighbor found muddy bear paw prints up high on her picture window on a second-story deck. Another found a 50-pound bag of sunflower seeds, which had been in a metal garbage can in an open garage, dragged to the driveway, torn open, but only half eaten (Indigestion!). I found one of my wire, cone-shaped tomato cages from the garden in the yard, completely flattened, with a large tuft of bear fur attached (Ouch!). A friend left his car windows open and a bear climbed in and bit the headrests and Styrofoam he had in a bag (Funny!). I came over a small crest of a hill on my mountain bike, and startled four bears who all had their noses to the ground on the same anthill (Surprise! For all of us!). I saw a very large bear on a bike ride (Me, not the bear!) last year. I was rubbing its back against a utility pole (Buggy!). I've seen bears while I was picking berries (I chose another patch!), and eating garbage (The bear, not me!) in the middle of the road when I've been on a bicycle (I changed directions!).



If you have a trail cam, you have surely captured photos of bears. Between January of 2017 and December of 2021, more than 33,000 images of bears were captured on trail cams, as reported to [Snapshot Wisconsin](#), a project of the Wisconsin DNR. More than 15,000 people participate in this wildlife monitoring program. If you enjoy wildlife, this is a rabbit hole of fun! There are 110 pages of [bear photos](#). If you visit the site, look for the bear photo tagged with "LOL."

We don't know the emotions that bears experience – satisfaction at finding a birdfeeder, fear that its cub would be harmed, desperation upon finding itself inside a home. Remember that there have been only nine bear attacks or injuries reported in Wisconsin since 2013. That black bear in Medford must have been royally pissed off and feeling threatened to charge at a house – in spite of the shouting – and to make the effort to climb up to a window, tumble her plump body through it and into the house, and then lash out at the occupants, only to henceforth be attacked with a knife. Of course, she would henceforth with even more ire as the fearful residents defended themselves. Bears, unfortunately, always seem to draw the short straw. Yet we are fortunate to have more than 24,000 bears among us in the northern third of the state, and they deserve our respect.

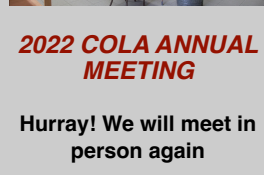
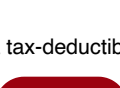
Note: All bear photos taken near Seeley, WI by Jeanine Evenson.



Click [here](#) for the 2021 report.

COLA NEEDS YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT

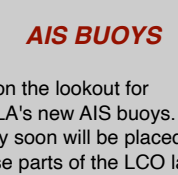
Please consider a tax-deductible donation today!



2022 COLA ANNUAL MEETING

Hurray! We will meet in person again

June 25, 2022
St. Francis Solanus Mission
More detail to come - save the date



AIS BUOYS

Be on the lookout for COLA's new AIS buoys. They soon will be placed in those parts of the LCO lakes with aquatic invasive species. The hope is to limit boat traffic in infested areas and the spread of AIS. COLA will provide more information in the near future.



HELP WANTED

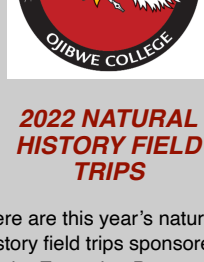
COLA needs to hire a Clean Boats inspector for the 2022 season on LCO. Must be available for weekend work, Saturdays and Sundays, June through September.

If interested, contact communications@cola-wi.org.

AND MANY THANKS!

COLA is scheduled to install the new internet camera on June 13th at the Hwy K ramp on LCO. The camera requires a 12 inch diameter by 4 foot deep footing for the equipment to mount on.

Bob Beatty offered his services to drill the hole at no charge to COLA. We thank him for his generosity, and if you find yourself needing that kind of work, give him a call at (715) 699-6825.

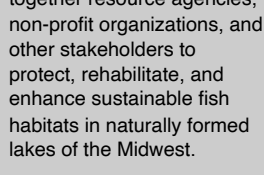


2022 NATURAL HISTORY FIELD TRIPS

Here are this year's natural history field trips sponsored by the Extension Program at the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe College near Hayward, Wisconsin. For more information, contact Cali Quaderer-Cuddy, Extension Program Coordinator, at cquaderer@lco.edu

- 6/22 Amnicon Falls/Wisconsin Point
- 7/6 Lost Creek Falls
- 7/20 Little Girl's Point, MI
- 8/17 Brunsweiler Canyon
- 9/17 Hawk Ridge, Duluth, MN
- 9/24 Blue Hills Felsenmeer
- 9/8 Juniper Bluff
- 9/15 Morgan Falls/St. Peter's Dome- autumn colors

[\(more\)](#)



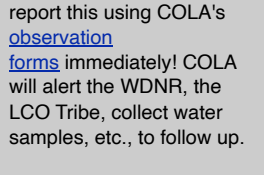
MIDWEST GLACIAL LAKES PARTNERSHIP

2022 WEBINARS

The Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership (MGLP) brings together resource agencies, non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders to protect, rehabilitate, and enhance sustainable fish habitats in naturally formed lakes of the Midwest.

