



# *Loon Preservation Committee* **NEWSLETTER**

*P.O. Box 604, Lee's Mill Road, Moultonborough, NH 03254; [www.loon.org](http://www.loon.org)*

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SUMMER 2013



A loon chick admires its reflection for the first time on Pleasant Lake.

Photo Courtesy of Kittie Wilson

## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

### **Loon Preservation Committee**

183 Lee's Mill Road, P.O. Box 604  
Moultonborough, NH 03254  
603-476-LOON (5666); [www.loon.org](http://www.loon.org)

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

### **LPC Staff:**

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Susie Burbidge  
*Outreach/Volunteer Coordinator*  
Chris Conrod  
*LPC Field Program Coordinator*  
John H. Cooley, Jr.  
*Senior Biologist*  
Caitlyn M. Dowell  
*Center Assistant*  
Tiffany J. Grade  
*Squam Lake Project Biologist*  
Linda Egli Johnson  
*Special Assistant/Newsletter Coordinator*  
Nancy C. McDonald  
*Loon Center Manager*  
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Harry S. Vogel, *LPC Executive Director*

## *The Jig Is Up For Lead Fishing Tackle*

Sometime in early July, a small group of volunteers and staff representing the Loon Preservation Committee, NH Lakes, and NH Audubon will gather at the State House to witness and celebrate a monumental achievement – the signing into law of a bill to protect loons from lead fishing tackle.

It has been a long and winding road to secure these protections for our loons. In 1994, after reading an LPC report documenting lead-poisoning of loons, then-Representative Jeb Bradley made a first attempt to require that fishing tackle of the types killing loons be made of non-toxic materials. That bill encountered stiff opposition and was eventually defeated because the EPA was considering national regulations – an effort that subsequently failed because the EPA decided it was a matter best left to individual states to decide.

In 1998, Senators Jeb Bradley and Carl Johnson co-sponsored a bill to limit the use on lakes and ponds of lead sinkers and jigs (lead-weighted hooks) weighing an ounce or less. Once again this bill encountered determined opposition; although the one-ounce-or-less weight standard for sinkers survived, the benchmark for jigs was reduced during the legislative process to a standard of less than an inch in total length. This was the first time any state had passed legislation restricting the use of lead fishing tackle; and, while there was much to celebrate, the end result – at least for jigs – was not a protective standard for loons. Legislation followed to expand the restrictions to all freshwater and to restrict the sale of these same types of lead tackle (please see pages 8-9 for a full legislative history).

In 2010, a record 11 documented loon deaths from ingested lead tackle – many a result of lead-headed jigs still legal for use and sale in New Hampshire – highlighted the shortcomings of current regulations to protect our state's loons. Senator Bob Odell sponsored legislation in 2011 to address the loophole that allowed these lethal jigs to continue being sold and used in New Hampshire. When that effort fell short due to strong opposition, Senator Jeanie Forrester sponsored the current bill to restrict the use and sale of lead jigs weighing an ounce or less. A strong show of support from the public and legislative champions from both parties ensured its passage through the Senate and House, and at this writing, the bill is about to be signed into law by the Governor.

And so a decades-long effort to share the results of our studies of loon mortality with decision-makers has finally borne fruit: we have convinced our legislature to finish the job and unreservedly choose loons over lead fishing tackle. Thank you to all of those who have been involved in this massive effort to protect our loons from lead tackle over these many years; your persistent efforts have, at long last, resulted in a hard-won victory for New Hampshire's loons.





## Notes from the Field

### Field Volunteers

We are very pleased to welcome conservation volunteers Brandon Ross and Nicole Cardona to our field program this season. Nicole will be assisting with field surveys in southern New Hampshire as part of her graduate work at Antioch University in Keene. Brandon hails from Cambridge, England, and brings experience as a game manager in Great Britain. Brandon's coursework and prior volunteering has also included game camera projects, tracking bison in an old-growth forest in Poland, and a summer at the North American Bear Center in Minnesota. LPC's field efforts are sure to benefit from the interest and hard work of Brandon and Nicole.

