

2018 BEACH RANGERS ANNUAL REPORT

2018 HIGHLIGHTS



7 Volunteer Teams



9 Beach Stretches



5 Carcasses Reported



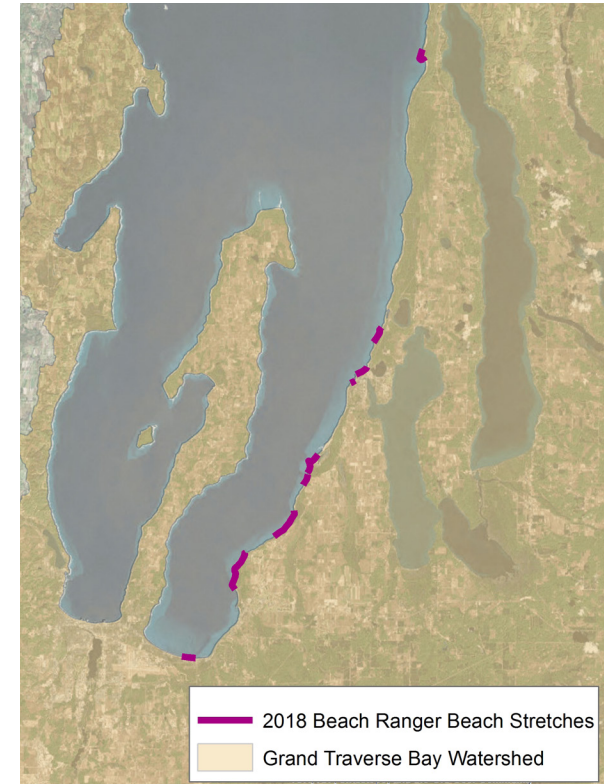
50+ Beach Walks

ABOUT THE PROGRAM: Over the last few decades, shorelines of Lake Michigan have experienced large-scale bird die-offs, caused by the bacterium *Clostridium botulinum*. When environmental factors are right, *C. botulinum* produces a toxin that can cause paralysis in birds, a condition termed avian botulism. Researchers are currently trying to better understand this phenomenon, though water temperature, water level, invasive species, and plant decay are thought to be at play.

The Watershed Center's Beach Ranger volunteers are helping track potential avian botulism outbreaks on the eastern shoreline of Grand Traverse Bay, the most likely spot for bird carcasses to wash up.

2018 RESULTS: 2018 was mild year for avian botulism in northern Lake Michigan. Preliminary data from regional organizations suggest that common loons were the most frequently document carcasses found along shorelines of northern Lake Michigan. The Watershed Center, along with Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore and other monitoring organizations, reported data to the U.S. Geological Survey National Wildlife Health Center so botulism outbreaks can be tracked long-term.

Beach Ranger Activity Map



For more about our Beach Rangers Program, visit www.gtbay.org/our-programs/beach-rangers

In 2018, Beach Rangers found two deceased common loons, one deceased white-winged scoter, and one deceased long-tailed duck.

