

## Algonquin Park 2017 Loon Survey

Please give us a hand by reporting your loon sightings this year.

Report forms are available at park offices and the Visitor Centre or email to:

[wildlivesurveys@algonquinpark.on.ca](mailto:wildlivesurveys@algonquinpark.on.ca)

The haunting calls of the Common Loon symbolize Algonquin's wild country for many people. Nearly every small lake has a breeding pair and there are multiple pairs on the larger lakes. Unfortunately, there are environmental threats to loons throughout their range that could potentially affect numbers here in the Park, including reduced reproductive success caused by acid precipitation, and loons dying during migration due to avian botulism.

In 1981, we began the Loon Survey to help determine how well loons were doing in Algonquin. Visitors and staff report the lakes where they see adult loons, their nests and young. On average, nests or young were observed on 40% of lakes where loons were reported during the 37 years from 1981 to 2017. Reports from 164 lakes in 2017 included observations of nests or young on just 54 lakes (33%). This apparent reduction from the average may have been due at least in part to rises in lake levels after major rain events that flooded out loon nests last year. Only a long-term monitoring program can distinguish real trends from normal yearly fluctuations, and we need observations from as many lakes as possible.

### Loon Reproduction in Algonquin

Year	# of lakes surveyed	% with nest/young
1981	121	38
1982	184	28
1983	237	21
1984	298	34
1985	210	37
1986	216	35
1987	261	43
1988	260	40
1989	240	41
1990	248	40
1991	201	50
1992	203	39
1993	232	43
1994	183	46
1995	223	45
1996	219	42
1997	173	45
1998	175	42
1999	190	33
2000	216	44
2001	168	39
2002	143	41
2003	120	46
2004	144	41
2005	156	40
2006	147	41
2007	138	43
2008	169	39
2009	146	40
2010	138	36
2011	134	51
2012	128	48
2013	120	52
2014	152	41
2015	129	40
2016	117	44
2017	164	33

PETER FERGUSON

## Fish Research on Lake of Two Rivers

Over two years (2017-2019) the Harkness Laboratory of Fisheries Research is conducting an in-depth population assessment and monitoring of fish movement in Lake of Two Rivers.

In May 2017, fisheries researchers caught 20 Lake Trout and 10 Smallmouth Bass and surgically implanted them with acoustic transmitters. The transmitter (about the size of one AAA battery) emits a unique sound frequency every 5 to 10 minutes. The sound from the transmitter is picked up by acoustic receivers in the lake, which are installed one metre below the surface of the water.



Fisheries researcher implanting transmitter.

DAVID LEGROS

With 49 receivers in the lake, the exact location and depth of each fish with a transmitter will be accurately determined. This study is anticipated to yield detailed information about habitat use.

If you happen to be fishing on Lake of Two Rivers, keep an eye out for fish with a small, red tag near the fin on the back. If you do catch one, please release it, so it may continue to contribute to our understanding of its species. If it cannot be released, please return the transmitter to a Park Office. Keep in mind the fishing regulations prohibit the harvest of Lake Trout from Lake of Two Rivers with a total length between 40-55 cm.

This valuable research helps improve our understanding of Lake Trout and Smallmouth Bass by producing accurate population estimates and determining where and when fish use specific habitat. The results of this study will help inform future fisheries management planning and resource management decisions, not only for Lake of Two Rivers, but all of Algonquin.

For more information see the bulletin boards or park office.



If you catch a fish with a red tag, please release it.

NECK LACOMBE



Museum • Bookstore & Nature Shop • Café **WiFi**

Open Daily  
9 am - 7 pm

June 16 to October 8, 2018

Algonquin Logging Museum - Open 9 am to 5 pm June 16 - October 14, 2018.  
The 1.3 km trail with outdoor exhibits is available year-round.

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Algonquin

# The Raven

A Natural and Cultural History Digest

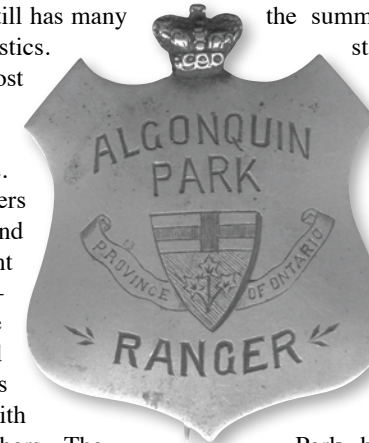
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## The Guardians of Algonquin: A History of the Park Rangers

by Mathew Thivierge

In 2018, Algonquin Provincial Park celebrates its 125th anniversary as a park, the oldest in Ontario's present-day system of provincial parks that now totals three hundred and forty. The park that visitors and staff members see today is much different from the park that existed at its inception in 1893, but still has many of its original characteristics. Perhaps one of the most important features is not what you see, but rather who: park rangers. The early park rangers had roles both similar and surprisingly different from those of present-day rangers. When the Park was established in 1893, Algonquin was smaller and started off with only seven staff members. The original crew consisted of Peter Thomson, who was named Chief Ranger and appointed superintendent the following year, three rangers and three temporary rangers. These seven staff members were responsible for the entire administration of Algonquin, an area of over 1600 square miles (4144 km<sup>2</sup>), roughly half the size of Algonquin Park today.

