

# **2017 Turtle Observations in the Jack Lake Watershed**



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This report should be cited as follows: Kerr, S. J. 2017. 2017 turtle observations in the Jack Lake watershed. Jack Lake Association. Apsley, Ontario. 4 p. + appendices.

Cover photo by Kim Saunders-Buenting

## Introduction

Citizen science may be broadly defined as “the participation of non-scientists, who are members of the general public, in the process of gathering data, according to specific protocols, as part of a larger collaborative project.” With reduced government budgets, the collection of information by volunteer members of the public has increased dramatically. Some examples include the Canada Lakes Loon Survey (Bird Studies Canada), Frog Watch Ontario (Toronto Zoo), and the Ontario Turtle Tally (Ontario Turtle Conservation Center).

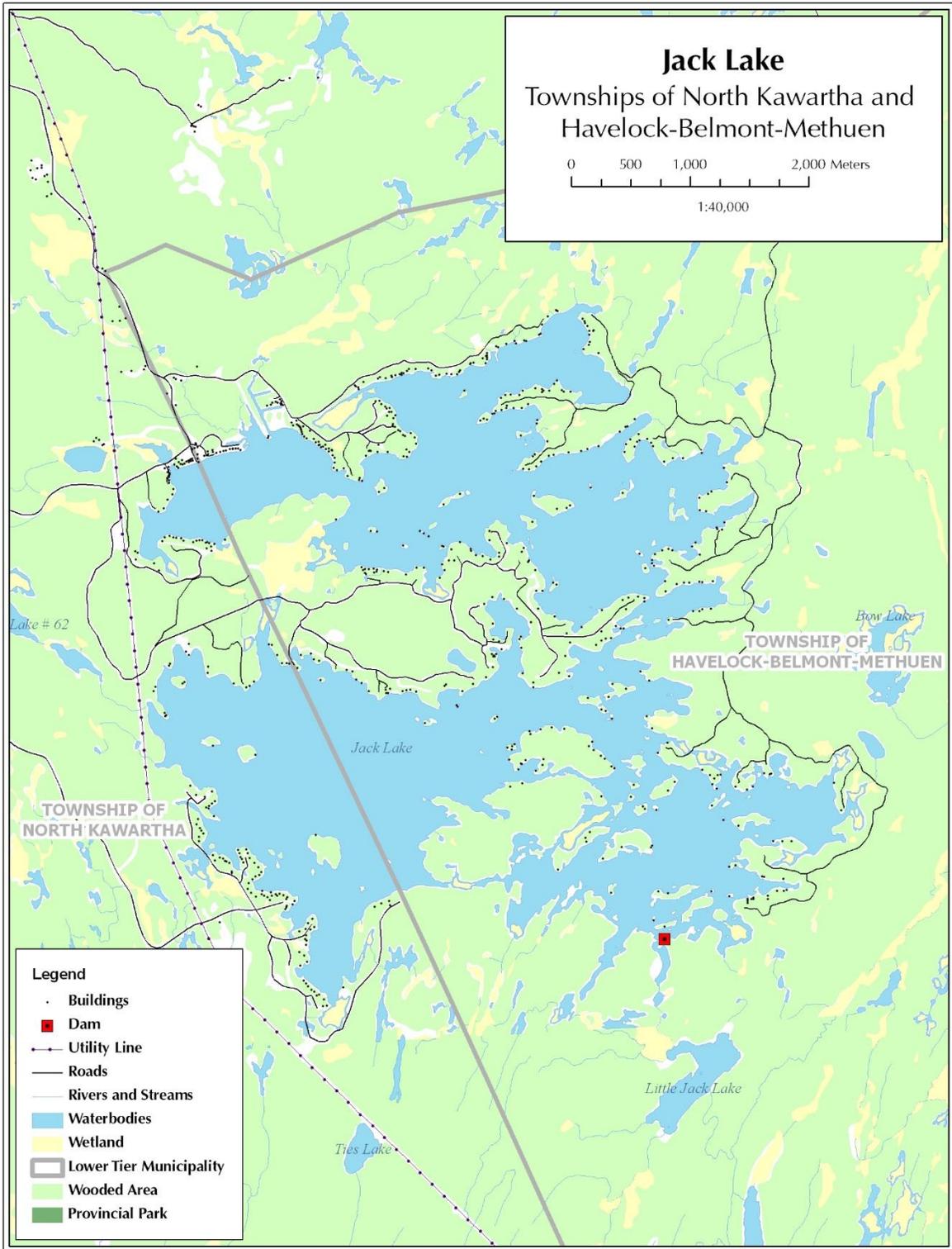
Jack Lake residents have participated in a number of these programs over the years. This report has been prepared to summarize observations recorded during the 2017 season.

