



LIĞWILDAẖ RESEARCH CENTRE

We are continuing regular newsletter updates to share exciting history from the Archives with the communities. Some know all about these strange things while others do not, so it is a pleasure to introduce Vol. 2, Edition three of; **Tales from the Vault**.

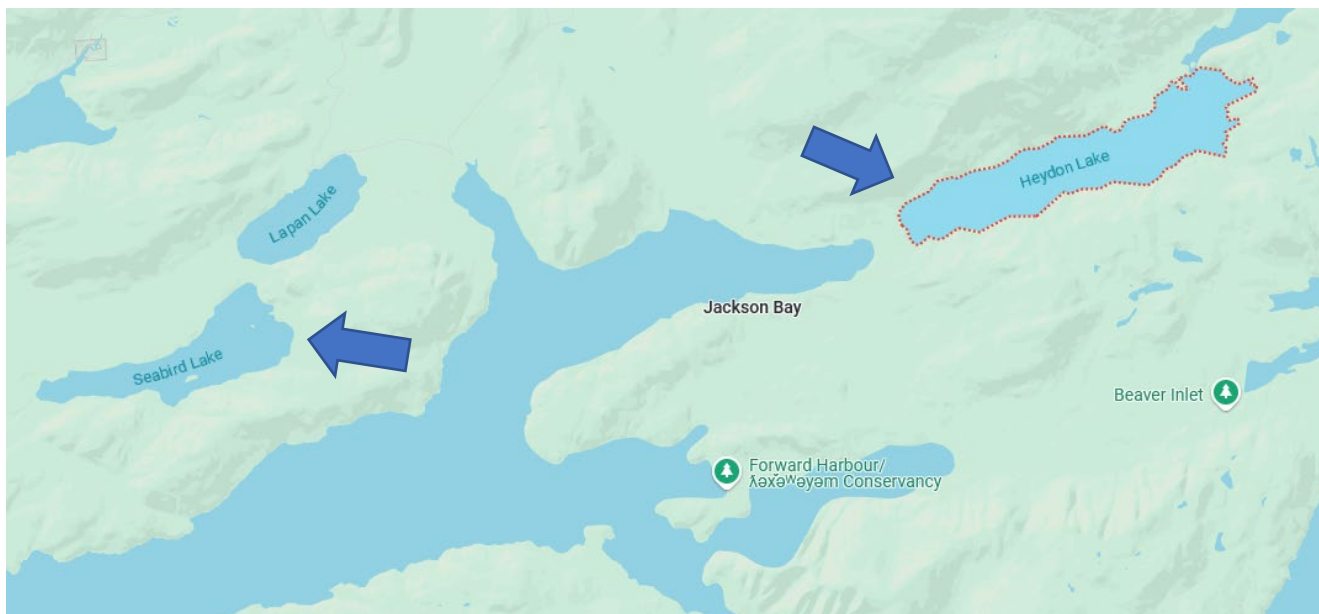
Lake Balls Explained

One crisp autumn day at Heydon Lake, near Loughborough Inlet, a near-perfect sphere was found resting on the shore, about 10 centimeters in diameter, its surface a dense tangle of pine needles and bits of bark. It wasn't just a random clump of debris. The sphere was surprisingly sturdy, solid yet lightweight, as if nature itself had woven the perfect ball. Over the years, similar spheres have been found, some reportedly as large as a meter across. But what exactly are these strange objects?

These natural formations, known as lake balls, are the result of plant material - pine needles, bark, and other forest debris - accumulating in the water and being shaped into spheres by wind and wave action. As the needles gravitate towards shore, wind action stirs up waves. Then they lap against the shoreline and the needles start clustering together. The back and forth and around action of the waves rock the clumps into spherical shape. It takes a certain combination of weather, shallow and sandy shoreline, and a lack of freezing that allow the balls to form.



Found 35 years ago at Heydon Lake, B.C.



In Liğwildaẖ territory, lake balls have been found in both Heydon Lake and Seabird Lake.



Recently, the BC Forest Discovery Centre was donated two lake balls found at Heydon Lake.

While they are rare, lake balls have been found in other parts of the world too. Similar specimens have been found at Seabird Lake in the territory, and just East of Osoyoos at Conkle Lake, BC. The famous writer Henry David Thoreau saw them, calling them "curious balls composed of fine grass or roots, perfectly spherical." In Japan, they are known as marimo and formed from algae, and in some European lakes, they have been found made of plant roots. Two lakes in New Brunswick are known to produce the balls, they have been found as far away as Ögii Lake in Mongolia, and even the Scottish Highlands.

Indigenous groups from Montana describe them as holding spiritual significance, a place to symbolically leave behind past burdens. These curious formations are a reminder of nature's skilled artistry, where wind and water come together to weave together something us humans could never could re-create.

The knowledge of these lake balls in Liḡwíłdaḡw waters helps us to understand some of the ways the land and water are always shaping and reshaping themselves. We are all part of the story of the land, formed by the same winds, currents, and cycles that have always guided life here.

Next time you're by a lake in our territory, keep an eye on the shoreline. You might just spot one of these perfectly woven spheres, a little piece of nature's mysterious handiwork.