Loon Preservation Committee NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 604, Lee's Mill Road, Moultonborough, NH 03254 603-476-LOON (5666)

SPRING 2008

A LightHawk view of freeze up on Lake Winnipesaukee with Mink and Jolly Islands in the foreground, and Moultonborough Neck and the Ossipee range in the distance. See pages 4 & 5 for a complete recount of the January 18, 2008 aerial loon survey.

The Loon Preservation Committee
183 Lee's Mill Road, P.O. Box 604
Moultonborough, NH 03254
603-476-LOON (5666); *www.loon.org*

The Loon Preservation Committee (LPC) is a non-profit, self-directed and self-funded constituent organization of the Audubon Society of New Hampshire (ASNH). Autonomous in membership and fundraising, LPC works to preserve loons and their habitats in New Hampshire through research, management and education.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Hands On Nature

We nature lovers tend to want to preserve the few natural places that are left, exactly as they are. I am not a militant "Hands Off Nature" environmentalist, but I readily admit that I would much rather see a loon nesting on a natural shoreline than on a raft floated by the Loon Preservation Committee. Of course, the reality is that we have all had our hands on nature for a long time, usually to the detriment of wildlife and natural places. To recover our loons and other threatened species, we sometimes have to put hands on nature to reverse the impacts of the many hands that have gone before.

LPC staff are already buying materials and building rafts and signs that will soon be floating on our lakes to help nesting loons in New Hampshire. This year, depending on the vagaries of weather and chance, a significant proportion of our loons, maybe close to half of them, will be born on a raft floated by LPC staff or in a space protected by a floating LPC sign. Every one of those chicks will grow under the watchful eyes of an LPC staff member or volunteer somewhere in the state.

Later this summer, a small number of loons will be lifted out of the water for a short time to have a couple of feathers clipped and a small sample of blood taken to test for contaminants and other health issues that may threaten the continued well-being of their species. Sadly, more than a few loons will be collected dead after swallowing illegal lead fishing tackle, or have to be humanely euthanized by one of the many veterinarians that work with LPC throughout the state.

There is a balance, of course, in this and everything we do as a society. There will always be a balance in helping our loons thrive in the presence of people, and we believe it can be done with a minimum of intervention in the natural cycles of loons. In many ways, a floating raft or sign is a poor substitute for a natural shoreline nest. If, as in many cases, long experience has shown that a raft or sign clearly will not help in a particular situation, then we won't float them, even though we might be asked by well-meaning volunteers to do so.

As long as we can be certain of the benefits of doing so, LPC's members, volunteers and staff will continue to lay their hands on nature. I see in those imperfect rafts and signs and LPC's other work, and in the members and volunteers that make that work possible, signs of compassion, an expanding consciousness, and hope that, with the help of some healing hands, Earth will abide.

Winter loon monitoring: Going, going, gone?

Just a few days before Christmas, as I stood shivering on the polished ice of Silver Lake in spite of my thick pair of wool pants and down vest, watching a loon circle in a few yards of open water, it was evident that the 2007 loon monitoring season had been a little longer than expected from beginning to end. We'd had an early and abrupt start to this year's field work in February with loons stranded on the ice of Lake Winnipesaukee (see Spring 2007 newsletter). And in November, as we went from storing boats and nest rafts to writing up the year's reports, I stashed an extra fleece jacket and down vest with my binoculars in the car. The chances of another early winter stranding were slim, but we planned to track closely the progress of ice-in and the departure of loons from New Hampshire lakes. This additional monitoring resulted in some interesting stories and findings.

Compared to a balmy late fall and early winter in 2006, cold weather arrived on a more typical schedule this year, with ice beginning to form on smaller lakes and ponds by mid-November. On the Monday after Thanksgiving, LPC volunteer Dan Jackman called from Salmon Meadow Cove on Lake Winnipesaukee to report that a few hundred yards of thin ice had blocked a loon from leaving the cove to open water on the main part of the lake. We considered plans to launch a powerboat in Center Harbor and break an escape channel through the ice. But time was on our side—by Tuesday a northerly wind had cleared the ice from the cove and the loon was able to escape to open water.

A week later a resident on Duncan Lake in Ossipee noticed a loon more seriously trapped. When I visited the lake on December 5, ice covered the pond except for a small opening around the loon. This is a difficult situation because loons will dive away from anyone approaching them and become entrapped under the ice and drown. The best chance for a rescue is to lure the loon away from the hole and net it before it has a chance to return. This loon responded with interest to playback calls from a portable CD player on the shoreline, but would not be lured away from the open water. The following day, our lake observer reported that the loon was gone. Since the opening in the ice was far too small for a normal takeoff, we assumed the loon was predated or trapped under the ice.