### Northeast Loon Study Working Group Meeting

On March 11-12, the Loon Preservation Committee hosted the 19th annual gathering of the Northeast Loon Study Working Group (NELSWG) at the Loon Center. The meeting featured over 20 presenters and more than 30 attendees, representing state and federal wildlife agencies, non-profit conservation organizations, university researchers, environmental consultants, among others.

Several NELSWG talks applied new technology to familiar problems. For example, LPC's Susie Burbidge reported on her use of social media for outreach and citizen science, a new twist on communicating with our traditional network of volunteers and members. Carrie Gray, research biologist with BioDiversity Research Institute, presented her use of satellite transmitter implants to track the winter movements and migratory routes of Red-throated



*LPC Executive Director/Senior Biologist Harry Vogel addresses attendees of the Northeast Loon Study Working Group (NELSWG).*

Loons along the Atlantic coast. While Gray's study was motivated by the practical need to locate off-shore wind farms where they are least likely to impact loons and other birds, it has provided new insight into basic questions about what loons are up to – and where they go – in the winter.

Also bringing new technology to bear on a familiar aspect of loon monitoring and management, LPC's Elizabeth Jackson and Wisconsin loon biologist Jeff Wilson both presented their 2012 nest camera projects, intended to track nest failure causes. Working on the Turtle-Flambeau Flowage in northern Wisconsin, Wilson arrived at a novel way to get cameras close enough for an unobstructed view of the nest, by suspending them over the nest on poles. His success with this technique makes it more likely that cameras can become a useful support for broader monitoring. Good camera data from a few

representative nest failures can be compared with nests monitored by field staff and volunteers throughout the state to shed more light on loon nest predation and disturbance.

Besides applying new techniques to old problems, other NELSWG presentations turned the focus to new problems, or newly identified threats. For example, NH Fish and Game Non-Game Wildlife Biologist Emily Preston described anticipated climate change impacts on New Hampshire wetland and lake habitat, and efforts to respond. Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation's Nina Schoch reported on her new analysis of the extent of mercury impacts on loon populations in New York. LPC's Tiffany Grade presented her work on the population-level impacts of lead fishing tackle mortality in New Hampshire. Like Dr. Schoch's analysis of mercury impacts,

*continued on page 4*

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Dr. Grade's work explains how lead mortality is not simply a threat to the individual loon, but a problem for the population as a whole.

Rounding out the talks on new threats, University of New Hampshire limnologist and cyanotoxin expert Jim Haney presented fascinating preliminary results showing that cyanobacteria-derived neurotoxins bioaccumulate in New Hampshire's freshwater food web, including in loon prey fish. Haney has been investigating whether neurotoxins from lake cyanobacteria may be correlated with the incidence of human diseases like ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) in New Hampshire. Bioaccumulating neurotoxins have been implicated in wildlife diseases in other locales, and in his talk Haney proposed that loons may be a suitable indicator species for studying this potential disease mechanism for humans and wildlife on New Hampshire lakes.

Finally, NELSWG talks also reported on efforts to link loon conservation to broader environmental networks and causes. Anne Kuhn, of US-EPA's Narragansett research facility, reported on a new on-line searchable map database for sharing loon, wildlife, and lake ecology data. This project will make available to the researchers and the public several regional datasets, including mercury data from LPC-supported sampling efforts in New Hampshire. Vermont Loon Recovery Project's Eric Hanson described the need in Vermont for a lake wildlife conservation program tying shoreline development planning to habitat conservation for loons and other plant and animal species. And Susan Gallo presented her work in Maine to involve citizen scientists in a lake habitat assessment program cen-



Photo Courtesy of Alexis Rudko

*Loon trapped between dams on the Cochecho River in Rochester, NH*

tered on loons and motivated by climate change.

