Loon Preservation Committee NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 604, Lee's Mill Road, Moultonborough, NH 03254; www.loon.org

FALL 2009

Loon egg from flooded nest on Lake Massabesic

Photo courtesy of Peter Broom; www.peterbroom.com

The Loon Preservation Committee
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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 monitoring, research, management and education.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

St. Francis in the 21st Century

I am not among the most devoutly religious of men, but I have always felt drawn to St. Francis, the patron saint of wildlife and animals. I am always moved to see a sparrow sitting on a statue of St. Francis in a well-tended garden, or see his likeness gracing the grave of a beloved pet. Compassion for the least among us (in the sense of those at the mercy of our compassion) is a powerful theme for me.

I was reminded once again of this topic as I spent a week exploring Algonquin Park in Canada this fall. It was good to relax and watch the leaves turn on a beautiful wilderness lake, but I had a sense of unease during that week all the same. The first thing I noticed on that remote lake was how exceptionally clear the water was – maybe the clearest water I have ever seen. I also realized that I saw only one sorry-looking fish and one visiting loon in my travels on that water over the course of seven days. The lake was beautiful, but it was dead; killed, in all likelihood, by the scourge of acid rain.

We don't hear much about acid rain anymore, and thankfully it is less of a problem in New Hampshire than it is across vast areas of the Canadian Shield. We have gradually reduced the emissions of sulfates and nitrates that caused this environmental catastrophe, but acidified lakes have been slow to respond to those changes. The damage ran deeper than we knew.

These dead lakes are proof of either a staggering miscalculation on our part, or an equally disturbing lack of care about the consequences of our conveniences. Either way, I find the implications for our responses to today's environmental challenges frightening. LPC is working hard to encourage informed discussion and responsible decisions on many environmental issues affecting loons and other wildlife, including our use of fossil fuels. Even if not for the CO^2 consequences – and those are some big consequences! – there are plenty of environmental, human health, resource and security reasons to reduce our use of hydrocarbons.

I have heard that St. Francis is one of the most studied men in history, but it seems that he and his philosophy are largely unheeded in modern times. Some might feel the need to categorize people as either environmentalists or realists, but my world is shades of gray. I've bought an efficient car, water heater and lightbulbs (and have happily stretched my non-profit salary as a result); but I still find myself striving to be wholly environmental in thought and deed, and ever failing to reach those ideals. I feel good every time I make the right choice though, and move myself along the environmental continuum in a direction that I think would make St. Francis happy.

In the end, of course, we are the sum of our choices in life. It's up to us, as individuals and as a nation, to lead by example. After the eloquent words of our decision-makers fade, the state of the Earth and all of its creatures will be the report card, the judgment of the Earth, on those choices. I hope we'll choose wisely.

Another Rainy Season Challenges New Hampshire's Loon Population

Neither rain, nor sleet, nor... yes, our North Country field biologist did actually see snow in the air on June 1 this year. But it was rain, rain, and more rain that dogged the LPC field staff, volunteers, and nesting loons over the first half of the summer. This has become a familiar pattern. Rain and flood events have significantly impacted loon nesting in four of the last five years.

Fresh snow in Pittsburg, New Hampshire during loon surveys on June 1. A cold and wet start to the field season.

SURVEY METHODS & RESULTS

LPC's 2009 field work relied on a 9-person crew and logistical, moral, and survey support from hundreds of volunteers. Together they surveyed an unprecedented 449 potential or occupied loon territories on 322 New Hampshire lakes. The results paint a clear picture of the rainy summer's impact on loon nesting and the continued increase in the size of the adult loon population.

Field surveys revealed 264 loon pairs defending territories this year, a 7% increase from 2008. We recorded nests for 184 of these pairs, a 15% increase over last year (Table 1). In spite of a record 94 failed nests, the total number of chicks hatched (161) and surviving to mid-August (109) rose from last year by an encouraging 26% and 12% respectively. Figure 1 (page 4) compares this year with 2008 and with the five-year average. From left to right on the graph, the first four categories (territorial pairs, nesting pairs, chicks hatched, and chicks surviving to mid-August) show the population increase in 2009 and the relative improvement in nesting success versus 2008. The bar on the far right, the average number of chicks surviving per territorial pair (CS/TP), reflects overall breeding success. This was remarkably low in both years, with nesting success (chicks hatched per nesting pair, CH/NP) and

continued on page 4

Table 1: 2009 New Hampshire Loon Breeding Season Results Versus 2008 and 2005-2009 Average

	2008	2009	% Diff from 5 yr. average	2009 Rank in 34 yr. monitoring period
Breeding (territorial) pairs (TP)	247	264	+14%	1st
Nesting Pairs (NP)	160	184	+18%	1st
Chicks Hatched (CH)	128	161	+16%	3rd
Chicks Surviving to mid-August (CS)	97	109	+4%	7th
Nest Failures (NF)	89	94	+ 21%	1st
NP/TP	0.63	0.70	+4%	9th
CH/NP	0.71	0.88	-2%	29th
CS/CH	0.65	0.68	- 11%	31st
NF/NP	0.55	0.51	+3%	9th
CS/TP	0.31	0.41	- 10%	32nd

continued from page 3

chick survivorship (chicks surviving per chicks hatched, CS/CH) in 2009 ranking near the bottom of the 34 years of LPC monitoring (see Table 1, right column). The low overall breeding success over the last 5 years also jumps out in the highlighted box in Figure 2 (below), a graph of long-term trends in breeding success and adult population size.

What meaning can we squeeze from these graphs, trends, and percentages? As with everything biological and wild, loon breeding success and population growth are determined by a complex set of factors, with a healthy dose of random variability thrown in. Another season of low productivity adds urgency to deciphering the trend and accounting for the major culprits driving it. In 2009 rain was the most obvious problem. Other widespread stressors like mercury contamination are certainly at play, even if their individual impacts can't be isolated from a single year of data.

One signal that does appear this year and in 2008 is the shift to a younger, denser loon population. In our field summary for 2008 (see Fall 2008 newsletter) we noted the loon baby boom from good nesting years between 2000 and 2005. After several years as maturing juveniles on the New England coast, young adult loons reappear on our lakes as early as their third or fourth year, but only begin breeding, on average, when they are six or seven years old. This means that chicks hatched in the boom years are returning now as young adults. The higher number of nesting territorial pairs this year is evident in the nesting pair category shown in Figure 1. The increase in nesting propensity and success between 2008 and 2009 suggests, in part, that the wave of newcomers is becoming

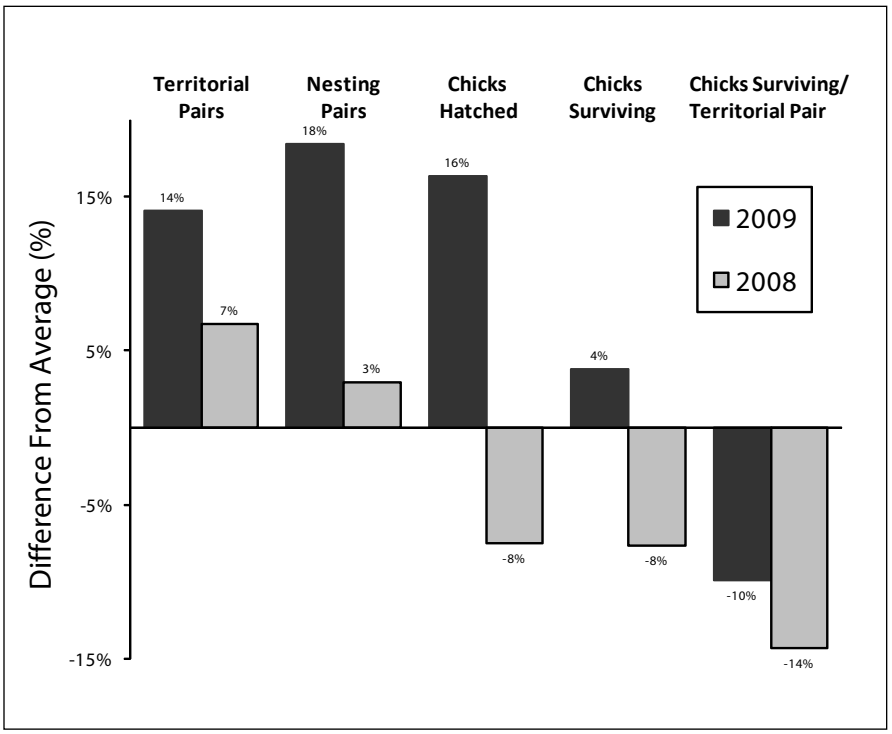

Figure 1. 2008-2009 Loon Nesting Versus 5-Year Average (2005-2009).