After one of the first real snowstorms of the winter, LPC received an unusual call on Friday December 14, from a Danbury, NH resident who had picked up a live adult loon from a snowbank on the shoulder of Route 4. This report seemed improbable, but when I met the caller in Franklin there was indeed a loon in grey winter plumage, resting in a pet kennel on the back seat of his car, looking out of place but alert, and apparently unharmed. Loons are known to mistake wet pavement for open water, especially during migration, and this one may have been forced to land on Route 4 during the snowstorm the day before. After transfer to loon rehabilitator Kappy Sprenger, the loon was released on the Maine coast. Many thanks to Dave from Danbury and to Kappy for getting it back on track.

Finally, in the week before Christmas, year-round resident Susan Clumpf called from Silver Lake in Madison to report a loon stuck in a small patch of open water as the lake froze. Susan had observed a second loon the

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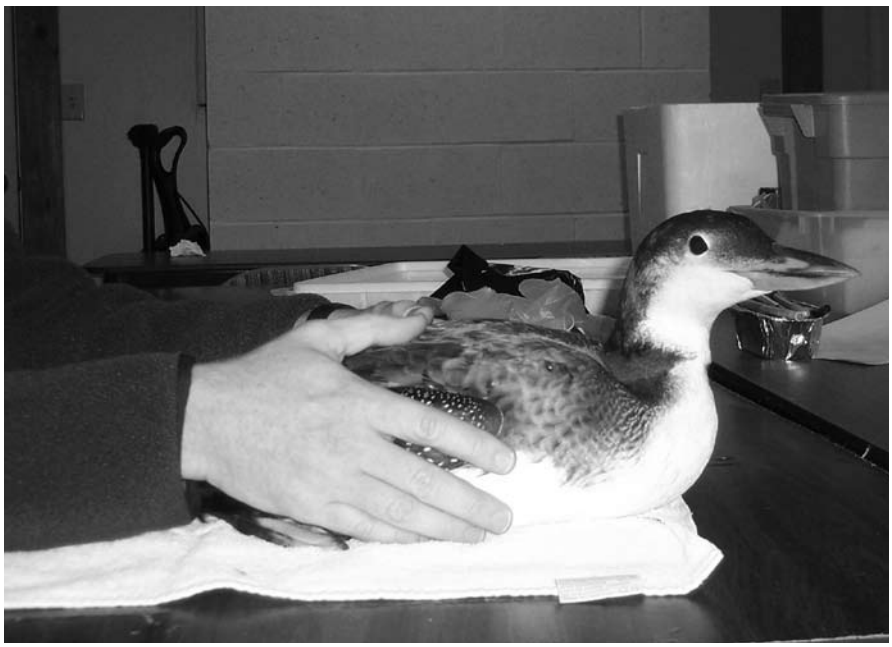

On December 14th an adult loon in winter plumage was rescued from a snowbank on the shoulder of Route 4 by a Danbury, NH resident. After a visit to rehabilitator Kappy Sprenger, the loon was released on the Maine coast.

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day before, moving between the remaining patches of open water near the trapped bird, and was startled to see the following morning that Bald Eagles were scavenging what appeared to be a loon carcass on the ice near the middle of the lake. Surveying from shore that day we weren't able to confirm that the carcass was a loon, but we did observe the trapped loon and a third loon, calling from further north on the lake where a stretch of several hundred yards of open water remained. As with the loon at Duncan Pond earlier in the month, the trapped loon showed interest in playback calls but made no move to leave its hole of open water. The following day Susan reported that the trapped loon was gone, and we assumed, once again, that it had been predated or trapped beneath the ice. By December 22, ice had surrounded the loon further north on the lake, leaving it in 50-100 feet of open water, but without room for takeoff. With slightly thicker ice, we tried again to approach this loon and lure it out of the water. This was done with the aid of a decoy, an old loon mount from the LPC archives. After getting no response with the decoy and taped calls, I pushed a flat-bottomed Jon boat (moored to shore in case the ice gave way) over the ice toward the loon. From fifty feet away the loon answered the taped calls and my best imitations with hoots and calls, but stayed put. Not wanting to risk thinner ice near the open water, I stopped and gave a few more hoots, urging the loon to hop out of the water so that I could scoop it up and take it south. As darkness fell I gave the loon another minute or two, scanning the deserted ice on the rest of the lake, and then hauled the Jon-Boat back to shore. Susan reported that the following day this loon was also gone. We were both disappointed that there had been no way to prevent the apparent loss of all three loons she had seen on the lake that week.

Unlike the loons found stranded last winter, the loon rescued from a snowbank this past December had not molted its flight feathers (as seen intact), an event that typically occurs on the ocean wintering grounds in late winter.

The black object in the center of the box is a loon trapped on the ice on Silver Lake in Madison, NH. Dangerous ice conditions prohibited reaching the bird by foot, while coaxing the bird with a decoy and calls was unsuccessful.

