



Squam Keeping in 2016

During the summer months the Squam Lakes Association conducts the Squam Keepers program in order to increase SLA presence on the lake, make observations on shoreline development, and track lake activity. Squam Keepers spend an hour of their day making observations in one of the thirteen boating census regions of Big Squam and Little Squam. These observations serve as important qualitative indicators of lake health and notes the weather conditions, water clarity, boating traffic, wildlife activity, human activity, and shoreline activity. In 2016, the Squam Keepers monitored every boating census area at least once. Bear Cove, Rattlesnake Cove, and Squaw Cove (Area 2); Sturtevant Bay (Area 7); and Southwest Squam (Area 10) were all visited twice over the course of the summer. You can view the monitored regions and the route of the Squam Keepers by referring to the Boating Census Areas map and the Squam Keeper Areas map. A comprehensive table of the 2017 Squam Keeper observations is found on the second page of this document.

Throughout the summer the quality of the water was consistently observed as clear and free of algae. The near-perfect waters of Squam bring boaters back every year. The table below provides boat count estimates for each boating census area. The most trafficked areas of the lakes, both for motorized and human-powered boats, were around Five Finger Point, Moon and Bowman Islands, and Little Squam. Wind and rain significantly reduced boating and human activity, however, even with gusty winds people still flocked to jumping rock off of Five Finger Point. The high rates of boat traffic in the listed areas are most likely due to their proximity to public lands and public boat launches. This pattern was also seen in the most popular swim spots, which were concentrated around Five Finger Point, the Sandwich Town Beach, Moon and Bowman Islands, and Little Squam.

Squam Keepers also observed the high density and visibility of houses in Bennett Cove, Carns Cove, Moultonborough Bay, Dog Cove, Cotton Cove, Livermore Cove, Grapevine Cove, and the entirety of Little Squam; whereas Otter Cove, Long Island, Bean Cove, and Sturtevant Bay were all viewed as having relatively few visible houses and less development. The more populated areas of the lake were more likely to have extensive lawns leading up to the waterfront, posing potential dangers to water quality within the Squam Lakes watershed. Fortunately, the Squam Lakes continue to remain clean environments for residents, vacationers, and wildlife due to the efforts of the extensive network of conservation-oriented organizations and residents. At the Squam Lakes Association we continue our efforts to monitor the watershed in order to protect the natural beauty around us.

The conservation initiatives of the Squam Lakes Association relies on the generous contributions of our volunteers. If you're interested in helping with the Squam Keepers program for the 2017 summer season visit <https://www.squamlakes.org/node/380> to download one of our "Tell Us What You See" forms. Next time you go out on the lake take the form with you and spend an hour recording what you see! For further information on our conservation programs please visit <https://www.squamlakes.org/programs/conservation-programs>.

2017 Squam Keeper Observations

Area	Region	Wildlife	Powerboat Traffic	Human-powered Boat/Sailboat Traffic	Additional Boating Activity	Swimmer Locations	Shoreline Development
1	Sandwich Bay	Gulls, Loon	Moderate	Low	Tuber	Private Docks/Beaches, Sandwich Beach	Moderate
2	Bear, Rattlesnake, & Squaw Coves	N/A	Moderate	High	-	Jumping Rock (Rattlesnake Cove)	Low
3	Broads Areas	Ducks, Gulls	High	High	-	Yard Island	Low
4	Pinehurst & True Coves/Utopia & Willoughby Islands	Loons	Low	None	Fishermen	N/A	High
5	Utopia, Willoughby, & Long Islands/Mooney Point	Dragonflies	Moderate	Low	-	Anchored Boats	Moderate
6	Moultonborough Bay	Loons	None	None	-	N/A	Moderate
7	Sturtevant Bay	Loons, Cormorant, Dragonflies	Low	Low	Fishermen	Center Harbor Beach	Low
8	Center of Squam	Loons, Eagle, Gulls, Heron	High	High	Tuber, Skiers, Fishermen	N/A	Low
9	Dog Cove	Loon, Gulls	Low	None	Tubers, Skiers	N/A	Moderate
10	Southwest Squam	Loon, Heron, Mountain Laurel	High	High	Skier, Tubing	Bowman Island, Moon Island	High
11	West Squam	Seagulls, Loons	Low	Moderate	Fishermen	Private Docks/Beaches	High
12A & 12B	Little Squam	Loon	Moderate	High	Tuber, Fisherman	Private & Public Docks/Beaches	High

***Powerboat Traffic Key: Low (1-9 boats); Moderate (10-19 boats); High (20+ boats)

***Human-power Boat/Sailboat Traffic Key: Low (1-3 boats); Moderate (4-6 boats); High (7+ boats)

***Shoreline Development levels were determined based on qualitative observations of house visibility, lawn visibility, and density of development