The first year of Algonquin's existence was about establishing authority of the rangers within the Park. The original park headquarters was constructed on the shores of Canoe Lake. Here, Chief Ranger Peter Thomson arrived on 2 August 1893 and immediately began his inspection of the surrounding area. During the summer of 1894, Thomson's ranger staff constructed 16 shelter huts and cleared 83 miles (134 km) of portage trails, laying the foundations for interior travel by rangers and campers alike, as well as enforcement of park rules and regulations. The shelters, typically small log cabins, were generally built within a day's travel of one another and allowed rangers to patrol their assigned areas, looking for anyone within Park boundaries without permission, which included poachers. They also watched for forest fires caused by campers and lightning strikes. By 1936, rangers had built 115 shelters within the boundaries of Algonquin. However, by the late 1950s and early 1960s, transportation became easier so all non-essential ranger huts were destroyed by the Department of Lands and Forests.



Today, only 14 cabins remain and they are available for rent to the backcountry camper.

After the completion of the Ottawa, Arnprior, and Parry Sound Railway in 1896, rangers also patrolled the tracks to ensure that sparks from the steam locomotives did not cause forest fires. Even with this effective method of enforcement, by 1897, the Commissioner of Crown Lands was aware of challenges in administering Algonquin and decided to make some changes. In 1898, George W. Bartlett, a former J.R. Booth Lumber Company employee was appointed as Algonquin's new superintendent. Bartlett would preside over the park for the next quarter century, overseeing many changes to park ranger staff.

According to the 1907 Superintendent Report, the ranger staff now totalled fourteen men, consisting of the superintendent, chief ranger and twelve rangers. The Park continued to grow, from 1600 to 2000 square miles (5180 km<sup>2</sup>), which was divided into seven sections or roughly 740 km<sup>2</sup> (the City of Toronto is only 630 km<sup>2</sup>) which were patrolled by two rangers each. However, Superintendent Bartlett still felt there weren't enough rangers patrolling the Park given its increased size and increasing number of visitors, and asked for one man to patrol each township in the Park. The rangers faced all kinds of calamities and hardships in the backcountry. An example of the challenges faced by park rangers can be found in the new park history book by Rory MacKay, *Algonquin Park—A Place Like No Other*:

*Early spring or late fall canoe travel was as risky then as it is today, but even more so because, as there were no lightweight lifejackets then, none were worn. Mark Robinson told about rounding a point and*



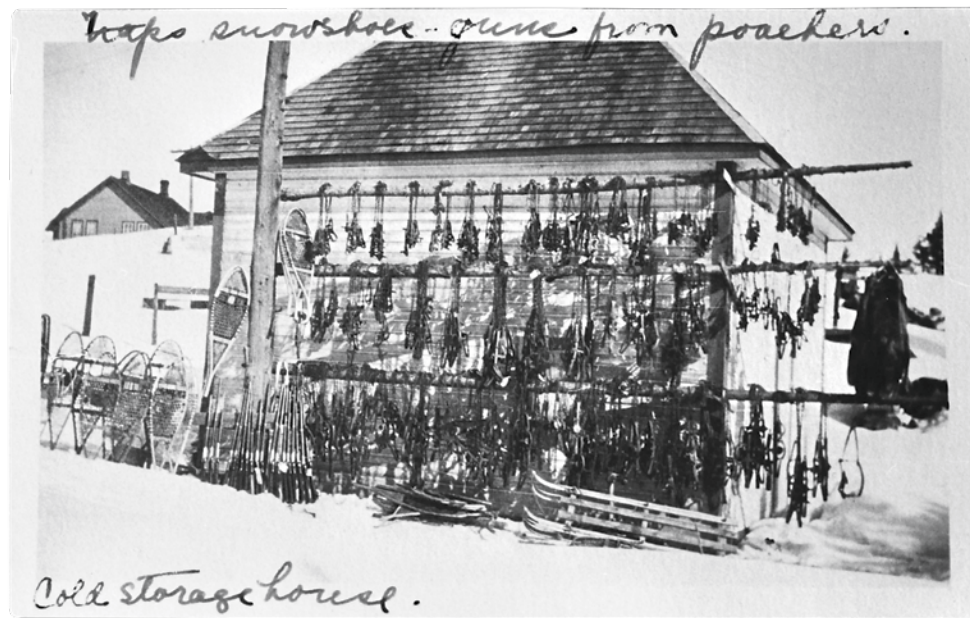
*Ranger shelter hut at Rain Lake, 1897. These cabins (usually of log construction) were built at convenient day's travel distances along the ranger patrol routes.* G.B. HAYES; APPAC #61



*Kitty Lake ranger cabin, 1976.* APPAC #3361

*upsetting the canoe in which he and Mr. Bartlett were travelling, one cold and windy day in April 1910. They lost their rifle, axe, and other supplies. They reached the nearest Shelter Hut over four miles (6.4 km) away in record time, apparently covering that distance, including some portages, in thirty-five minutes. Any travel in spring or fall could be uncomfortable, as Robinson noted on September 28, 1908: "Mr. Balfour and I in camp very wet and chilly and owing to heavy wind and rain could keep very little fire."*