In January, we had more reassuring evidence that this winter would not see another large-scale stranding. An LPC press release in December requesting input from Lakes Region residents if they observed late-season loons prompted a call from Al Rollins, a volunteer pilot with LightHawk, an organization dedicated to

providing conservation flight services (see box this page). A flyover was quickly organized for January 18, just in time to see the lake as it froze over completely. Happily, we did not observe any loons on this flight. However, veteran birding local Tony Vazzano reported a loon on Opeechee Bay in Laconia on January 27. A visit to the area the following week revealed no loons, but confirmed that dozens of acres of open water remained where the current below the Lakeport dam almost always prevents ice from forming. Even in January and February, this may be one of the few places that loons can find refuge if they opt to stick around.

We don't know why some loons get stranded by encroaching ice. Chicks haven't made the journey to the ocean before and perhaps lack the "hard wiring" for migration. Chicks hatched late in the season might not be strong enough to migrate in time; another reason to give nesting loons space and ensure that first nests are successful. Adult loons compromised by contaminants like lead or mercury, illness, or injury might be unable to migrate.

In summary, this winter's more typical weather brought an early freeze up, pushing loons to the ocean at their normal time. They were on the coast before undergoing their mid-winter feather molt avoiding the fate of the molting, flightless loons on Winnipesaukee last year. While our winter loon-watch didn't encounter anything as dramatic as the February stranding, the loons that disappeared on Duncan and Silver Lakes illustrate a harsh, but—on the relatively deserted winter landscape of NH lakes—often unnoticed annual challenge to loon survival.

~John H. Cooley, Jr.

Winnipesaukee Loons Migrate Before Freeze Up
By Alisoun Hodges, LPC

LPC's ability to monitor Lake Winnipesaukee for wintering loons got a big boost this January from an organization by the name of LightHawk. Headquartered in Lander, Wyoming, LightHawk is the oldest and largest environmental flying organization in North America. It is a nonprofit, volunteer pilot-based organization that has flown environmental missions since 1979 in collaboration with hundreds of partner organizations throughout Central and North America; giving a bird's eye view, so to speak, of environmental projects and problems. Responding to local press articles about winter loon monitoring efforts, LightHawk offered to help LPC check Winnipesaukee ice conditions and look for any lingering loons with a flyover of the lake.

LightHawk volunteer pilot James "Al" Rollins (pictured below), who flies out of southern Maine, met LPC staff on January 18th at Moultonborough Airport. An avid outdoorsman, Al is a retired educator who taught ecology and environmental science at the college level. Their flight path took them over Moultonborough Bay and Cow Island, down around Rattlesnake Island, back past Long Island and up Moultonborough Neck. The pilot circled over the Broads for as close a look as possible at the area where last year's birds were found.

The flight made it possible to survey Lake Winnipesaukee just as it was freezing over completely. It was an invaluable way to check a large part of the lake for loons during this critical freeze-up period. From the Cessna 175, LPC biologists were able to see the condition of the ice on different parts of the lake and confirm that new ice had formed on the Broads, probably the night before the flight. Happily no loons were spotted.

The Loon Preservation Committee is grateful to LightHawk regional manager Kelly Tucker and volunteer pilot Al Rollins for their efforts to organize the flyover. The flight allowed LPC to check the lake for remaining loons more thoroughly and safely than any on-ice survey.

For more information about LightHawk visit their website:
www.lighthawk.org

LPC's Research Projects

THE SQUAM STUDY

It has been a busy and productive winter for several of LPC's ongoing research projects. Our investigation of the Squam loon population, prompted by the sharp decline in adult loons on the lake from 2004-2005, continues to be at the forefront. In 2007 we witnessed a further troubling decline in breeding success of the remaining loon population on Squam, with only one surviving chick on the entire lake. We are awaiting the results of contaminant testing on inviable eggs, blood, feathers and loon carcasses collected on Squam and on other lakes last summer. Stable isotope analysis of these samples will provide key information about potential changes in loon diet and prey composition in recent years.

Based on Squam and statewide blood and feather samples collected last summer, a preliminary report prepared by Tuft's veterinary student Ya Zhang Rhote has established that toxins derived from cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) are present in loons. Blue-green algal blooms are a known concern for human health, but cyanotoxins have not been documented in loons until now. More study will be required to determine whether these cyanotoxins are accumulating to harmful levels in loons on Squam or other New Hampshire lakes.

The Squam investigation has also involved collecting available data on lake water quality, climate, recreational use of the lake, and fish populations. Fish abundance is obviously a primary factor in loon habitat selection and breeding success. On Squam, New Hampshire Fish & Game management for land-locked salmon entails tracking of salmon stock and the forage fish on which salmon prey, primarily rainbow smelt. Data from these Fish & Game hydroacoustic surveys on Squam and other New Hampshire lakes may help give us a clearer view of this aspect of loon ecology on Squam, and help solve the mystery of the precipitous declines witnessed on Squam in recent years.

MEASURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF NEW HAMPSHIRE'S LEAD SINKER LEGISLATION

Another student project which may yield interesting results is Chris McClellan's work this semester on New Hampshire's loon lead mortality data. Chris is a senior at Colby-Sawyer College in New London, New Hampshire, and was our Winnipesaukee field biologist in 2007 (see the article on his internship at http://www.colby-sawyer.edu/currents/loon.html). His analysis will address whether the New Hampshire ban on lead fishing sinkers passed in 2000 has made a difference in reducing loon deaths (see the Spring 2006 LPC Newsletter for a preliminary LPC analysis of the same question). Chris' additional goals are to look at regional differences in lead mortality rates within the state, and to compare New Hampshire's lead problem with the situation in neighboring states. His work comes as New Hampshire Fish & Game uses LPC's data on loon lead mortalities to inform hunting and fishing regulatory strategies within the Atlantic Flyway Council of regional wildlife agencies.

CONTINUED MONITORING OF MERCURY IN LOONS AND OTHER WILDLIFE

LPC staff have been involved in assembling a national database of wildlife mercury samples this spring. Loons are a prominent indicator species for environmental mercury, and data on New

Chris McClellan, a senior at Colby-Sawyer College in New London, replaces a "Loon Nesting Sanctuary" sign with a "Baby Loons" sign while making his rounds on Lake Winnipesaukee last summer. Photo by Kate Seamans.

Hampshire's loons will be combined with thousands of samples from loons and hundreds of other species across the country to identify appropriate locations for intensive mercury monitoring sites and to analyze national trends in wildlife mercury levels. The database project is a product of loon and mercury investigations at BioDiversity Research Institute in Gorham, Maine, on behalf of the US-EPA Clean Air Market Division.

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE LOON RECOVERY PLAN

Fisheries data described above in connection with the Squam investigation is also tied to another research effort at LPC this winter, refining our estimate of New Hampshire's carrying capacity for loons. As we create a formal New Hampshire Loon Recovery Plan, a fundamental question is: How many loons can New Hampshire support? The short answer is: How many fish are there in the lakes? While we continue to use physical factors like water quality and lake depth as an indicator for prey and nest site abundance (larger lakes tend to have more fish and more potential nest sites, and therefore more loons), we hope to work more closely with fisheries experts and their data to tighten our estimates of habitat suitability. If we can determine that fish are a limiting factor on some lakes that otherwise appear suitable for loons, it will increase the accuracy of our carrying capacity estimates.

Recent work by LPC and other organizations has increased, and substantively changed, our understanding of the impacts of many stressors on New Hampshire's loon populations. The New Hampshire Loon Recovery Plan will analyze effects of these stressors to determine the impacts of each on the growth rate of our loon population. For example, we will analyze effects of climate change by estimating the impacts on loon breeding success (based on data collected by LPC over the past 32 years) of an increase in extreme weather events predicted in published reports. We will also measure the impacts of a periodic die-off of adult loons attempting to overwinter on freshwater lakes rather than migrating to the ocean (based on LPC data). We will repeat these analyses for lead fishing tackle, mercury, lake use and other stressors.

A loon, alert to intruders, sits on its nest on Lake Winnipesaukee. Nest disturbance is just one of many stressors challenging New Hampshire's loons.

Our ability to mitigate these stressors (i.e. increase loon population growth rates) will be analyzed using rafts, signs and rope lines, stabilizing water levels and education to inform lake users and the public about loons and their needs. These analyses will reveal the levels and combinations of management necessary to ensure a stable or growing loon population in New Hampshire in the face of current and predicted challenges.

The ultimate goal of the Loon Recovery Plan is to use the results of the above analyses to inform and revise LPC's Strategic Plan, and drive the programs and fundraising necessary to achieve LPC's mission to promote a healthy loon population. An additional benefit of this groundbreaking work is that the New Hampshire Loon Recovery Plan will provide a methodology to create plans for other threatened or endangered species using LPC's model.

~John H. Cooley, Jr. & Harry Vogel

For many of us, a starry night and a chorus of loons is both nourishment and respite. To care about loons is to fully know we are less without their companionship.

From Call of the Loon by David C. Evers & Kate M. Tayor

LPC Biologists Co-author Mercury Paper in Journal "Ecotoxicology"

No fewer than three Loon Preservation Committee biologists co-authored a landmark paper titled "Adverse effects from environmental mercury loads on breeding common loons" published in the prestigious peer-reviewed journal *Ecotoxicology* this past February. The paper resulted from analyses of mercury in close to 5,500 samples of loon blood, feathers, and inviable eggs collected by LPC, Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) and other researchers from government agencies and universities over 18 years.