## Characteristics of Jack Lake

Jack Lake is a moderately sized (1,237 ha) lake situated on the edge of the Canadian Shield in southcentral Ontario. The lake has a complex basin comprised of several discrete bays connected to each other by relatively shallow channels. Jack Lake is a headwater lake whose catchment is used to provide water for the Trent-Severn waterway. It is surrounded by numerous wetlands and wetland complexes. The lake has a maximum depth of 51.2 m and a mean depth of 10.0 m (Table 1).

Table 1. Selected physical and chemical characteristics of Jack Lake, Peterborough County (from JLA Fisheries Committee 2013).

Latitude	44° 41' 20"N
Longitude	78° 02' 54"W
Surface area (ha)	1,237.3
Drainage area (km <sup>2</sup> )	83
Maximum depth (m)	51.2
Mean depth (m)	10.0
Growing degree days > 5°C	1,820
Morphoedaphic index (MEI)	7.32
Water clarity (Secchi depth in m)	4.9



## Spring and Summer Weather Conditions

After a colder than normal winter, turtles did not emerge from their overwintering grounds as early as usual. That coupled with the increase in rain during spring and summer led to a perfect storm of turtles moving en masse (Ontario Nature 2017). In southcentral Ontario the summer of 2017 was generally characterized as wet with relatively high water levels and below normal air temperatures. Conversely, the month of September was generally drier and warmer than usual.

## 2017 Turtle Observations

Turtle observations noted during the 2017 nesting season varied from May 6 until late August (Appendix 1). Many of the sightings were along roadways and, in several instances, turtles were moved off the road.

Nesting activity was recorded for snapping turtles on June 16 (2), June 17 (2) and June 20. The only midland painted turtle nesting activity was reported on June 10. Nesting activity was not observed for any of the Blandings or Northern Map turtles which were reported.

Turtle observations have been recorded on an ad hoc basis since 1987 (Table 1). In 2014, members of the Jack Lake community collectively participated in the Ontario Turtle Tally (Kerr 2016). 2017 represented the fourth consecutive year of JLA volunteer involvement in that project.

Table 1. Turtle observations reported for the Jack Lake watershed by local volunteers, 1987-2017.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Blandings Turtle</b>	<b>Midland Painted Turtle</b>	<b>Northern Map Turtle</b>	<b>Snapping Turtle</b>
1987	-	-	-	1
1988	-	1	-	1
1994	-	-	-	1
1999	-	1	-	-
2007	1	1	-	2
2008	1	1	-	2
2009	1	8	-	2
2010	4	8	-	-
2011	3	3	-	-
2012	2	2	-	5
2013	1	7	-	5
2014	2	32	-	12
2015	3	56	-	20
2016	5	14	-	16
2017	6	60	2	21
<b>Summary</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>88</b>

As knowledge of the provincial Turtle Tally Survey has become more widespread around the lake, participation rates and the number of turtle observations has increased over the past four year period (Table 2).

Table 2. A summary of participation and numbers of turtles observed by Jack Lake volunteers, 2014-2017.

