

Coliform sinks lake as swimming spot

By [AMY PUGSLEY FRASER](#) / Staff Reporter

The closure of a Dartmouth lake Monday because of high bacteria levels leaves a lot of swimmers high and dry, says the area councillor.

"There are not a lot of alternate places to go, especially for the kids who walk," Coun. Jim Smith (Albro Lake-Harbourview) said Monday.

Albro Lake is well-used, said the councillor, who has taken the occasional dip there himself.

"It's the only place that most of north Dartmouth (residents) have to go."

The municipality put up No Swimming signs and issued a release Monday alerting residents that the municipally supervised part of the beach is closed.

Tests showed high coliform levels in the lake, municipal spokesman John O'Brien said Monday.

"The Department of Environment does our testing for us and if the coliform level is up they recommend that we close it," he said, noting it was the first municipal lake closure this season.

Lifeguards remained at the lake Monday to advise of the closure, while parents of children registered in swimming lessons were contacted about a switch to Birch Cove beach about a 15-minute walk away.

Mr. Smith said the lake, one of almost two dozen in Dartmouth, used to fall victim to swimming closures every year.

"We've been lucky (lately) because Albro Lake hasn't been closed in the last few years."



ERIC WYNNE / Staff

A sign placed near the Albro Lake Beach informs swimmers not to go in the water due to high coliform levels in the lake.

However, trouble always starts when the water level gets low and there is nothing to replenish or flush out the system, he said.

"The lake is part of a system (of lakes) which runs right down . . . from Martin (Lake), through Little Albro, Big Albro and down into the harbour."

The councillor points the finger at birds that frequent the lake - and the people who feed them.

"When people feed the ducks, it attracts pigeons and gulls and they are the culprits.

"The three of them together really cause the problem because their feces gets in the water."

The only thing that can help the lake now is for more water to get into the system, he said.

"We just need more rain and that would probably dilute it enough to clean it out."

[Back](#)