"...it was rain, rain, and more rain that dogged the LPC field staff, volunteers, and nesting loons over the first half of the summer."
~John H. Cooley, Jr.

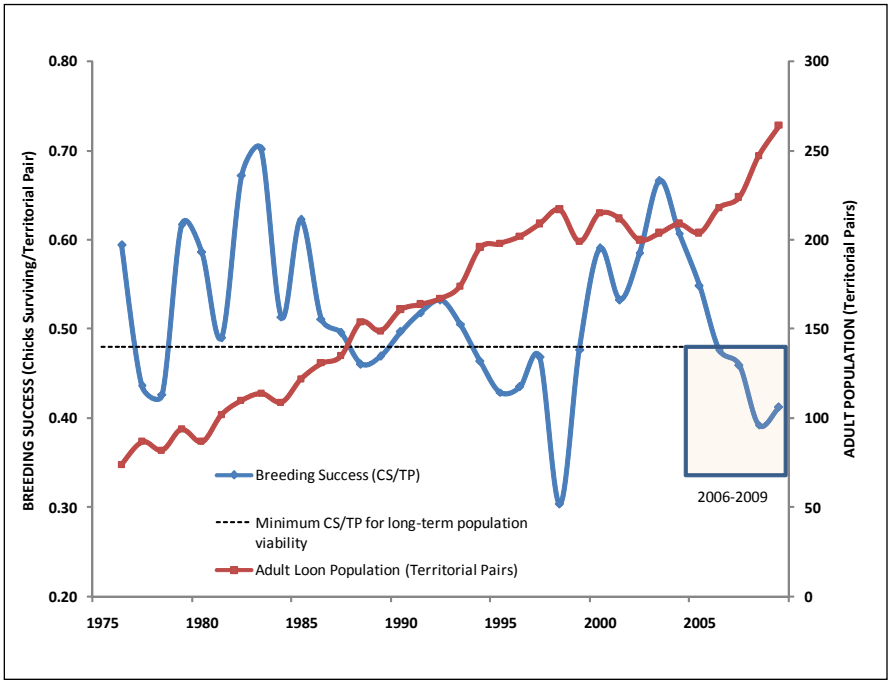

Figure 2. Loon Breeding Success (chicks surviving per territorial pair) and Adult Population Size, 1975-2009.

an established cohort within the breeding population. As this cohort gains experience, its members stand a higher chance of nesting successfully and contributing chicks to the population in future years.

Because adult loons live a long time, the population isn't likely to shrink immediately or dramatically after a single bad nesting year. But 2009 was the fourth poor season in a row, more than just a blip in the long-term trends. It seems likely that just as good nesting years in the first half of this decade contributed to recent adult gains, lower productivity since 2005 may translate into a plateau or even a decline in the breeding population size over the next 5-10 years. We can hope that the same combination of lousy weather, demographic shifts, and a varied suite of other threats that have conspired to reduce productivity in the past five years will not hold true in 2010 and beyond, allowing the population to continue its incremental recovery from a mid-20th century low point.

HOW RAINY WAS THE SUMMER OF 2009?

Rain totals this summer did not come close to record flood years like 1998, or recent extreme events in New Hampshire like the October floods of 2005 or the 2006 Mother's Day flood. Instead, the Northeast Regional Climate Center reported that for June "the wet conditions were not a result of a few extraordinary rain events, but lots of rainy days. In New Jersey, for instance, measurable rain fell somewhere in the state every day of the month except the 1st." In New Hampshire, statewide mean totals for May-June-July precipitation were 16.8 inches -- 4.6 inches (38 %) above the 35-year mean (Figure 3). But more than the total monthly rainfall amounts, the intensity, timing, and sequence of individual precipitation events determine how many loon nests are flooded. Comparing Figure 3 to the annual nest failure rates in Figure 4, we can see that years like 2005 did not have much more rainfall than average (for example 2000, 2002 and 2004 are all close) but that due to the timing and location of the rain events, the rate of flooding nest failures was high (see the 2005 bar in Figure 4). The steady rains in 2009 also came with below normal temperatures. This made more of an impression on people and may have increased the impact of the rainy season on loons. Loon eggs stand an increased chance of becoming chilled and nonviable if exposed during wet, cold weather. The silver lining for the loons was that this same cold, wet weather also kept people off the lakes and reduced the potential for nest disturbances.

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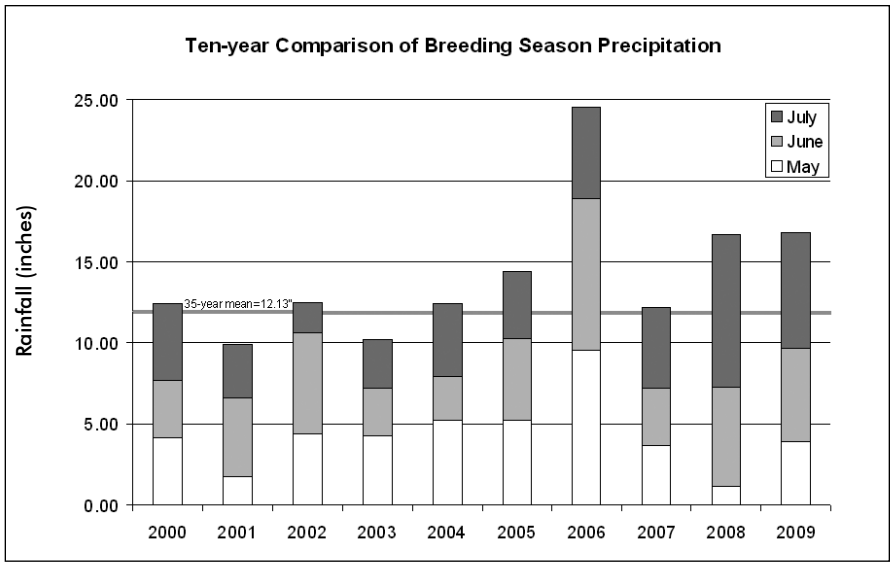

Figure 3. New Hampshire Summer Rainfall Amounts, 2000-2009.