We have long known that levels of mercury in our environment, and specifically in fish, are high enough to affect loons and other fish-eating animals. Most of this mercury comes from human sources, including coal-fired power plants and waste incinerators. Analyses of the massive dataset collected by LPC, BRI and other organizations revealed impacts of mercury on loon behavior, physiology, survival, and breeding success in New Hampshire and other states in the northeast. The complete text of the paper can be found at www.springerlink.com, and highlights of our findings are presented below:

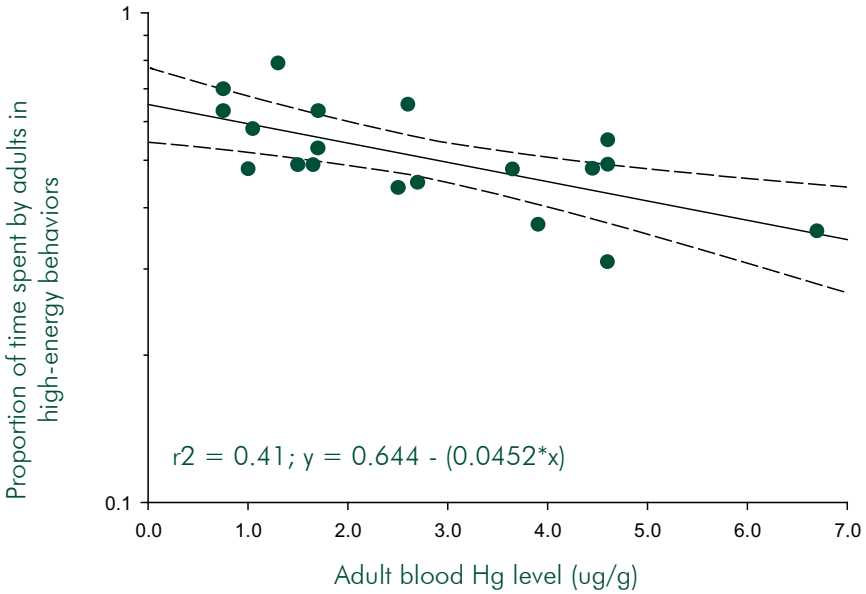


Figure 1: Proportion of time spent by adult loons in high-energy activities (foraging etc.) decreased as mercury levels in blood increased.

IMPACTS OF MERCURY ON LOON BEHAVIOR

We found that loons with higher concentrations of mercury in their blood (also termed their mercury load, or mercury body burden) spent less time in high-energy activities such as diving to catch fish for themselves or for their chicks (Figure 1). Loons with high mercury loads also spent less time incubating eggs, and loon chicks with high mercury body burdens spent less time back-riding on parents. Any of these behavioral changes could reduce the health and breeding success of loons.

IMPACTS OF MERCURY ON LOON PHYSIOLOGY

Loons with high mercury body burdens produced smaller eggs. High mercury loons also exhibited a condition known as fluctuating asymmetry. This condition was measured by comparing the size of feathers taken from one wing with the size of feathers taken from the opposite wing. The sizes of feathers were up to 7% different in loons with the highest mercury loadings, significantly more than feathers taken from low-mercury loons. Fluctuating asymmetry is a sign of physiological stress at the time these wing feathers were being grown. Other studies have found that birds with wing asymmetries of more than 5% must expend 20% more energy to fly, a difference that might impair the migration, survival and breeding success of our large and heavy-bodied loons.

IMPACTS OF MERCURY ON LOON SURVIVAL

Loons are long-lived birds. No one knows exactly how long (despite their popularity there is a lot we have yet to learn about loons), but some researchers estimate that loons typically live for more than 30 years. Loons have evolved mechanisms to rid their bodies of mercury over their lifetimes by filtering it from their bodies with their liver and kidneys, and by excreting it into their feathers. Unfortunately, mercury is also sequestered into eggs. Loons sampled in successive years showed an increase in their concentration of mercury of more than 8% per year, evidence that mercury in the environment was at levels that overwhelmed their ability to rid it from their bodies. Loons with the highest concentrations of mercury were accumulating mercury at the rate of 10% per year. These disturbing results allow us to infer increased morbidity and mortality of loons in high mercury environments as they age.

IMPACTS OF MERCURY ON LOON REPRODUCTION

We found that loons with high mercury body burdens produced 41% fewer fledged young each year than loons with low mercury body burdens (Figure 2). This result, along with the findings on survival above, means that as individuals age and their mercury body burden increases, it could easily affect a loon's lifetime reproductive success (the total number of chicks fledged per individual).

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

We found that 16% of the adult loon population in the Northeast exceeded the threshold for mercury that resulted in significant adverse effects on loons. Population models based on data collected by LPC, BRI and other organizations show that loons need to produce 0.48 chicks per pair, per year, to maintain a viable population over the long term. Our research suggests that mercury is contributing to pushing loon breeding success below that level in some areas, creating "population sinks," or sub-populations of loons that would not be viable over the long term without immigration of new loons from surrounding lakes.