Year	Number of Participants	Total Number of Turtles Observed
2014	5	46
2015	6	79
2016	17	35
2017	31	89
2014-2017 Summary	5 – 31 (mean 14.8)	35 – 89 (mean 62.3)

## Acknowledgements

This information was collected and reported by a number of Jack Lake residents and visitors including (listed alphabetically): Doug Allison, Tash Alves, Debra Anthony, Kim Saunders-Buenting, Karen Burleigh-Kerr, Frank Cirinna, Tim Cork, Ruth Davenport, Kim Peter Davis, Nicole Dodds, Dawn Tower-DuBois, Irit Hartman, Courtney Hewitt, Sheelagh Hysenaj, Mike Jensen, Allan Kerr, Andrew Kerr, Steven Kerr, Russ Miller, Amanda Palmdale, Sarah Robertson, Paula Schnurr, Jeff Seaward, Karen Sjolín, Nanci Smith, Dave Tabon, Dawn Tower-DuBois, Arnold Tripp, Linda Tripp, Jan Van Velzen, and Cathy Ward.

## References

- Jack Lake Association (JLA) Fisheries Committee. 2013. A review of fisheries management activities on Jack Lake and proposals for the future. Jack Lake Association. Apsley, Ontario, Ontario. 27 p. + appendices.
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## Appendix 1. Turtle observations recorded in the Jack Lake watershed in 2017.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Turtle Species</b>	<b>Observer(s)</b>	<b>Site/Location</b>	<b>Details</b>
May 6	Midland Painted	Sarah Robertson	West of Idlewood in passage toward Sharpe's Bay	One adult and two juveniles observed.
May 13	Snapping	Karen B.-Kerr	Jack Lake road (near marina)	One large turtle crossing the road.
May 28	Snapping	Sarah Robertson	Long Bay	One large adult near dock.
	Midland Painted	Sarah Robertson	Long Bay	Eight turtles observed in bay behind cottage.
Late May	Midland Painted	Sheelagh Hysenaj	Brooks Bay (northwest end)	Three turtles observed.
	Midland Painted	Sheelagh Hysenaj	Brooks Bay (southwest end)	Four turtles observed.
	Midland Painted	Sheelagh Hysenaj	Snake Island wetland (Brooks Bay)	Five turtles observed.
May 31	Midland Painted	Paula Schnurr	FR85Q	Photo taken.
June 3	Midland Painted	Cathy Ward	Griggs Island (east end)	Two turtles observed basking.
	Midland Painted	Irit Hartman	Jack Lake road (#573)	Turtle was moved off the road.
June 10	Midland Painted	Tash Alves	Jack Lake road (33 FR85 P)	Turtle was laying eggs (photo taken).
	Snapping	Karen Sjolin	Griggs Island	Turtle was on the lawn ~ 75 feet from shore.
	Snapping	Courney Hewitt	Brooks Bay at Forest Glen marina boat launch.	Young turtles (2016 hatch?) – photos taken.
June 11	Midland Painted	Ruth Davenport	McCoy road (FR85)	Turtle was on the side of the road.
June 12	Midland Painted	Frank Cirinna	McCoy road at PCGP sign	Photo taken.
June 15	Snapping	Nanci Smith	Jack Lake road	-