To speed up communications between park rangers in the backcountry and headquarters, the park telephone system or "bush line" was implemented by Superintendent Bartlett in 1911 after permission was obtained to use the telegraph poles along the Grand Trunk



*Traps, snowshoes, and guns at Cache Lake, 1931, confiscated from Algonquin poachers. Illegal trapping by both poachers and some rangers continued to be a major problem until 1932, when winter air patrols began.*

W.N. BENDER; ONTARIO PARKS; APPAC #275

Railway. This system had immediate effects because it helped in enforcement, controlling fires and rescue work. This communication system became even more important as Algonquin nearly doubled in size in 1914.

When George Bartlett became superintendent in 1898, he introduced policies in conjunction with the government to make Algonquin a self-supporting park. As strange as it seems today, rangers trapped furbearers to generate Park income. The fact that rangers could trap in the Park, and anyone else caught doing so was a poacher enraged local people. As a result, this practice was discontinued in 1920 to prevent a conflict of interest on the ranger's behalf when enforcing park regulations. Some wildlife, however, continued to be killed mercilessly. Wolves were to be snared, trapped, shot or poisoned using Strychnine. The killing continued until 1959 when wolves, previously viewed as pests harmful to the ecology of the park, were first studied and later recognized as integral to Algonquin's ecosystem. Poaching remained a problem in Algonquin despite air patrols introduced in the winter of 1932 by Superintendent and pilot Frank MacDougall.

Poaching lessened after 1941 due to increased regulation in the form of registered trap lines and reduced demand for fur. MacDougall introduced significant changes to the ranger staff in Algonquin Park, and his legacy is still felt today, which includes emergency first response flights, and flying researchers and interior rangers, plus their equipment throughout the Park.

Until 1931, there were two groups of rangers in Algonquin Park. Approximately twenty-five park rangers worked year-round, while a similar number of fire rangers worked only for the summer months. Fire rangers were tasked with patrolling rail routes, and clearing brush close to the tracks to prevent forest fires from starting as a result of flying sparks from steam locomotives. Fire rangers were also stationed in the interior of Algonquin at fire towers located at strategic locations. Using multiple fire towers, rangers would triangulate the location of fires and telephone coordinates to headquarters. Differences in employment contracts created tensions among the two ranger groups and ultimately reached the point, according to Ralph Bice, where the fire rangers did not trust the park rangers, and

summer visitors did not trust either faction. A solution arrived when the administration decided that park rangers would fulfill the roles of both. The disagreement between the ranger groups was also lessened with the introduction of aircraft, which forced the two ranger groups to work together while fighting forest fires because efficient fire detection and control required the use of both aircraft and fire towers.

The way people came to the Park also changed the duties of rangers. While the train still remained the most popular method of travel, one of the three trestles crossing Cache Lake was condemned in 1933, preventing through travel in Algonquin Park. At the same time, construction of Highway 60 began and was completed in 1936, which created a new way to enter the Park. While not heavily used at the time of its creation because personal vehicles were not yet in widespread use, it was still a second entrance point into Algonquin that rangers were required to monitor. Rangers continued to patrol both the rail line and the highway for over twenty years until all traffic on the southern railway ceased and the tracks were pulled up in 1959. It was at this time that Park Headquarters was moved to its present location at the East Gate.

Modern Algonquin Park staff members carry out many roles similar to those performed by the rangers of the past. Today, rangers are called park wardens, a name first introduced by Superintendent Frank MacDougall. As Algonquin increased in size, the duties of individual staff became



*Park Warden talking to visitors at the Brent Crator lookout in Algonquin.* ONTARIO PARKS

much more specific, but some are still quite similar to the rangers of days past. Interior crews are still responsible for clearing and maintaining portages, including over 2000 km of canoe routes and the maintenance of over 1900 interior campsites. Overall, the full-time staff numbers around 30, with an additional 200 seasonal staff and students. These staff members are responsible for the management of the Algonquin landscape, visitor experience and safety. Annual Park visitor numbers have reached 940 000 as of 2016 making it among the most popular parks in Ontario.

The duties of park staff have changed over time to meet the needs of our visitors and to serve as stewards of the landscape. Despite many of these changes, the men and women who serve as park rangers continue to make Algonquin a safe and enjoyable place for people to visit and create lifelong memories. We hope that you enjoy Algonquin and celebrate its 125th anniversary, and if you get the chance, thank a ranger.



## Algonquin Park—A Place Like No Other

This new title combines archival sources and "tales told" to explore the rich history of Algonquin Provincial Park. Long-time cottager and director of The Friends of Algonquin Park, Brian Maltman stated, "This is the definitive work on the human history of the Park, and how it has been shaped by the people who explore, work in, live in and love this place".

Available at the Algonquin Visitor Centre Bookstore & Nature Shop, East Gate and West Gate, or online at [algonquinpark.on.ca](http://algonquinpark.on.ca)