Mercury is only one of many stressors affecting loons. Lead fishing sinkers continue to kill an average of over 5 adult loons a year in New Hampshire, a very significant impact to our loon population, and many other factors also play a role in limiting our loon population. However, the results of this study clearly indicate that we need to continue to reduce mercury in our environment to benefit loons and other fish-eating animals, including people. Our study also demonstrated the need for continued monitoring of loon populations in New Hampshire and other states

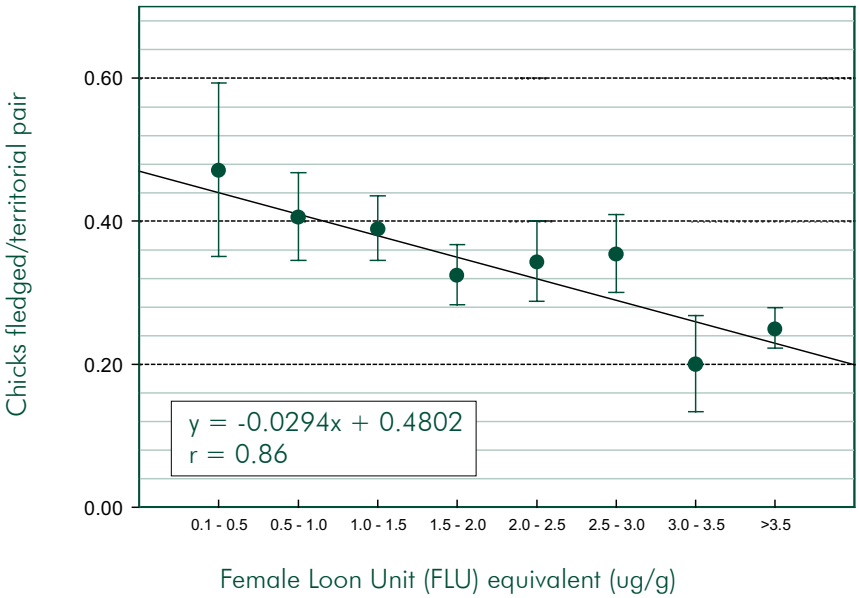


Figure 2: Reproductive success of loons (measured as chicks fledged per territorial loon pair) decreased as mercury in loons (reported as a female loon unit, a standardized measure) increased.

to measure the environmental impacts of mercury pollution, and hopefully to track the return of environmental health to our aquatic ecosytems as we reduce mercury inputs into our environment. Our hope is that this comprehensive study will promote informed discussion of this issue and assist the Environmental Protection Agency to propose effective national regulations, based on sound science, to limit mercury emissions from power plants and other sources.

~Harry Vogel

JOURNEY NORTH

Help track loon migration!

For years, LPC members and volunteers have reported the arrival of loons after ice-out to Journey North, a citizen science project that engages school children and the general public in "a global study of wildlife migration and seasonal change." Loon arrival dates can now be reported directly to the Journey North website (http://www.learner.org/jnorth/) where a map of the latest sightings for loons and other species is available. We encourage New Hampshire loon watchers to visit the Journey North website. If you would like to participate but are not able to file a report on the Internet, you can send the lake name, ice-out date (if known) and loon arrival date by paper mail to LPC for forwarding to Journey North.

A Look Ahead

BIRDATHON/BLOOMATHON

Team leaders Tony Vazzano, Ned Beecher and Chris Cline are in a bit of a quandary this year with respect to dates for NH Audubon's/Lakes Region Chapter's annual Birdathon/Bloomathon. With the heaviest snow cover in years, no one dares guess when wildflowers will be visible in this part of New Hampshire. In an attempt to pin down a date, the trio has come up with a choice of either May 15th or May 22nd.

Each year the Lakes Region Chapter holds this exciting event. Field Teams go out early in the morning and count the number of species of birds and flowers they see. Chapter members are contacted in advance and asked to join the fun by pledging a certain amount per species, or by making a donation in honor of the field team's accomplishments. A large part of the funds raised are contributed to the Loon Preservation Committee, with a small percentage retained by the Chapter to help pay for programs.

This is a wonderful event and something to look forward to after a long, hard winter. Chapter members will receive their pledge letter in the middle of April. If you are not an official Chapter member but would like to participate in the Birdathon/Bloomathon, contact LPC or Lakes Region Chapter Chair, Jane Rice.

RAFFLE

Ladies and gentlemen, you are in for a treat when you see this year's raffle quilt. By sheer chance, LPC made contact with quilter Dale Cheney of Dunbarton, NH. Dale has summered on Winnipesaukee's Mark Island since she was a child and is very familiar with both loons and camp spirit. She has designed, made, and donated to LPC a magnificent, queen-size quilt. Dale tells us, "The quilt is a scrap quilt made with tone on tone and plaid homespun fabrics of many colors. It is made up of traditional quilt blocks such as log cabin, bear paw, pine tree, flying geese and many more. It has hand appliquéd NH wildlife animals on it and has a mother loon and her baby as the centerpiece." Dale has been quilting for over 20 years and says that she is addicted to fabric! She has managed to break away from time to time, though, managing to hike all NH 4,000 footers with her husband.

