2020

Lymantria dispar dispar (LDD) Moth

In the fall of 2020 Pike Lakers became aware that our area was experiencing an invasion of what were then referred to as Gypsy Moths, then renamed Lymatria dispar dispar (LDD) and now called Spongy moths along with other regions of southern and eastern Ontario. During July, the males could be seen in clouds around trees on the shores of parts of the lake and throughout the fall their egg masses were found on many of our precious trees.

The Pike Lake Community Association Board kept members of the Association up to date on the latest information about the moths, and various possible mitigation measures. Members were encouraged to scrape the egg masses off the trees in an attempt to reduce the number of caterpillars hatching in the spring. The LDD moth caterpillars are capable of defoliating deciduous trees which may recover with a second leafing in the same season or the next year, but they also affected the pine trees which can not re-foliate and they may be killed by an invasion of the caterpillars.

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Some owners opted to have aerial spraying done in the early spring as the caterpillars were hatching to reduce their number and the defoliation of their trees. In July of 2021, the PLCA was able to secure 500 pheromone lures from a chemist in southern Ontario and volunteers distributed 4 lures to each of the members who wished to use them to make traps for the male LDD moths so that they were not able to fertilize the eggs laid by the females.

In October of 2021 this map from the Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources & Forestry, (NDMNRF) became available. Although the area of defoliation had expanded in the general region, in our area a mass die-off of maturing caterpillars in June 2021 meant few females survived to mate in the fall. This along with our mitigation efforts by scraping in the fall of 2020, and spring aerial spraying and using lures to trap viable males in the fall of 2021 reduced the number of egg masses.

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By spring of 2022, there were no reports of significant larva hatching. The invasion of the moths is cyclical and we may be pressed to use the techniques we've learned through this breakout in the years to come.