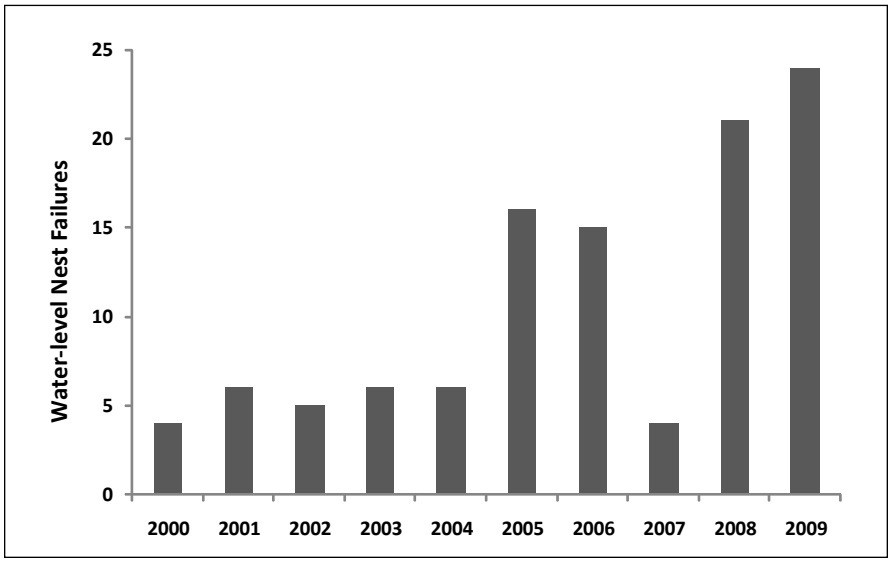

Figure 4. Water-level nest failures (rise and fall) for New Hampshire loons, 2000-2009.

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Field staff recorded extraordinary efforts to combat the rising waters – loons built towering 'stumps' to keep the nest above high water, visible at some flooded sites after the water receded. These photos are from nests on Lake Umbagog (below) and Bolster Pond (right).

MANAGEMENT

An intrepid 2009 LPC field crew and volunteers kept pace with the increase in nesting loon pairs by stepping up protection at nest sites and brooding areas. Ten percent more ropes and signs were floated this season than in 2008, at a total of 68 nesting territories. Some combination of rope, sign, and/or raft management was used at 109 loon territories. This meant that over half of the successful loon nests in New Hampshire received at least one of these forms of management, contributing 51% of all chicks hatched. In addition, LPC worked with dam operators and managers around the state to maintain stable water levels at 42 territories, including Lake Umbagog, Conway Lake, and Balch Pond. We also continued to provide educational signs to lake hosts, associations, and volunteers around the state. Complementing the LPC management described above, Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge staff built and floated 12 loon nest rafts and continued rope and sign barriers at multiple nest sites.

CAPTURE AND BANDING

Loon Preservation Committee staff worked with band crew leaders from BioDiversity Research Institute in Gorham, Maine to capture, sample, and band loons on seven New Hampshire lakes over the course of nine nights in July and August. Twenty-one adult loons were captured and sampled. Twelve of these were banded for the first time and two juvenile loons were also banded. Analysis and archiving of blood and feather samples will continue contaminant, genetics, and health monitoring for these loons.

RESCUES AND RECOVERIES

During the 2009 season, LPC rescues of live loons and mortality collections included fewer lead-poisoned loons than in 2008, but twice as many loon chicks and juveniles. Altogether, LPC coordinated or participated in 13 live rescues and 13 mortality collections. Six of the rescued loons were released immediately or rehabilitated and released, but seven loons died or had untreatable injuries that required euthanasia.

LPC field staff received and responded to dozens of other reports and inquiries about potentially injured or distressed loons. Notably, by mid-October, we had received confirmed reports from at least 13 lakes around the state of adult loons tangled in fishing line or fishing tackle. A few of these came from waterbodies in the same part of the state and may represent the same individual loon moving from lake to lake, but at least 10 were confirmed by photographs and observation to be distinct cases. This is a higher number than the scattered reports of this kind that we usually get each year. The upswing doesn't have any clear cause. In a few cases rescue attempts were feasible and are included in the following chronology, but the majority of these reports involved a loon that was still mobile—able to dive and therefore nearly impossible to capture. These tangled loons are unlikely to survive the stress of fall molt and migration with the added impediment. For example, a banded loon on Little Squam Lake that was entangled in fall 2008 could not be captured and did not return this year.

SUCCESSFUL RELEASES

The following is a summary of the successful rescues and releases that occurred during the 2009 season:

■17 June. Pit # 2, Pike Industries, Farmington, NH

LPC field staff Sam Merker and Tori Kentner responded to a report of an adult loon tangled in fishing line in a gravel quarry. A first attempt to net the loon from a small Jon-Boat failed. When Sam and Tori returned with kayaks they discovered the loon beached on shore. Examination at a local veterinary office revealed no additional injury. The fishing line was removed and the loon was released on Wheelwright Pond in Lee. Notably, this loon had been banded as a juvenile in 2005 on Pawtuckaway Lake; another banded loon from Pawtuckaway was rescued in Lee in 2008.

■7 July. Lake Ivanhoe (a.k.a. Round Pond), Wakefield, NH

Field coordinator Chris Conrod captured a beached adult loon and released it on Belleau Lake. The male loon was banded on Ivanhoe in 1998 but had been displaced from the territory since. It was apparently chased onto the beach by the resident loons as they protected a newly hatched chick observed near the nest.

■7 July. Elbow Pond, Andover, NH

NH Fish and Game officer Heidi Murphy collected an adult loon from dry land about ¼ mile from Elbow Pond. Proctor Academy staff had reported moving a stranded loon from Route 11 to the pond days earlier. The loon was rehabilitated and released a week later in Maine.

■15 July. Little Squam Lake, Holderness, NH

Squam field biologist Tiffany Grade netted a lethargic loon reported by staff at the Asquam Marina. Examination at the Plymouth Animal Hospital revealed no obvious injuries or metal fishing tackle. The loon was rehabilitated and released on a Maine lake on July 26. (See pictures below.)

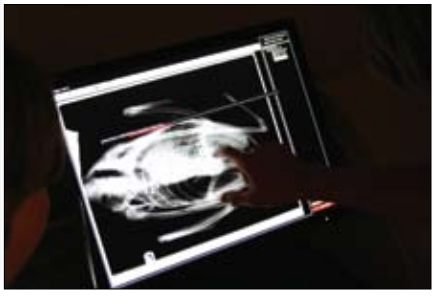
■25 July. Seaver Pond, Harrisville, NH

Neighbors of LPC volunteer Polly Croteau discovered a stranded immature loon at the junction of Brown Road and Seaver Pond Road. Local bird rehabilitator Maria Colby at Wings of Dawn received the loon and released it on a nearby lake.

continued on page 8

Little Squam Rescue:

Photos courtesy of Karen and Don Grade



■23 June. Barrington, NH

Seacoast biologist Sam Merker responded to a report of a loon sitting on a road. The report sounded plausible because it had rained the previous night and loons sometimes mistake wet pavement for open water. Sam ultimately found the loon in the backyard of a neighbor who had retrieved it and placed it in a large pen with twenty-odd peacocks. The rescuer was a bit agitated and one of his hands was bleeding. He remarked that, in all his years of handling birds, he had never had one that put up such a fight. Apparently the loon also made an impression on the peacocks. Because the loon appeared in good health with no apparent injuries, Sam released it on nearby Pawtuckaway Lake.

continued from page 7

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Where would LPC field biologists be without the local know-how provided by hundreds of enthusiastic and observant loon watchers? The astute field crew member quickly realizes that volunteers can point her to the usual nest site, warn of lurking rocks, fill her in on what the loons have been up to, and generally save days/weeks of time in getting to know the lakes. This year hundreds of volunteer contacts continued to provide information, lake access, and elbow grease toward the accurate documentation of loon presence, absence and productivity, the vigorous protection of nesting and brooding loons, and the rescue and recovery of injured or dead loons. As LPC tracks a growing loon population on an increasing number of lakes, volunteer help remains vital.