The machine quilting of this magnificent piece was done by Janet-Lee Santeusanio of Hampton Falls, NH, who supplied the batting and made a significant donation towards the work. She is the originator of the annual Machine Quilters Exposition, which began in her living room eight years ago and now takes place at the Center of New Hampshire. Her website is www.woodlandmanorquilting.com. We are thrilled to have the support and the finished product of these two loon lovers.

Raffle tickets will be on sale shortly. Ticket price will be the same as last year, $5.00 for 4 tickets. Tickets will be mailed to members at the beginning of May and will be available at The Loon Center throughout the summer and fall. The drawing will take place at LPC's Holiday Open House on November 29th; participants needn't be present to win.

GALA AND SILENT AUCTION

Every summer for the last 30 years LPC members and guests have been getting together to share a meal, compare notes on their loons, and enjoy the camaraderie of acquaintances with similar interests – all while supporting LPC's work to safeguard loons. This year's Gala will take place on June 29th at Castle in the Clouds, starting at 12:30 p.m. Hampshire's Culinary Planning, who provided the delicious luncheon for our 30th Anniversary Gala three years ago, will be the caterers.

The committee is already busy lining up items for the Silent Auction. Some of your favorites will be back: Sally Carver and Jerry Hopkins will offer their Winnipesaukee boat ride followed by dinner; and Eric and Marlene Taussig have once again donated a week at their lovely house on Campobello Island. We are looking forward to some new and unique gift certificates, services and items as well, including a basket of quilting supplies, notions and books donated by Keepsake Quilting.

Dr. Mark Pokras, of Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, will be the featured speaker at the Gala. We have worked closely with Mark for many years, and he is an important collaborator in LPC's work to preserve loons.

Reserve the afternoon of June 29th, for this annual get-together. In addition to the good company, beautiful scenery and awesome views, you can also enjoy the annual Antiques Fair taking place outdoors the same day. And, with prior notice to LPC, the Castle will provide tickets to tour the facility that day for $5.00 per person, half the usual price. It all adds up to a day worth remembering. Most of all, you will be helping to make it possible for LPC to continue to protect loons and their habitats in New Hampshire.

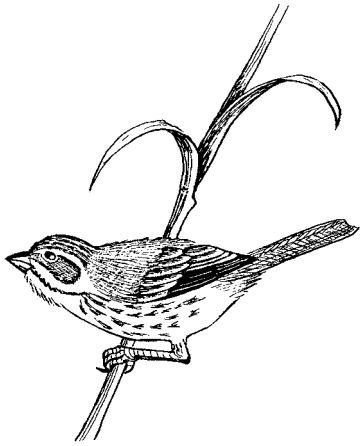
GOLF FOR THE LOONS

The 4th Annual Benefit Golf Tournament will take place on Monday, August 18th this year. Beautiful Ridgewood Country Club on Route 109 in Moultonborough, at the foot of the Ossipees and overlooking Lake Winnipesaukee, will again be the location. Golfers travel from across the state to participate in this worthwhile event to help with loon study and preservation. If you are a golfer (and will be in the area on August 18th) you won't want to miss this opportunity for a fun-filled morning of golf, with the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping our loons.

One of the attractions of the tournament is that each year a former Red Sox star is invited to attend. Last year Luis Tiant graced the course and this year both Bill Monbouquette and Bob Tewksbury have been lined up to participate. This not-to-be-missed outing includes gift bags for participants, prizes, raffle items, and the chance to win a new car.

The Honorable Carl Johnson, Chair of LPC's Board of Trustees, is in charge of the event. For more information or to sign up, contact LPC at 603-476-5666, ahodges@loon.org, or Carl Johnson at 603-279-6492.

~Alisoun Hodges



Holiday Reminiscences & Thanks

Saturday, November 24th was a beautiful and frosty winter day, setting the mood for LPC's annual Holiday Open House at The Loon Center. LPC invited the community to partake in the festivities as it has for the past 15 years. Attracting several hundred people, families arrived early and stayed late.

There was much to do, starting with wildly creative balloons tied by the ever-jovial Mr. Phil, face painting by the talented Mrs. Cedar, and fun crafts for kids of all ages. Snow covered the ground this year, making for perfectly picturesque hay rides up and down Lee's Mill Road, provided by Brian Thompson. Santa Claus made his entrance at noon to excited cheers. The line of children waiting to sit on his lap snaked around the room, and each one left with a small gift and a smile. Volunteers in The Loon's Feather Gift Shop were busy all day helping visitors get a jump on their holiday shopping.