<b>Date</b>	<b>Turtle Species</b>	<b>Observer(s)</b>	<b>Site/Location</b>	<b>Details</b>
June 16	Snapping	Frank Cirinna	McCoy road (first wetland from Hwy 504).	Nesting turtle observed in morning – photo taken.
	Snapping	Frank Cirinna	McCoy road (85A)	Turtle was along the side of the road. Morning observation
	Snapping	Frank Cirinna	McCoy road (85E)	Nesting turtle. Morning observation
	Snapping	Dave Tabone	Shady Lane (east of transfer station).	Nesting turtle. Afternoon observation
	Blandings	Linda and Arnold Tripp	McCoy road	Early evening observation.
	Snapping	Linda and Arnold Tripp	McCoy road	Early evening observation.
	Midland Painted	Linda and Arnold Tripp	McCoy road	Early evening observation.
	Blandings	Steven and Andrew Kerr	Highway 504	Turtle was moved off the road. Evening observation
	Blandings	Steven and Andrew Kerr	Highway 504	Turtle was moved off the road. Evening observation
	Blandings	Steven and Andrew Kerr	Highway 504 (near McCoy road)	Evening observation
	Midland Painted	Steven and Andrew Kerr	McCoy road	Two turtles went into adjacent marsh. Evening observation.
June 17	Snapping	Jan Van Velzen	McCoy (FR 85)	Photos taken.
	Snapping	Jan Van Velzen	McCoy road	Turtle was laying eggs. Photo taken.
	Snapping	Tash Alves	McCoy road (3 km from Hwy 504)	Turtle was laying eggs. Photo taken.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Turtle Species</b>	<b>Observer (s)</b>	<b>Site/Location</b>	<b>Details</b>
June 18	Midland Painted	Steven, Allan and Andrew Kerr	McCoy road (inside PCGP)	Two turtles crossing the road.
	Midland Painted	Steven, Allan, and Andrew Kerr	McCoy road (first wetland from Hwy 504).	Two turtles basking on log.
	Snapping	Kim Peter Davis	Hwy 504 (3.2 km north of McCoy road).	Turtle was moved off the road. Photo taken.
June 18	Northern Map	Kim S.-Buenting	Wetland in Sheeps Bay	Turtle was basking on log. Photos taken. Evening observation. Identification confirmed by B. Bowles.
June 20	Snapping	Dawn T.-DuBois	Hwy 504 (near a wetland)	Turtle was laying eggs. Photo taken.
June 24	Midland Painted	Debra Anthony	FR89 (near trail to White Tail Drive)	Turtle was moved off the road. Photo taken.
June 26	Midland Painted	Amanda Palmdale	Anchorage Marina road	Photos taken.
June 27	Midland Painted	Steven Kerr	McCoy road (first wetland from Hwy 504).	Two turtles basking on a log.
June 29	Snapping	Paula Schnurr	FR85P	Photo taken
June 30	Midland Painted	Paula Schnurr	FR85Q	Turtle was heading toward water.
June 30	Snapping	Jeff Seaward	FR85Q	Turtle was heading toward water.
June	Blandings	Mike Jensen	Jack Lake Road (north of Shady Lane)	Turtle was moved off the road.
July 1	Midland Painted	Jeff Seaward	FR85P	-
July 4	Midland Painted	Sarah Robertson	Long Bay	Two turtles basking on a log. Photo taken.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Turtle Species</b>	<b>Observer(s)</b>	<b>Site/Location</b>	<b>Details</b>
Early July	Snapping Turtle	Doug Allison	Redmond Bay (small bay behind Island 10)	Turtle observed on several occasions.
Early July	Midland Painted	Tim Cork	Small bay off Center Bay	Three specimens observed.
Early July	Snapping	Tim Cork	Small bay off Center Bay	One turtle observed.
Early July	Midland Painted	Tim Cork	Small bay north of Rathbun Bay narrows	Four turtles observed.
Early July	Midland Painted	Tim Cork	Center Bay around Griggs Island.	Five turtles observed
July 20	Midland Painted	Sarah Robertson	Anchorage Marina road	One very small turtle examined.
July 22	Snapping	Steven Kerr and four others	Rathbun Bay (north shore)	One large (mossy backed) adult swimming slowly along shoreline near dock.
Early August	Northern Map	Russ Miller	Miller's Island (SE Redmond Bay)	Turtle seen basking on several occasions. Photos taken.
August 13	Blandings	Steven Kerr and Karen B.-Kerr	Hwy 504 (between Apsley and McCoy Road)	One large adult moved off center of highway.
August 19	Midland Painted	Steven Kerr	McCoy road (first wetland from Hwy 504).	Adult basking on small log in wetland.
August 25	Midland Painted	Nicole Dodds	McCoy Bay	Two adult turtles basking on log near cottage.
Late August	Snapping	Ruth Davenport	Rathbun Bay (south shore)	Turtle seen on a regular basis near cottage.

Legend

FR – Fire Road

PCGP – Peterborough Crown Game Preserve

**Appendix 2. 2017 Turtle photos from the Jack Lake area.**



Snapping turtle photos by Jan Van Velzen





Nesting snapping turtle on McCoy Road adjacent to a small wetland (Frank Cirinna photo).



Young snapping turtle captured near the public boat launch in Brooks Bay (Courtney Hewitt photo).



Young painted turtle captured on the Anchorage Marina road on July 20 (Sarah Robertson photo).



Northern map turtle in southern Redmond Bay (Russ Miller photo).