Many of the talks at NELSWG meetings continue an ongoing discourse on perennial topics and concerns; each year there are also some topics and ideas that are completely new. In this mix of familiar and new, the NELSWG meetings usually produce many "Aha!" moments—connecting practical conservation and science. The 2013 meeting was a rewarding experience for all participants in this respect, true to form. This summary of the NELSWG proceedings wouldn't be complete without mentioning the rare cameo appearance of rock-and-roll legend David Bowie (aka Jim Paruk) who regaled the standing room only crowd with an acoustic, loon-er rendition of Space Oddity. Thank you, David!

### ***Bouchard Oil Spill 10-year Anniversary***

April 27, 2013 marked the 10th anniversary of the Bouchard-120 oil spill in Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts. The spill of heating fuel oil from a transport barge killed

hundreds of loons. Some of the individual loons that survived were traced back to their breeding lakes in New Hampshire, and other New Hampshire loons were likely impacted or killed. Restitution for the environmental impact of the spill is carried out through the Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) process. A NRDA Council of Trustees, including the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Wampanoag tribal representatives, and state agencies from Massachusetts and Rhode Island, is charged with accomplishing the settlement. Although a partial settlement was reached in 2010 (seven years later) for other species, no resolution has been reached for impacts to loons.

After ten years of legal wrangling and internal debate between the Trustees and the responsible party (Bouchard Transportation Company), the damage settlement, as far as loons go, remains unresolved, with no meaningful endpoint in sight. LPC continues to work diligently to ensure that society will be fairly compensated for the loss of these loons.





*A loon nest on Woodward Pond in Roxbury exhibits the vulnerability of natural nests to water-level fluctuations and flooding.*

### **Late Spring Rescues**

Many thanks to LPC board member and volunteer Brian Reilly, Wings of Dawn wildlife rehabilitator Maria Colby, and the Weare Animal Hospital, for their combined effort to rescue and then successfully release an adult loon discovered on May 14 at Center Pond in Nelson. The loon may have crash-landed and/or ran into trouble with other loons on the pond. A radiograph showed bruising but no other major injuries. After recuperating for several days at Wings of Dawn, the loon was released on an unoccupied pond. Followup surveys confirmed that it had apparently made its way off the pond.

We haven't tried a rescue, but another unusual loon call in late May came from downtown Rochester, NH, where a loon was apparently trapped with not enough take-off space between two dams on the Cocheco River (pictured left). When she arrived to investigate, field biologist Alexis Rudko discovered the loon below the dam—at least a 10-foot drop—on swift-moving water. The loon was diving and had no obvious injuries. As the newsletter goes to

press we will continue to monitor this loon, waiting for signs that it is beaching itself, since extremely difficult access at the river site makes a water rescue impractical.

### **Early Nesting**

By the end of the second week in May, loon watchers on Bow Lake and Pleasant Lake in New London had already documented early nests. As more and more nest reports have come in during

the second half of May, we've seen a few of the early starts predated or flooded. For some nests, these early weeks have involved a close watch of the lake level and precipitation, with several rainy days and storm fronts putting the loons 'close to the brink.' With the encouragement of LPC volunteer Dana Duxbury-Fox, and the cooperation of the NH DES Dam Bureau, LPC continues to alert dam operators on loon nest lakes of the need for stable water levels during the nesting period, and to work with operators on a case-by-case basis where there are vulnerable nests.

### **Nest Rafts**

This spring LPC staff and volunteers provided over a dozen new nest rafts to replenish rafts that have worn out and to offset nest failures and degraded habitat at occupied loon territories. Many thanks to a hardy core of volunteers who helped launch the raft-building season at an LPC work day on April 19th. We received additional help with raft and sign construction again this year from

*continued on page 6*



*Patti Furness from Lake Massasecum along with Bob and Dale Cunningham from Rockybound Pond lend a hand during the raft building workshop.*

*continued from page 5*

Moultonborough Academy Earth Day volunteers and from vocational arts classes at the Franklin Middle School. Thank you all!

