

## 50-3A. COEUR D'ALENE LAKE

### Boundaries and ownership:

*Boundaries:* Lake shoreline, but not including Wolf Lodge, Beauty, and Blue Creek Bays, or Heyburn State Park

*Ownership:* Bureau of Land Management, USDA Forest Service, The Nature Conservancy, municipal, private

### Focal species using the site and timing of use:

Nesting species around the lake include waterfowl (Canada Goose, Cinnamon Teal, Northern Pintail, Wood Duck, and others), waterbirds (Pied-billed Grebe, Red-necked Grebe, Common Merganser, Hooded Merganser, Sora [Valhalla Point], Great Blue Heron), shorebirds (Killdeer, Wilson's Snipe, Spotted Sandpiper), raptors (Osprey, Bald Eagle, and others), Belted Kingfishers, and Red-winged Blackbirds. During migration and/or winter waterfowl (Trumpeter Swan, American Wigeon, Eurasian Wigeon, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye), waterbirds (Common Loon, Pacific Loon, Horned Grebe, Western Grebe), and occasional shorebirds can be seen.

*Mica Bay:* Waterfowl (Cinnamon Teal, Northern Pintail) and Soras breeding. Virginia Rails may be there, but haven't been heard in many years.

*Cougar Bay (12 acres protected by The Nature Conservancy):* filled during migration by waterfowl (Tundra Swan, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Cinnamon Teal, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Ruddy Duck, and Mallard). Summer breeders include waterbirds (Great Blue Heron, Sora, Red-necked Grebe, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorants [new]), shorebirds (Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe), Cinnamon Teal, Bald Eagles, and Osprey (large concentration).

*Colonies:* Great Blue Heron (Mica Bay/Fernan Lake) – Mica Bay colony may have moved to Fernan Lake after nest tree fell.

### Location of type 1 and 2 habitat within the site:

Functional Group	Type 1 Habitat	Type 2 Habitat
waterbirds	open water & emergent vegetation	none
large waders	breeding colonies (Mica Bay/Fernan Lake) emergent vegetation	rest of shoreline
secretive marshbirds	water's edge (Cougar Bay, Mica Bay, Valhalla Point)	none
waterfowl	open water, edges during breeding season	none
shorebirds	shoreline	none
gulls and terns	all areas	none

### Access to the type 1 and 2 habitat and visibility of the birds:

East side of lake is easily accessible by road that winds along the lake. West side a little more difficult, and may require use of a boat. Mica Bay is easily accessible and birds are visible from a viewing platform and the boat launch, as well as from along the dike. Cougar Bay would require boat access, particularly for birds in marsh habitat. Accessibility and visibility of birds will vary depending on the bay.

### Conservation issues:

- Disturbance from residential development along shoreline, from family pets, and from recreation (particularly jet ski users)
- Conflict among various recreational users: birdwatchers, fishermen, duck hunters, etc.

- Noxious weeds
- Road construction through Mica Bay likely altered the habitat, and may cause disturbance to nesting waterbirds

**Conservation measures taken, in progress, or proposed:**

- 12 acres have been acquired by TNC at Cougar Bay

**Past and current surveys:**

- Nest boxes in some bays (Wood Duck)
- Informal surveys by Coeur d'Alene Audubon twice a month at Mica Bay for last two years
- Informal surveys by Coeur d'Alene Audubon of Cougar Bay
- Osprey nest monitoring/banding for several years

**Potential survey methods**

*Description:*

- Nest searches for grebes and other waterbirds nesting in the emergent vegetation in small colonies. Can be done from shoreline in some areas (i.e., Mica Bay), but others will require a canoe (i.e., Cougar Bay).
- Colony counts for nesting Great Blue Herons.
- Census for waterfowl on the open water using a boat, or from land along east side of lake. Late summer or winter counts may be better than breeding season counts, as waterfowl are more easily detected during this period.
- Area searches for migrating shorebirds from observation points near Type 1 habitat. This may be low priority as migrating shorebird numbers are very low at this site.
- Systematic sampling, probably including the use of playback calls, for secretive marshbirds.
- Census for gulls and terns during waterfowl counts.

*Selection bias:* There may be some bias associated with ability to survey certain bays because of ownership issues. Some of this bias may be remedied by surveying birds from a boat in bays that have private landowners along the shoreline.

*Measurement error and bias:* ID skills may or may not be an issue; very few shorebirds or other hard to identify species are present. Development is a significant presence in the area and may result in changes of bird distribution around the lake over time.

**Needed pilot studies:** Because this is such a large area, a pilot study may be needed to determine where monitoring efforts should be concentrated and the most efficient way to survey the site.

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