In 2009 several aspects of this help were especially noteworthy. In western New Hampshire, for example, Newfound, Mascoma, and Sunapee Lake together account for almost 10,000 acres of water, more than Lake Umbagog or Squam Lake. All three of these western New Hampshire lakes are the responsibility of one Monadnock field biologist, outfitted with a kayak, binoculars, and upwards of eighty other lakes on his or her list. In past years we have had terrific volunteer help from census participants on Newfound Lake and from residents on Mascoma. The Lake Sunapee Protective Association (LSPA) was a welcome addition to this team of big-lake networks this year. Between ice-out and October, LSPA compiled sightings from a committee of about a dozen loon watchers into monthly updates from around the lake, totaling many dozens of hours of observation. This information, complemented by several surveys of the lake by LPC field biologist Susie Burbidge, confirmed the presence of at least four resident adult loons and one immature (sub-adult) loon. The LSPA's loon committee and similar efforts throughout the state bring our monitoring one step closer to the goal of pinning down even this most elusive portion of the New Hampshire loon population—the sparse resident population on these huge lakes. Following are just a few snapshots of this very useful volunteer community.

Photo courtesy of Jon Eaton

On Newfound Lake, we were delighted to receive reports from Camp Mayhew of an active nest on Mayhew Island. Confirmed by LPC field staff, the nest hatched a chick after at least one of the two eggs was placed back into the nest by bystanders when it was washed out early in the incubation. (See photo above by Jon Eaton. Note chick under the wing.)

At Granite Lake in Munsonville, loons nested successfully for the first time in decades. Lake association members and residents played a key role, alerting LPC staff and cordoning off the nest site on a popular island with LPC assistance.

On Lake Winnipesaukee, a newly established territorial pair nested in Roberts Cove at the south end of the lake. Close coordination between a youth camp which owns the nest island, LPC Winnipesaukee biologist Vincent Spagnuolo, and volunteer observers like Jeannie Lewis (a retired elementary school teacher known to her students in Ohio as the Loon Lady!) helped track the progress of this nest and manage potential disturbance. Unfortunately, the nest site was exposed to wave action and the eggs did not hatch. Maybe next year...

JULY CENSUS

The July 18th loon census saw 524 observers cover 116 of New Hampshire's lakes, tallying 418 adult loons, 9 immature loons, and 59 loon chicks. This snapshot picture of the population helped confirm the status of active nests and young chicks on many territories, and results from all lakes were combined with season-long monitoring to compile LPC's monitoring data for 2009. Turnout for the census was comparable to recent years (Table 2).

The census observation forms are often returned to us with

added notes about loon activity at other points in the season. We love to get this news! For many, the census is the best opportunity for this exchange, but interested loon-watchers are encouraged to check out other easy ways to update LPC on your sightings. Check our website volunteer link (www.loon.org/volunteer-field) for details, or give us a call or send an email (field@loon.org).

Table 2: Volunteer Census Results, 2006-2009

	2006	2007	2008	2009
ADULT LOONS	386	356	401	418
CHICKS	52	57	45	59
IMMATURES	12	8	6	9
TOTAL LOONS	450	421	452	486
LAKES CENSUSED	114	110	122	116
OBSERVERS	512	513	549	524

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

On a sunny day when the water is calm, loon monitoring can be downright pleasant. But this year's steady diet of rain—regular soakings that gradually consumed all the spare notebooks and dry pairs of socks in sight—made the daily field routine more epic. A big round of thanks to this year's field crew for very cheerful perseverance through a soggy summer. Lakes Region's Tori Kentner is doing field biology this fall with a tropical twist: studying whale sharks off the Seychelle Islands, just north of Madagascar (check out www.seychelles-whale-sharks.blogspot.com). "Seacoast Sam" Merker is also in the southern hemisphere, on an academic EcoQuest program in New Zealand. North Country and Umbagog biologists Keith Blanchette and Mike Sharon are both closer to home, back in school at Unity College and Antioch University, respectively. Our Monadnock biologists have returned to their day jobs: raptor monitoring for Julie Tilden, NH Audubon Sanctuary management for Phil Brown, and a job search that included wind energy wildlife risk inventories for Susie Burbridge. And it's back to graduate studies for Winnipesaukee's Vince Spagnuolo (Boston, MA) and Squam's Tiffany Grade (Madison, WI).

~John H. Cooley, Jr. & Chris Conrod

The LPC field program is grateful for the help received from the following supporters during the 2009 field season:

Collaborators and General Support

Aubuchon Hardware, Moultonborough (sign materials discount)
BioDiversity Research Institute, Mike Chickering and Chris Persico (loon banding)
Eagle Optics (www.eagleoptics.com)
Heath's Servistar Hardware, Center Harbor
Manchester Water Authority
Massabesic Audubon Center (Allison Dixon and volunteers)
New Hampshire Fish and Game Department Officers and Dispatch (Loon rescues and enforcement)
New Hampshire Marine Patrol
Squam Boat Livery
Squam Lakes Association
Squam Lakes Natural Science Center

Veterinarians and Rehabilitators

Kappy Sprenger, Bridgeton, ME
Cathie Gregg and Bethani Garland,
Elaine Connors Wildlife Sanctuary, Madison, NH
Maria Colby, Wings of Dawn, Henniker, NH
Kim Johnsen, Northwoods Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, Twin Mountain, NH
Plymouth Animal Hospital (NH), Dr. Ellyn Tighe and staff
Sandwich Animal Hospital (NH), Dr. Julie Dolan
Moore Animal Hospital (NH), Dr. Dutton
Whitefield Animal Hospital (NH)
Lee Animal Hospital (NH)

"Generosity is the flower of justice."
~Nathaniel Hawthorne

CSI at LPC: Solving Loon Mortality Mysteries

One of the most important lessons I have learned as a Tufts veterinary student is that very little is clear-cut in veterinary medicine. This is a field where creativity, imagination, and improvisation are prerequisites. Until recently though, I had always thought I had found the exception, the one diagnostic technique that is always reliable—imaging. I took the radiology (x-ray) course in the spring of my second year. During that time, I learned the types of densities that could be visualized on a normal radiograph (air, fat/soft tissue, fluid, and mineral) as well as a density not normally found in the body, metal. I learned the patterns associated with ileus (paralyzed bowel), obstruction, pneumonia, etc. and was confident in the arsenal of knowledge I had gained. But today, in the necropsy lab of the Bernice Barbour Wildlife Building at Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, I was tricked.

As soon as Dr. Mark Pokras and I pulled up the radiograph of the loon we were preparing to necropsy, the cause of death seemed obvious—three metal densities in the exact shape of lead pellets from a pellet gun were embedded in this loon's head. The bird, an adult female, was found floating dead in the water of Lake Winnipesaukee, in fairly good body condition with no obvious injuries. Since shooting the Common Loon, a threatened species in New Hampshire, is illegal under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the State Threatened and Endangered Species Act, we prepared for a thorough necropsy, assuming that our findings might be needed as legal, forensic evidence.

We began, as with any other necropsy, preparing to determine why and how this bird died, not unlike an episode of CSI (but much more exciting)! We weighed and measured the bird; took feather samples to determine presence of toxins and heavy metals; performed a physical exam to check for wounds, broken bones, and foreign bodies; and finally opened up the bird in an attempt to prove our theory...that this loon was killed by gunshot wounds to the head. As we examined the bird's skin and subcutaneous tissue, we first noted fresh bruising and a puncture in the bird's right body wall near the pectoral muscle. On further examination and removal of the pectoral muscles and sternum, the truth began to unfold. The lungs, trachea, and abdominal cavity were filled with blood, as if the bird had suffered a massive hemorrhage. We also noted that the heart appeared to have an enlarged right atrium. In further support of a sudden death was the bird's otherwise excellent body condition, with abundant subcutaneous fat and a stomach stuffed with fish—this was not a bird who died from starvation or other nutritional deficits or any chronic affliction.