Note, in particular, the seminars/links to materials regarding the WI Shoreline Stabilization Outreach Project and the study of wakesurf and non-wakesurf boats and their effects on lake shore.

[\(more\)](#)

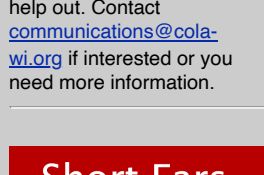


SEE ANYTHING WEIRD?

If you observe green water, algal mats on the surface or floating or dying fish - anything out of the ordinary - please take pictures and report this using COLA's [observation forms](#) immediately! COLA will alert the WDNR, the LCO Tribe, collect water samples, etc., to follow up.

Please, if you see something, do something.

Do your part to help enhance and preserve the LCO Lakes!



LCO NEEDS YOUR HELP

COLA is a **volunteer organization**. That means essential jobs don't get done unless someone steps up to help out. Contact communications@cola-wi.org if interested or you need more information.

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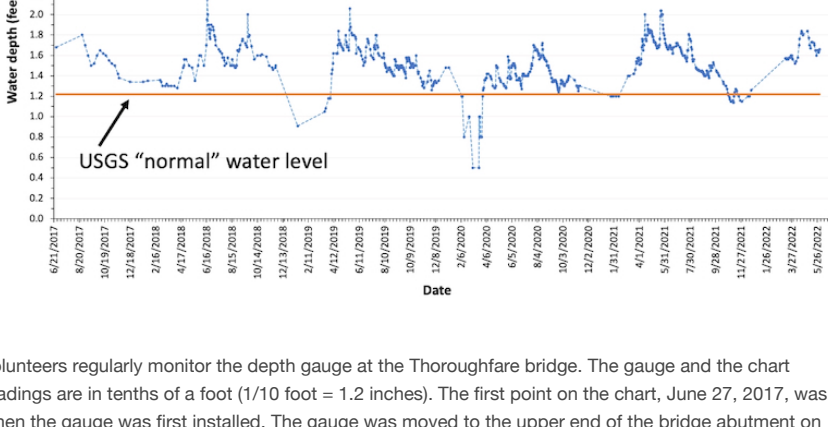
[ARCHIVED ISSUES OF SHORT EARS, LONG TALES](#)



Allison Slavick is a nature lover who bicycles, skis, and picks berries near her home on Crystal Lake in southern Bayfield County.

Questions, comments, or suggestions for future articles may be sent to her at allison.slavick@gmail.com.

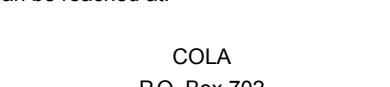
LCO Water Depth Recorded at Thoroughfare Bridge Gauge



Volunteers regularly monitor the depth gauge at the Thoroughfare bridge. The gauge and the chart readings are in tenths of a foot (1/10 foot = 1.2 inches). The first point on the chart, June 27, 2017, was when the gauge was first installed. The gauge was moved to the upper end of the bridge abutment on 4/15/21. The USGS "normal" water surface elevation for big LCO is 1287 feet and is represented by the lower orange line.

The Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) is represented by the upper orange line. The OHWM establishes the boundary between public lakebed and private land, was established for big LCO in 1955 and is 1289.27 feet above mean sea level. The OHWM is "the point on the bank or shore up to which the presence and action of the water is so continuous as to leave a distinct mark either by erosion, destruction of terrestrial vegetation or other easily recognized characteristic."

Periodic readings are recorded as accurately as reasonable. The water itself is in perpetual motion, not only flowing downstream but rising and falling due to waves, the current in the channel, the wind which can actually push water and "stack" it toward one end of the lake or the other and the seiche effect caused by the gravitational pull of the moon and sun.



COLA Mission: 1) to protect, preserve and enhance the quality of Lac Courte Oreilles and Little Lac Courte Oreilles, their shorelands and surrounding areas, while respecting the interests of property owners and the rights of the general public; and 2) to consider, study, survey and respond to issues deemed relevant by COLA's membership.

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