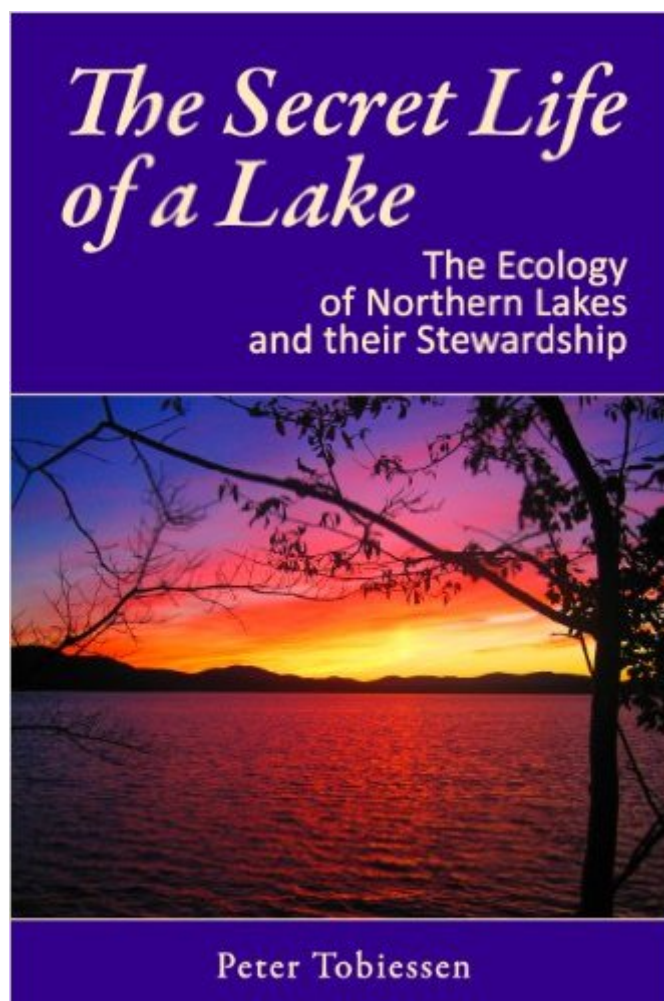


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The Secret Life Of A Lake: The Ecology Of Northern Lakes And Their Stewardship



Synopsis

As you canoe over the placid surface of your favorite lake, have you ever wondered what lies beneath you? What kind of creatures lurk there? What do they look like and why, and how do they interact? This book is fully illustrated, and written for curious lake enthusiasts who want to know more about their lakes. By letting readers in on a lake's "secret life," and sharing some fascinating stories of a lake's inhabitants, the author hopes to provide a deeper understanding of these complex and dynamic ecosystems. Perhaps some readers might even become more motivated to participate in a lake's maintenance and preservation. Excerpt from the Preface... I have tried to create a book somewhere between the mostly descriptive genre (limited to describing a lake's inhabitants) and the more rigorous scientific monograph. I wanted to write not only about who lives in our lakes, but why they look the way they do and how they interact with other creatures and their physical environment. Ultimately, my purpose was to help the curious lake enthusiast better understand the dynamics within these marvelous aquatic systems. For instance, why do algae have such bizarre shapes? How do small aquatic animals defend themselves against larger predators? How has evolution shaped these organisms? How does the addition of a pollutant affect a lake, and how can we detect a problem before it has a major impact? Why do certain chemicals increase in concentration as they pass from organism to organism within a food web? What effect will invasive plants and animals have on our lakes, and when are controls feasible? Although focused on an Adirondack lake, the principles of lake ecology discussed in this book are relevant to all lakes that are covered by ice during their seasonal cycle. The more we understand these beautiful, complex ecosystems, the deeper appreciation we will have for our lakes, and the wiser our decisions will be in preserving them. Excerpt from Chapter 1... Humans have always been drawn to bodies of fresh water. At first it was for the necessities of sustenance and transportation. Later they were attracted by the recreational opportunities of fishing, boating and swimming. However, for many of us there is another dimension to this attraction, one at a more spiritual or primal level. Yeats wrote, "I hear the lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore.../ I hear it in the deep heart's core." It is also not surprising that Thoreau, when he was searching for inspiration in his struggle to resolve the conflict of nature and civilization, chose a site next to a lake--Walden Pond--to build his cabin. He wrote: "A lake is the landscape's most beautiful and expressive feature. It is the earth's eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature." Some have even suggested that our affinity for lakes arose from our prenatal sloshing in maternal amniotic fluid. I only know that when I am near a lake, I feel a kind of peace that I rarely find elsewhere. However, below the peaceful surface of a lake is a dynamic and complex ecosystem of fascinating creatures interacting in weird

and wonderful ways. The typical person enjoying a canoe or kayak trip on a lake is totally unaware of what lies beneath the lake's surface--in essence the lake's "secret life." For instance, the curious observer of a lake may ask: What determines the shape of a lake? Why does a lake freeze from the top down instead of the bottom up? How can an apparently homogeneous volume of water in a lake support hundreds of species of plants and animals? How do these species interact? What lies in the future for our lakes? Excerpts copyright (c) 2012 by Graphite Press. All rights reserved.

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Customer Reviews

Here's a scholarly book written for laypeople. It has a literate and accessible style, accurate information, and all the topics critical to understanding lake issues. Lake George, the lake I am most familiar with, is in danger of becoming a murky pool matted with algae and clogged with what are essentially freshwater barnacles called zebra mussels and Asian clams. Knowledge of the mechanics of lakewater movement, plant species and distribution, and characteristics of plankton, algae, and aquatic animals is important for coming up with control strategies. This book provides the information necessary to understanding more about what needs to be done to save lakes.

I love this book! It is a mandatory read for my College-age sons. Easy, enjoyable reading, especially for anyone at all interested in fresh water ecology. Makes me want to move back up North, to enjoy NY state lakes (well, almost!). D.Tracy, MD Nacogdoches, TX.

For anyone who loves the fresh water lakes of the northeast, this book offers insight into the

amazing properties of water which enable myriad life forms to flourish in every season. Along with an understanding of the complex processes in motion within, on, and above the water comes the realization that we all have a responsibility to protect and maintain these ecological gems. Read this book: you will learn and be inspired.

This book centers on an Adirondack lake, but the chemistry and biology is the same wherever you are. I work with local groups monitoring and protecting the water quality of a 900-acre Wisconsin lake. I found this book so helpful, and so very readable, that I've ordered copies for our entire Board of Directors.

Peter Tobiessen's book is a wonderful read and very interesting. I learned quite a bit about the world around me, not just related to lakes, but more broadly, as well. His writing style is engaging, and he has total mastery of the subject matter.

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