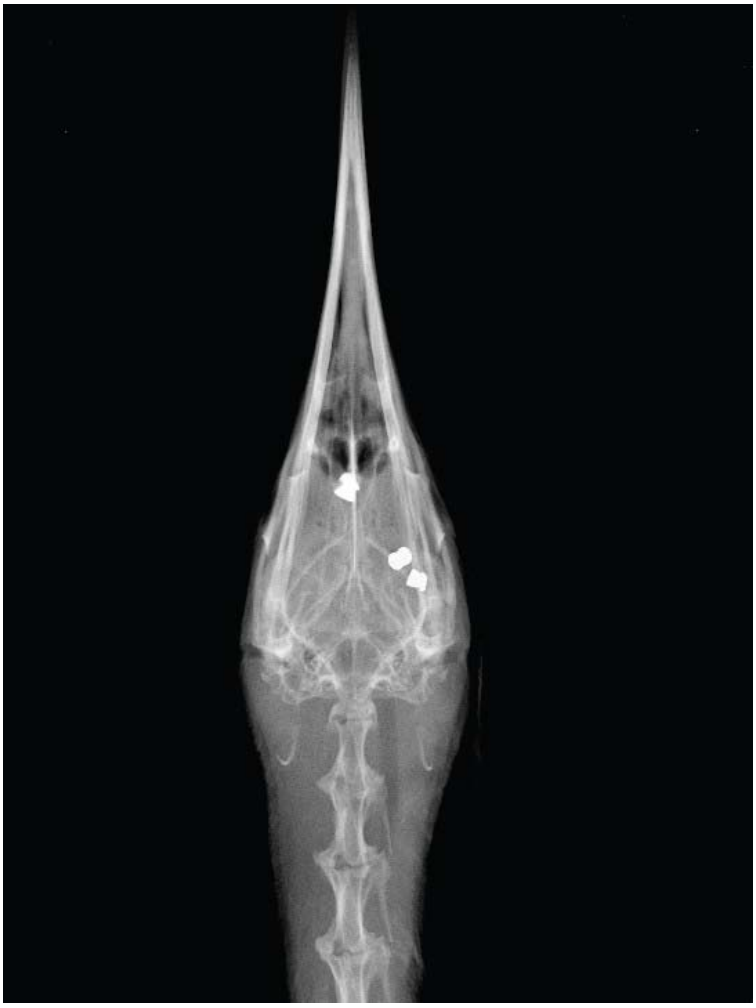
Continuing the necropsy, we began to dissect the head, still expecting to find subcutaneous hemorrhage, blood clots, and other clues that pellet wounds to the head killed this bird. To our surprise, as we dug out the first projectile, lodged in the frontal bones of the bird's skull between the eyes, we found nothing of the sort—the pellet was fibrosed and healed over ("old business" as we say in the pathology lab). As it never even penetrated the skull, this pellet clearly did not cause the bird's death…not what the radiographs had so tidily suggested. After uncovering the other two lead pellets (one just behind the eye and the other embedded in the skin between the loon's jaws) we were stumped—though this loon had indeed been shot in the head, there seemed to be no logical way to connect the healed head trauma to the massive hemorrhage throughout the rest of this bird's body.

As we continued our dissection, Dr. Pokras, Jessica Martinez (another Tufts veterinary student) and I hypothesized other causes of hemorrhage-induced death. We re-examined each of the bird's organs, still more carefully, and finally returned to the heart. To our surprise, the "enlarged atrium" we had previously noted was actually a massively enlarged cranial vena cava (vein) overlying a perfectly normal atrium. Our initial theory quickly shifted, and death due to aneurism soared to the top of the differentials list. We considered that aneurisms, though rarely seen in birds, are usually caused by a weakness in the vascular structure, associated with trauma in the area.

It was time to return to the punctured body wall we had noted in the initial necropsy. It is well documented that rival loons stab each other with their sharp beaks (see photo at right) often puncturing the bone, cartilage, and associated muscle of the victim's sternum. As this loon had several punctures to her sternum, we hypothesized that the hole in her side could have been from a dispute with a fellow loon. As this puncture was very near to the area of the ballooned cranial vena cava, we concluded that this loon almost certainly died from

an aneurism and associated internal hemorrhage. It seems that this loon was a victim of loon-on-loon violence, a conclusion very different from our initial hypothesis. One could speculate that the earlier shooting somehow predisposed the bird to being attacked... but we may never know.

By the end of the session, Dr. Pokras, Jessica and I knew one thing for sure—the radiographs had fooled us, and the pellet wounds seen in the bird's skull were apparently unrelated to the cause of her death. That afternoon I was finally convinced that, though imaging is a valuable tool, it is never sufficient as the sole diagnostic technique. Radiographs cannot be substituted for a good physical exam and a gross exam with a necropsy, and the real value of these diagnostic tests is revealed when they are interpreted together (along with a good working knowledge of the species natural history). While this mystery may never be completely solved, working with this loon helped me see that appearances can be deceiving and that a complete work-up is the only way to achieve reliable diagnoses.



A radiograph revealed three metal densities in the exact shape of lead pellets from a pellet gun embedded in this loon's head. Further investigation found that the pellets weren't the actual cause of the death of this loon.

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Editor's note:
Dead loons found by LPC staff or volunteers are routinely sent to Dr. Mark Pokras at the Wildlife Clinic at Tufts University. The work of Dr. Pokras and his veterinary students is invaluable to determine the nature and extent of challenges facing New Hampshire's loons.

Photo courtesy of Peter Broom; www.peterbroom.com

Friend or Foe: Loon Recognition of Individual People

It is as typical a night of loon-banding on Squam Lake as these nights can be. The loon has been carefully measured, weighed, fitted with bands, and had samples taken for contaminant testing. The information we have gained, and will gain, from this loon will be invaluable to increase our understanding of loons and the challenges they are facing. All is done and the loon is ready to be released. As the bird is gently placed in the water, I feel exhilarated and relieved that the loon's ordeal is over and it can go back to the business of taking care of its chick and living its daily life on Squam. But as it swims away and calls out its distress to the night sky, I also feel a pang of dread. If this loon is typical, there is a good chance it will fear me for the rest of the summer.

Tiffany Grade, LPC Squam Lakes Field Biologist, holds an adult loon while Chris Persico, Biodiversity Research Institute, attends to the bird during a banding session on Squam Lake. Loons are handled with great care during the banding process, and measurements and samples are collected with great precision and respect for the bird.

Yes, that's right—fear me. As the Squam Lakes biologist for the past two summers, I have alienated numerous loons on the lake from my involvement with banding. The summers begin smoothly: I carry out my monitoring duties of each pair of loons on the lakes and, being careful not to approach the loons too closely or disturb them in any way, the loons soon accept my presence as a part of their daily existence. My appearance in their territories elicits no reaction. But the reward for loons that are raising chicks is a date with the LPC/BRI banding team. After that, my relationship with some of these loons is altered for the remainder of the summer.

The first sign of trouble arose in the summer of 2008, my first year on Squam. The pair of loons at the Yard Islands on Big Squam had hatched the first chick of the summer and was contentedly allowing me to check on the safety and progress of the chick each day. When the chick was almost 4 weeks old, a team of biologists from LPC and Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) went out to capture and band the adults. We first captured the male and released him safely back into his territory, but our efforts to capture the female that night were ineffectual. The following day, I drove out to the Yard Islands to make a routine follow-up check on the pair after the banding. I entered the territory well away from where the loon family was. To my amazement, the female of the pair immediately dove and came up alongside my boat, tremoloing in agitation. I was astonished and confused: I had never drawn this sort of reaction from these—or any other—loons before. Quickly establishing that the family was physically fine, I immediately left the territory. The female was captured that night, and her agitated behavior when I approached continued for the remainder of the summer. Although the male of the pair showed no sign of distress at my presence, the female instantly reacted whenever she saw me, coming up to my boat and calling repeatedly until I left the territory. Other boats in the area elicited no such reaction. The logical conclusion was that I was now the enemy in the eyes of this loon.