We are also extremely grateful to the local merchants who supported raft and sign management with generous discounts and donations of materials (see box at right). Please let them know how much their support allows us to do for loons, and thank them with your patronage.

*~John Cooley*

### ***Early Winter Rescue on Squam Lake***

*A team effort was needed to rescue this stranded loon when it was discovered in early January by local ice boaters Lee Spiller and Randall Rice, near the Yard Islands on Squam Lake. At the shoreline on Bean Road, Spiller and Rice handed the loon off to NH Fish and Game Conservation Officer Brad Morse, who delivered it to LPC staff. Dr. Jacques at the Interlakes Animal Hospital provided a radiograph and quick health exam, and LPC's Liz Jackson and her father, Dan, transported the loon to Portsmouth, where it was released on the coast.*

## **THANK YOU MERCHANTS!**

### **Raft and Sign Materials:**

Uncle Hilde's Discount Lumber, Tilton, NH  
Boulia-Gorrell Lumber Company, Laconia, NH  
LaValley-Middleton Building Supply, Meredith, NH  
Gilbert Block, Laconia, NH  
Dion's Plant Place and Landscapes, Moultonborough, NH  
BF Products, Carlisle, PA  
World Wide Enterprises, East Providence, RI

### **Field Equipment:**

Opticron—Field staff optical equipment  
Eagle Optics—Field staff optical equipment



Photo Courtesy of Lee Spiller

**To report a stranded loon, loon harassment, or an injured or dead loon, please call the Loon Preservation Committee: 603-476-5666, or New Hampshire Fish & Game Dispatch: 603-271-3361.**

**Thank you!**



## *New Educational Campaign to Promote Lead-Free Fishing in NH!*

**“L**et’s Get the Lead Out, NH!” is a new educational campaign launched by the New Hampshire Lakes Association (NH LAKES) in collaboration with LPC to encourage lead-free fishing in New Hampshire. Whether you are a member of a lake association, an avid fisherman or a retailer, you can make a pledge to take action.

Participants will be provided with important information and necessary tools needed to host lead fishing tackle collection and exchange events and other educational activities. Additional ways for associations to get involved include training Lake Hosts to participate in this campaign, encouraging local retailers to stock non-lead fishing tackle and posting information at boat launches or other key access points on the lake. Individual anglers can make a pledge to use only non-lead tackle, properly dispose of old lead fishing gear and share a testimonial about the benefits of fishing lead-free. A few examples of how retailers can participate include pledging to sell non-lead tackle, keeping a collection bin in the store and displaying campaign information for customers to learn more.

For more information or to sign up, please visit <http://nhlakes.wix.com/leadoutnh> or contact NH LAKES at [info@nhlakes.org](mailto:info@nhlakes.org) or (603) 226-0299.

We are very excited about this new campaign and hope that this effort will help keep loons (and other waterbirds) safe while fishing!

*~Susie Burbidge*



**“Y**ou may think that I am a visionary looking into a nebulous future, but I believe sincerely that if you neglect your opportunities now, within a couple of decades they will be gone.”