As in past years, there was an outpouring of community support for this event. Sincere thanks to the many volunteers who donated their time and services to make the day run smoothly, and to area businesses for their donation of delicious foods and desserts: Barb & Herb Lauterwasser, Jacquie Colburn, Lydia & Nate Torr, Betty & Brian McNerney, Marion Powers, Laurie & Doug Whitley, Bette & Mike Ruyffelaert, Terry Wetzler-Finn, John & Sue Scudder, Heather Vernon, Elizabeth Mahan, Meabh Cunningham, Nancy Jane Duncan, Winnie & Joe Oustecky, Sidney Stewart, Jan Welch, Mr. Phil (balloons) & Mrs. Cedar (face painting), Armand Maheux (aka Santa), Kristina Waterman (elf), the Thompson family (hay rides), Sonny & Sylvia Keyser (hay), The Corner House, E.M. Heath Grocer, Hart's Turkey Farm Restaurant, Jackson's Star, Moulton Farm, The Village Kitchen, The Woodshed and Winnipesaukee Bay-Gulls.

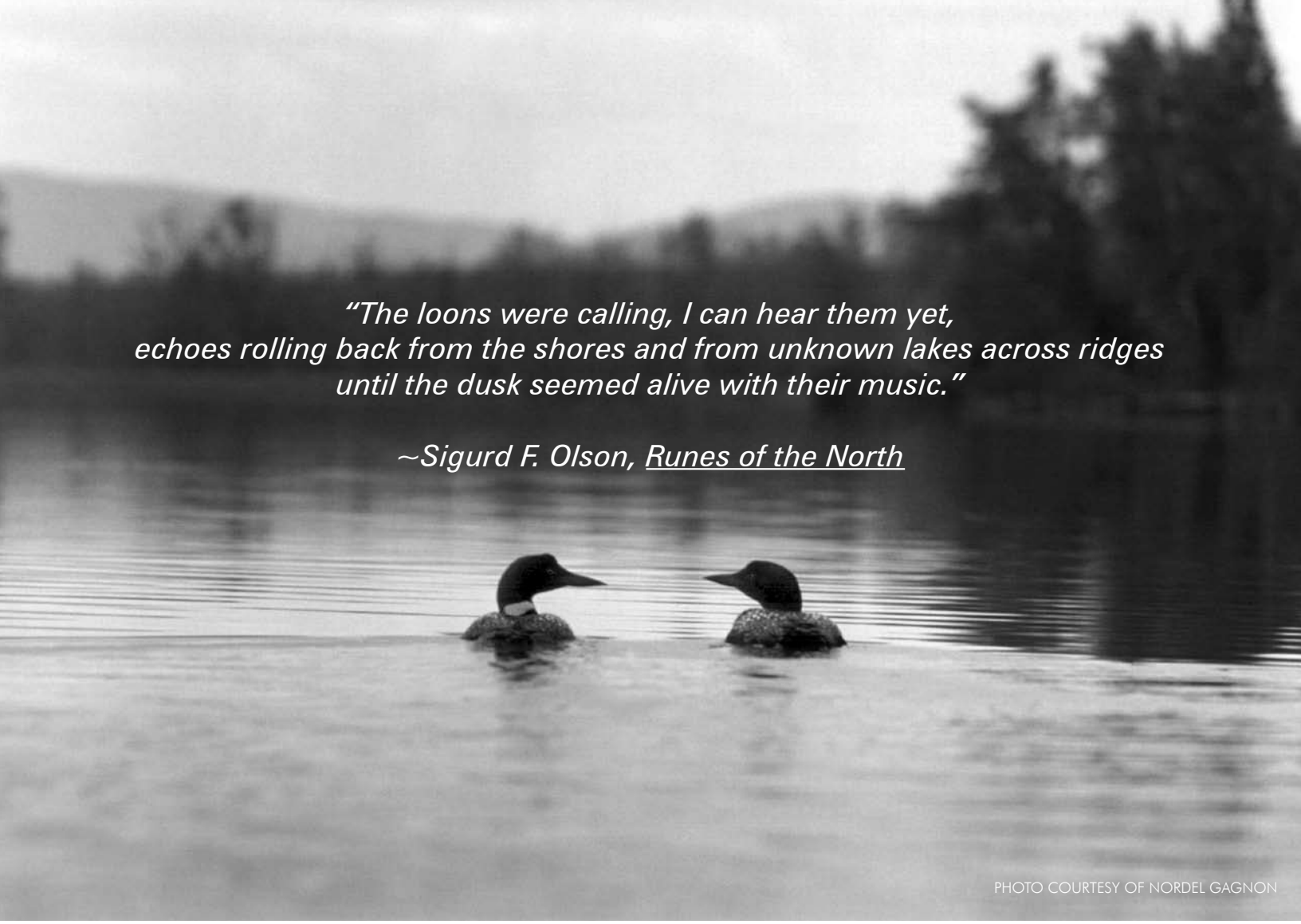
~Rachel Williams

WISH LIST

The Loon Preservation Committee is in need of additional powerpoint projectors to carry out their educational outreach programs this summer and throughout the year. A donation of a powerpoint projector or a monetary gift towards purchasing these projectors would be much appreciated.

Please call The Loon Center at (603) 476-5666 if you are able to help with this request.

THANK YOU!



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