Unfortunately, this loon was not alone in her fear of me. This past summer, banding sessions left loons at Heron Cove, Mooney Point, and Moultonborough Bay with lasting bad memories, too. Prior to the banding, all had regarded me with equanimity. Afterwards, my appearance in the territories would elicit calls and attempts at confronting me by swimming towards me and calling (although none took it to quite the extreme of the 2008 Yard

Islands female). Interestingly, all the loons that developed a post-banding antipathy have been female. Among the males, only the Mooney Point male showed some signs of disturbance at my presence after the banding, but he got over it relatively quickly.

Loons are not unique in their ability to recognize an individual human. Recent studies have examined this ability in wild birds. Some of you may have heard the story that aired recently on NPR about the work of researchers at Cornell and the University of Washington who discovered that crows they were banding would recognize and scold them when they spotted them again, singling the researchers out among the crowds of people on their campuses. John Marzluff, a biologist in Washington, conducted an experiment in which people of different physical appearance wore masks while banding crows and later walked in the same area wearing those masks. These people were scolded and chased by the crows significantly more frequently than if they were not wearing the mask worn during banding. The crows rapidly learned to recognize and remember individual facial features of the masks after a single experience of banding. In contrast to the rapid learning of these crows, Marzluff points out that multiple exposures to a stimulus are usually necessary for long-term memory retention in animals. He interprets the crows' rapid learning, retention, and subsequent responses (scolding, and in some cases, avoidance) with fear conditioning. In addition, for other crows observing the incident, the sight of a trapper with a net and a bird in distress are powerful biological stimuli which may speed up these other birds' abilities to recognize a threatening person.

Marzluff's analysis raises both explanations and questions about the reaction to me of the loons on Squam. First, the behavior and circumstances of the crows and the loons were very similar. In both cases, birds captured for banding subsequently approached and scolded or confronted the bander(s) when the birds resighted them. Marzluff's experiments with masks proved that the crows recognized individuals, and it seems highly likely that the loons are reacting to me as an individual and not simply to any human or boat. I have not observed the loons reacting in the same way to other boaters. In addition, the boat used to capture loons for banding is the LPC boat from Winnipesaukee, which is a different size and style boat from the LPC Squam boat. In 2008 especially, the Squam boat was a completely different shape from the Winnipesaukee boat, and the Yard Islands female did not hesitate in reacting to me. The loons seem to be able to recognize me as an individual. Secondly, Marzluff's point that the sight of a trapper and a bird in distress are powerful learning stimuli to other birds offers an explanation for the behavior of the Yard Islands female. On the initial night of banding, the male was captured, but not the female. Nonetheless, the female approached the boat and tremoloed at me after that first night. She was captured the second night and continued to repeat the behavior for the remainder of the summer, but the sight of her captured mate may have activated her fear response and ability to recognize a "dangerous" person on that first night.

However, Marzluff's analysis also raises questions about the way the loons recognized me. Marzluff points out that the crows learned to recognize individual people after a single negative event. At first glance, it appears the loons did the same, but is this really the case? The loons had seen me on an almost daily basis all summer. It is possible that they already recognized me and tolerated me, having learned that I was not a threat. However, they then recognized me during banding, knew who I was, and quickly changed their opinion of me—they learned I was suddenly a "dangerous" person and now had to be confronted. Whether the loons learned to recognize me after a single negative experience or over the course of the summer is unclear, but the latter seems more likely.

A study by Levey et al. (2009) on northern mockingbirds revealed similar abilities in these birds as well. In this case, people approached and touched mockingbird nests in an urban environment. By the end of four days, the mockingbirds increased the distance at which they flushed off the nest and scolded more vigorously when the same people approached. A different person approached the nests on the fifth day, but did not elicit this stronger response, demonstrating that the birds recognized the individual and were not simply responding to any person.

Both Marzluff and Levey raised the question of what the value was of birds' abilities to recognize individual humans. After all, humans cannot recognize individual crows or mockingbirds. Marzluff suggested that, considering crows are cognitively advanced birds who live in close association with humans, it is beneficial for them to recognize individual people who may either help them (feed them) or harm them. Levey expressed surprise that mockingbirds could recog-

continued on page 14

continued from page 13

nize individuals, considering their alleged cognitive inferiority to birds such as crows and parrots. Rather than having evolved a specific ability to recognize humans, as Marluff believed crows have, Levey proposed that mockingbirds' abilities to learn quickly are necessary for successful nesting in novel environments. Many mockingbirds have begun nesting in urban environments. Urban predators may vary in their degree of threat to the birds, and the ability to recognize this degree of threat and respond appropriately may be beneficial to the mockingbirds.

So where does this leave the loons? First, the behavior of the Squam loons calls into question our understanding of cognitive abilities in birds. Avian cognitive abilities are likely more advanced over a wider range of bird species than has generally been recognized. Secondly, what is the value of a loon's ability to recognize individual people? This is a difficult question to answer, but it may tie into the issue of birds' cognitive abilities. As Levey and Marzluff point out, individual predators may vary in their degree of threat to prey, and birds in general may have developed the ability to recognize individual predators that are a greater threat to them. By recognizing the more threatening individuals, birds can focus their energies and responses to these predators, while preserving energy by ignoring more neutral/less threatening individuals. As for people, Marzluff has stated, "People are probably at the extreme end of being unpredictable and variable, so recognizing threatening from neutral people may be at a premium." By possessing the ability to recognize individual predators, birds may have the ability to recognize individual people as potential threats as well. While banding the loons, I had clearly crossed the line from neutral to threatening person for some of the Squam loons. The loons' memories of me, however, are more than offset by the knowledge gained from the data collected from these banded loons, which help LPC preserve loons in New Hampshire and understand the factors affecting the population.

Besides these benefits, there is hope for my loon monitoring as well. The Yard Islands female returned in 2009 and tolerated me just fine. I can hope that the loons of 2009 will return next year and all will be forgotten—at least until the next time I help band them.

Author:
Tiffany Grade,
Squam Lakes Field Biologist,
2008/2009

Photo courtesy of Kittie Wilson

This amazing photo of a loon and chick on its nest was taken by Kittie Wilson (see page 16 for profile). The picture clearly depicts a band on the adult loon's foot, as well as a small hole in the egg as the second chick prepares to hatch.

Editor's note: Loon Preservation Committee, Biodiversity Research Institute, and other cooperating researchers involved in loon banding efforts operate under federal permits issued by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The information gained through these efforts is invaluable to determine loon survival, movements, wintering areas, and the effects of contaminants and other stressors on loons. Every effort is made to minimize the handling time and stress to birds during the banding process. Based on two decades of collective experience banding thousands of adult loons throughout the United States and Canada, we know that this work poses very minimal risk to banded loons.

Caught in the Act: Eagles Bring New Challenges to Loons

In February of 2009, a newspaper piece by Granite State nature columnist [or should we say granitic and stately columnar naturist] John Harrigan attracted the attention of a few wildlife biologists. In part, Harrigan relates a North Country showdown between eagles and loons witnessed by game warden Warren Jenkins:

"A couple of years ago [Jenkins] was swimming in a cove on Umbagog when he heard a commotion, and swam around the point to see an eagle hovering over a pair of loons—both of which are revered icons of the quasi-religious endangered-recovered movement. Suddenly the eagle dove, snagged a loon chick, and flapped off."