*~Sigurd F. Olson*

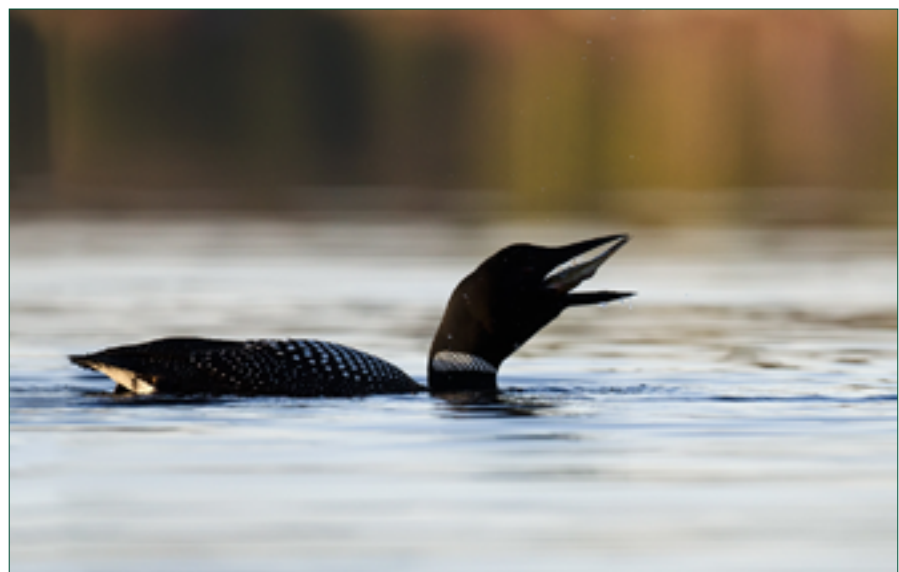


Photo Courtesy of Jamie Pringle

## *Legislation to Protect Loons from Lead – a Tremendous Team Effort*

**L**egislation to adequately protect our state's threatened loons from toxic lead (Pb) fishing tackle is finally on the verge of being signed into law thanks to your outstanding efforts.

Senate Bill 89, sponsored by Senator Jeanie Forrester (R-Meredith), and cosponsored by a strong bipartisan coalition of senators and representatives, will ban the sale and freshwater use of lead fishing sinkers and jigs weighing one ounce or less. This tackle is the largest known cause of New Hampshire adult loon mortality.

SB 89 has been passed by the NH House and Senate and is now on its way to Governor Maggie Hassan. We believe that the Governor will sign the bill in the coming weeks. If further action by you becomes necessary to get this bill signed into law, we will let you know immediately.

LPC, NH Lakes Association (NH LAKES) and NH Audubon have been working together in support of SB 89. In addition to loons, this important legislation will protect many other wildlife species at risk of lead poisoning from ingestion of lead tackle.

It has taken nearly two decades to secure the vital protections for loons finally passed by the legislature this year.

**Thank you to all of our members, volunteers and partners who have played a crucial role in securing our legislative victories for loons.**

In 1994, Representative (now Senator) Jeb Bradley (R-Wolfeboro) and Rep. Rose Marie Rogers (D-Rochester) sponsored the first bill to restrict the sale and freshwater use of lead fishing sinkers and jigs (HB 1527). Unfortunately, the House Wildlife and Marine

Resources Committee killed that bill after opponents claimed that further study was needed.

In 1998, Rep. Bradley and the late Senator Carl Johnson (a former LPC board member and tireless advocate for loons) sponsored a similar bill (HB 1196). Amidst an "educate, don't legislate" petition drive by opponents, the House stripped that bill of its restrictions on lead tackle and replaced them with requirements for the Fish and Game Department to develop a lead education program and study lead poisoning in waterbirds.

Although the Senate restored the 1998 bill's provisions banning the sale and freshwater use of lead sinkers and lead jigs weighing one ounce or less, this protective standard was greatly reduced by the Committee of Conference that reconciled differences between the House and Senate versions of HB 1196. The bill signed into law banned only the use of lead sinkers weighing one ounce or less and lead jigs measuring one inch or less on NH's lakes and ponds.

Several years later, in 2004, Sen. Johnson sponsored successful legislation (SB 487) that banned the sale of these lead sinkers and jigs and expanded the ban on their use to include all freshwaters of the state. Then, in 2005, we had to defend our legislative achievements for loons against a bill to weaken restrictions on lead sinkers and jigs (HB 211). Fortunately, we succeeded.

By 2011, however, it became clear that opponents' efforts to limit the 1998 bill's restriction on lead jigs had reduced that bill's protective standard – a key part of our current law – to a point of ineffectiveness.

Lead fishing sinkers and jigs caused nearly half (49%) of the NH adult loon mortality between 1989 and 2011, and the majority of these lead-related deaths were due to currently legal lead jigs.