Accounts like this inspire a certain horrified fascination in even the most casual loon enthusiast, let alone reverential fans. Before the modern [twentieth century] decline of both eagles and loons in New Hampshire, such incidents must have been commonplace. As eagles return to New Hampshire similar anecdotes have circulated with increasing frequency. In 2007, for example, I ran out to nearby Green's Basin after an excited boater called to report an eagle dive-bombing a young loon family. In that case, I found the loon chick and its parents intact, and no eagle. The 2008 field season saw the first eyewitness documentation by LPC staff of a close encounter between an eagle and loons. Here is Winnipesaukee field biologist Todd Loffredo's recounting:

"The most amazing, awe-inspiring thing I have seen in nature occurred at Langdon Cove on July 12, 2008. As I boated into the area between the Monroe Islands and Moultonborough Neck where the loon parents and their chick were hanging out I heard a yodel and the other loon tremolo as she wing-rowed toward the male loon and the chick. At first I thought I was disturbing them. Then I looked up and saw a bald eagle soaring overhead. I watched as it dive-bombed the chick—both parents were rearing up in the water and tremoloing. Then the eagle soared back up and composed itself. Again, [it dove] and again the parents responded, defending their chick. Finally, the eagle soared back up high into the sky, this time about twice as high as it had been .... I was thinking in my head that the chick would be a goner. The eagle made one last attempt, perhaps starting from so much higher to gain more speed in its pursuit of the loon chick. Again, the loon parents defended their chick. The eagle's talons hit water but the chick...was somehow, miraculously well protected and the eagle, miffed, flew away. The loon parents successfully defended their chick."

Eagle predation of loon eggs and nests is less frequently reported than attacks on chicks, and rarely documented. A few years ago, NH Fish and Game biologist Will Staats observed a bald eagle devouring what appeared to be loon eggs, with distressed adult loons nearby, on Pontook Reservoir in Dummer. Vliestra and Paruk (1997) reported the dramatic attack by a bald eagle on a nesting loon in Wisconsin. And in New Hampshire in 2008, on Lake Umbagog, biologists noted clear signs of eagle predation on a loon nest.

Are these recent showdowns and predations a sign of things to come? Indeed, in Washington State there are over a thousand breeding bald eagles, and they routinely put a big dent in the annual breeding success of a relatively small loon population. Close observers of loon behavior on New Hampshire lakes may have noticed the tendency of loons to respond with alarm to airplanes overhead. As eagles reoccupy their rightful role in triggering this innate response, an old battle for territory and prey is resuming. In addition to airplanes, loons will more and more have this returning threat, their original arch-rival, to yodel at and contend with. The anecdotes will pile up and thrill-seeking loon, eagle, and wildlife watchers (quasi-religious or not) will have a fresh alternative to reruns of "Animal Kingdom": dropping into a lakeside lawn chair with the realistic hope of seeing the same kind of high-stakes drama, closer to home.

~John H. Cooley, Jr.

Photo by John Rockwood; www.oegallery.com/NaturePhotosByJohnRockwood

LPC Volunteer Kittie Wilson Honored with Spirit of the Loon Award

At its Annual Meeting on August 27th, the Loon Preservation Committee (LPC) honored Kittie Wilson of Pleasant Lake, New London with its 2009 Spirit of The Loon Award, given annually to an individual who exemplifies outstanding volunteer service to loons and the Loon Preservation Committee. The LPC Board established the Spirit of the Loon Award in 2008, in honor of the 100th birthday of LPC founder Rawson Wood, and recognized Rawson as the first recipient of the award.

Loon Preservation Committee Senior Biologist/Executive Director Harry Vogel (left) and LPC Chair, The Honorable Carl Johnson Sr. (right), present volunteer Kittie Wilson with the 2009 Spirit of The Loon Award.

Kittie has volunteered for LPC since 2003, and has supplied LPC with detailed loon updates and photos and worked tirelessly to protect loons on Pleasant Lake in that time. Kittie and her husband John worked with LPC to build two loon nesting rafts for Pleasant Lake after repeated nest failures of its loons, and both rafts have been used by loons and hatched chicks. She worked closely with LPC staff to capture a sick loon in 2008, and has helped our field biologists collect unhatched eggs from failed nests to analyze for contaminants.

In response to loon deaths on Pleasant Lake caused by ingested lead fishing tackle in 2004 and 2008, Kittie launched grassroots public education campaigns and created, printed and distributed flyers door-to-door around the lake. She also handed out non-lead fishing sinkers, collected lead sinkers, and wrote articles for local papers.

Kittie's photos and information about the loons on Pleasant Lake are distributed via lake website and email chain. She has been warmly supportive of LPC field staff and their monitoring and management. She has also been involved with the Pleasant Lake Protective Association for more than 20 years; has been a Board member and Secretary of the association for most of that time; and currently chairs its Wildlife Conservation Committee. She has always advocated for responsible development to protect loons, the lake, and its watershed.

Every year, LPC benefits from the efforts of close to a thousand volunteers working in many capacities throughout the state to protect loons. It is unfortunate that LPC can honor only one of its many outstanding volunteers with this award each year, but of course there are other rewards for volunteering for LPC. Chief among those are the sights and sounds of loons on our lakes, and the certain knowledge that your efforts have helped make that presence possible. We extend our sincere thanks to Kittie for her work on behalf of loons, and for the inspiration she has provided to her fellow volunteers, and staff here at LPC!

~Harry Vogel

The Spirit of the Loon Award
is to be presented to an individual who
exemplifies outstanding volunteer service to loons
and the Loon Preservation Committee.

A Wild and Wonderful Ride for Loons

Looking for ways to contribute to the community, the new owners of Laconia Harley-Davidson, Steve and Anne Deli, decided to begin by generously donating a 2009 Harley-Davidson Softail Rocker motorcycle to LPC to raffle off for the benefit of New Hampshire loons. The kick-off for the raffle coincided with the 86th Laconia Bike Week, June 13, 2009, at the Harley-Davidson dealership in Meredith, NH. LPC set up a tent alongside various motorcycle vendors, selling raffle tickets and telling folks all about loons and LPC. Anne Deli put additional resources towards reaching the goal of selling 2,000 of the 3,000 tickets printed by the end of bike week.

As if donating the bike were not enough, the Delis also hosted a Wild HOGs for Wild Loons ride and party, with all registration fees going to LPC. Held on August 22nd, the ride toured the Lakes Region and some scenic roads north. Rainy weather kept a lot of people away but didn't dampen the festivities, which included a live band and a buffet luncheon catered by Mame's of Meredith.

The drawing took place at 2 p.m. with first prize going to Rick Blanchflower of Leominster, MA. Second and third prize were gift cards to Harley-Davidson for $500 and $100 and were won by Chris Landry of Milford, MA and Dan Tibbetts of Ayer, MA respectively. When all was said and done, 3,000 tickets were sold and $26,700 raised!

From beginning to end, Wild HOGs for Wild Loons was a great experience for LPC, and its success was in no small part due to the tremendous support of Anne and Steve Deli and their staff at American Road Group. In particular, we'd like to thank Amanda Blyth and Kelly McDaniel of the Orlando office, Dawn Hardies of the Chicago office, and Kyle Jones and Karl Stober of the Meredith office. They all went above and beyond to help make this effort a success, and it was a pleasure to work with and get to know these wonderful people! If you missed getting your Wild HOGs for Wild Loons "Live Free and Dive" T-shirt or ball cap, visit or call The Loon Center!

~Rachel Williams

Gala a Huge Success

And what a Gala it was! Church Landing in Meredith hosted LPC's annual summer celebration this year. A larger facility allowed more loon lovers to attend and to enjoy socializing, a lovely buffet luncheon, and both a silent and a live auction. Local radio personality Pat Kelly served as auctioneer for the live auction items which included an African safari and one week at a villa in Tuscany. Silent auction items included gift certificates from local businesses, a day with the Moultonborough Fire Department, a week on Campobello Island, and Mary Rice's warm and cozy handmade wool socks.

The afternoon was a huge success, not only for those attending but for LPC as well. After expenses, the Gala brought in almost $16,500 for the organization. Renée Speltz served as chair of the Gala Committee and deserves great credit for her hard work and her organizational skills. Under her guidance, committee members Jeanie Forrester, Barbara Putnam, Lydia Torr and Terry Wetzler-Finn worked efficiently and with pleasure to make this Gala work so well. A huge thank you to them, and also to all the businesses who reaffirmed their love of loons by donating to the auction, including the helpful and cordial folks at Church Landing.

~Alisoun Hodges

Alisoun Hodges Leaves LPC for Greener Pastures (or Woods)

Alisoun Hodges was hired as LPC's Loon Center Manager in April of 2000, and soon became the Center and Membership Manager to exercise her considerable skills in recruiting and caring for LPC's members. With the support of a grant from the Natural Areas and Wildlife Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, Alisoun became LPC's Development Coordinator in August of 2001.

Alisoun's passion for loons and the environment, and her good care of LPC's members, resulted in very significant gains in membership support in the past 9 1/2 years.

Alisoun is an avid hiker, and loves to explore the trails and peaks of the White Mountain National Forest. The creation of the new White Mountain National Forest Headquarters in Campton, only two miles away from her

Alisoun Hodges continued

home, provided an opportunity Alisoun could not pass up, and she accepted a position in visitor services. She, and her good work, will be missed here at LPC. We wish Alisoun all the best in her new adventure!

~Harry Vogel

Annual Loon Festival: 32 Years Dry!

At the risk of sounding like a broken record – whew! The evening prior to the 32nd Annual Loon Festival brought wind and rain and the collapse of one of the tents, but come time for the Festival itself, the rains ceased and the fun and games began!

There was the ever jovial Mr. Phil, who can make a balloon into just about anything one's heart desires. Equally talented in her field, Mrs. Phil created some incredible face painting.

The ever popular "Stump the Biologist" dunk tank returned this year, as did the ever faithful Meredith Rotary Club with volunteers to cook hotdogs "any way you like them" and dish out Ben & Jerry's ice cream.

Kids stayed occupied with several fun crafts that even the adults enjoyed. Slide shows about loons were presented by field biologists and nature photographer John Rockwood. The Squam Lakes Natural Science Center attracted curious folks wanting to know about all the interesting artifacts on hand at the Discovery Table.

Thanks to all who volunteered, making this another successful and fun Loon Festival: Nancy Christie, Sue & Bob Connolly, Marilyn & Bob Coppo, Paige & Dave Kuether, Elizabeth Mahan, Phyllis and Jordan Prouty, Mike Ruyffelaert, Springli Sage, and Lydia & Nate Torr; Squam Lakes Natural Science Center volunteers Erica Anderson, Clair Fowler, Diane Nyren and Jan Welch; and Meredith Rotary volunteers Ted & Christina Fodero, Harry Harrison, Carl, Eliot and Tim Johnson, Jim Matthews, Bernie Nealon and Donna & Jerry Ulbricht.

~Rachel Williams

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Swim '09 Raises $9,836 for Loon Conservation

Shortly after sunrise on a cool, early-August morning, the first of six Squam Swimming Sisters (and Bro) slipped into the calm waters of Squam Lake to begin a demanding seven-mile relay swim. The purpose of this daunting task was to raise funds for LPC's work to investigate and reverse the declines of loons on Squam. After five hours and forty-five minutes, this intrepid group of swimmers came ashore at the Sandwich Town Beach to the grateful applause of a gathered crowd of supporters. Their swim, and much soliciting of friends of loons around Squam, had raised close to $10,000 to fund LPC's work in support of loons.

Swim '09 continued

LPC has used, and will use, these funds to investigate and reverse the dramatic declines of loons on Squam by testing for contaminants in unhatched loon eggs collected from failed nests; to rescue loons in distress as a result of injury or disease; to determine causes of death of loons which we are unable to rescue; to band loons to track the survival, breeding success and wintering locations of individuals; and to extend LPC's field season on Squam to allow more intensive monitoring, research, management and education to support Squam's loons. Thank you to all of the Squam Swimming Sisters and Bro (Rick Van de Poll, Alex Adriance, Nancy Hansen, Wendy Van de Poll, Rose de Mars, and Carol Zink) for their tremendous effort, and to 132 friends of loons who together pledged $9,222 for the swimmers! Our thanks as well to the following people and businesses who donated auction items and raised an additional $614 for The Swim: Dale Lary, Mocha Rizing, The Corner House, Donny Brook, Jeane Claridge and Michelle Eastman of Fashion Forward, North Sandwich Store, Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, Red Hill Gym, Rick Van de Poll, Dragonfly Yoga Barn, Will Lehman, Sandwich Animal Hospital, Lupine Blossoms, Robin Dustin, Diane Johnson, Nancy Hansen, Ben Adriance, Wayside Farm, and Booty Family Farm. Our thanks as well to Rockywold-Deephaven camps for donating their pontoon boat on the day of the Swim.

Altogether, the Squam Swim '09 raised $9,836 for LPC's work to preserve Squam Lake as a home to a thriving population of loons once again. Thank you all for your support!

~Harry Vogel

5th Annual Golf Tournament

A beautiful day greeted the golfers who arrived at Ridgewood Country Club at 7 a.m. to play LPC's 5th Annual Benefit Golf Tournament. LPC volunteers Laurie Whitley, Jordan Prouty, Joe Kabat and Carl Johnson were on hand to greet and register the players. Carl Johnson, Jr. and his son Tim were already out on the course installing hole sponsor signs, and Scott Griffin was there ready to take his stand as a hole-in-one observer.

Luis Tiant once more graced us with his presence, joined by fellow former baseball player Jim Corsi. With the help of prime sponsors Reynolds American and Northeast Delta Dental, the event raised over $11,000.

A sincere thank you to Carl Johnson for spearheading this fundraiser, and a very special thanks to Stan Plifka who arranged for Tiant and Corsi to be present. Thanks partly to son Garret Plifka, the foursome of Plifka, Plifka, Tiant and Corsi were the tournament winners. Thanks, too, to Ridgewood Country Club, to all who donated prizes and auction gifts, and to all the volunteers who made this event a success.

~Alisoun Hodges

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LPC Holds 3rd Annual Meeting

The Loon Preservation Committee held its third Annual Meeting at The Loon Center in Moultonborough on Thursday, August 27th, as required by the By-laws that accompanied LPC's incorporation as an independent 501(c)(3) organization in 2006.

The meeting opened with a slide presentation by New Hampshire wildlife photographer and LPC member John Rockwood, which featured loons that John monitors on Lake Massabesic in southern New Hampshire. Harry Vogel presented preliminary results of the Loon Preservation Committee's monitoring, research, management and educational programs and commented on the significance of some of the recent trends observed in New Hampshire's loon population (please see a full report on pages 3 to 9 of this *LPC Newsletter*).

The Chair of the Loon Preservation Committee Board, the Honorable Carl Johnson, presented the following slate of LPC officers: The Honorable Carl R. Johnson, Chair; William R. Crangle, First Vice Chair; Peter C. Sorlien, Second Vice Chair; John W. Lanier, Tech-nical Vice Chair; Lydia M. Torr, Secretary; and Jordan S. Prouty, Treasurer.

This slate was voted in unanimously. LPC also welcomed two new members to the Board at the meeting, Nancy Christie and Renée Speltz.

Bill Crangle, Chair of LPC's Finance Committee, reported that the audit for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2009 was complete. He noted that LPC had ended the year with an operational shortfall of $49,200 and an additional loss of $13,400 in LPC's endowment fund for a total loss of $62,600 last year. The LPC Board was aware of the loss early last year but felt that it was a priority to maintain staff and programs in what it knew would be a difficult year for LPC financially. He reported that the first four months of LPC's current fiscal year were looking better, although it will be a continuing challenge to make budget given current economic conditions.

~The Honorable Carl Johnson, Chair
Harry Vogel, Executive Director

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