While the one ounce or less weight standard for lead sinkers is sufficient, the one inch or less length standard for prohibited jigs has proven completely inadequate. All of the lead jigs removed from dead NH adult loons have measured well over one inch, and most have measured more than two inches.

Effective June 1, 2016, SB 89 will remedy our current law's major deficiency by banning the sale and freshwater use of lead sinkers and lead jigs weighing one ounce or less. Implementing the same standard for prohibited lead sinkers and lead jigs will make the law adequate and clear. The three-year phase in period gives anglers and retailers time to transition to non-lead tackle.

While the defeat of similar legislation last year (SB 224) was discouraging, we were heartened by the dedication of the bill's supporters. Better still, we could sense that we were nearing a tipping point where legislators understood the full impact of lead fishing sinkers and jigs upon loons. It was a moment that opponents tried desperately to avoid by unleashing a barrage of bizarre speculation and misinterpreted studies to downplay lead fishing tackle's well-documented lethal effects.

Loons do not usually breed until they are six or seven years old. Then, they only produce one chick per pair every two years on average. Therefore, adult survival is the most important factor in maintaining the viability of NH's



loon population. The loss of 124 NH adult loons to lead tackle between 1989 and 2011 has had a significant negative impact on our state's small loon population.

Still, returning to their "educate, don't legislate" refrain, opponents convinced the House Fish and Game and Marine Resources Committee to kill SB224 last year.

Education is a vital component of reducing loon mortality from lead poisoning, but it is not a replacement for adequate restrictions on lead fishing sinkers and jigs. In the Granite State, despite decades of educational outreach, this tackle is still the largest known cause of NH adult loon deaths.

So, we forged ahead with SB 89 and sought to involve you even more extensively in this year's legislative efforts. Unsurprisingly, whenever we issued a call to action, you answered it – and the legislative results speak for themselves.

Your calls and emails to legislators – and your attendance at hearings – were pivotal in securing the following:

**UNANIMOUS PASSAGE OF SB 89 BY THE SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE,**

**UNANIMOUS PASSAGE OF SB 89 BY THE FULL SENATE,**

**PASSAGE OF SB 89 BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FISH AND GAME AND MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE BY A 2/3 MAJORITY (9-6), AND,**

**PASSAGE OF SB 89 BY THE FULL HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, BY A MARGIN OF 225-142.**

Senator Forrester has worked tirelessly in support of SB 89, as



*Some of LPC's members and volunteers from throughout NH who attended the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee's hearing on SB 89 on February 20th to show their support for NH's loons.*

has Senator Bob Odell (R-Lempster), who cosponsored SB 89 and was SB 224's prime sponsor last year.

SB 89's other Senate cosponsors, Sens. Martha Fuller Clark (D-Portsmouth), John Reagan (R-Deerfield), Andrew Hosmer (D-Laconia), David Pierce (D-Etna), Peggy Gilmour (D-Hollis) and David Watters (D-Dover) were also integral to the bill's success.

Additionally, Senate Majority Leader Jeb Bradley (R-Wolfeboro) again provided critical support for our legislative efforts to protect loons.

In the House, SB 89's cosponsors Reps. Ben Lefebvre (D-Grantham) and David Kidder (R-New London), provided tremendous time, effort and leadership to the efforts to pass this bill. The bill's other cosponsors Reps.

Lynne Ober (R-Hudson) and Neal Kurk (R-Weare) were also important advocates for SB 89. Finally, House Majority Leader Steve Shurtleff (D-Penacook) and Representatives Steve Ketel (D-Dover) and John Manley (D-Bennington) provided crucial support for the bill.

**We are tremendously grateful for our many friends and legislative champions who have carried on Senator Johnson's tradition of tireless and effective advocacy for our loons.** With continued commitment we can protect our hard-won legislative gains and other successes on behalf of New Hampshire's loons and other wildlife. More information about SB 89, loons and lead may be found at [www.loon.org](http://www.loon.org).

*~Sheridan Brown*

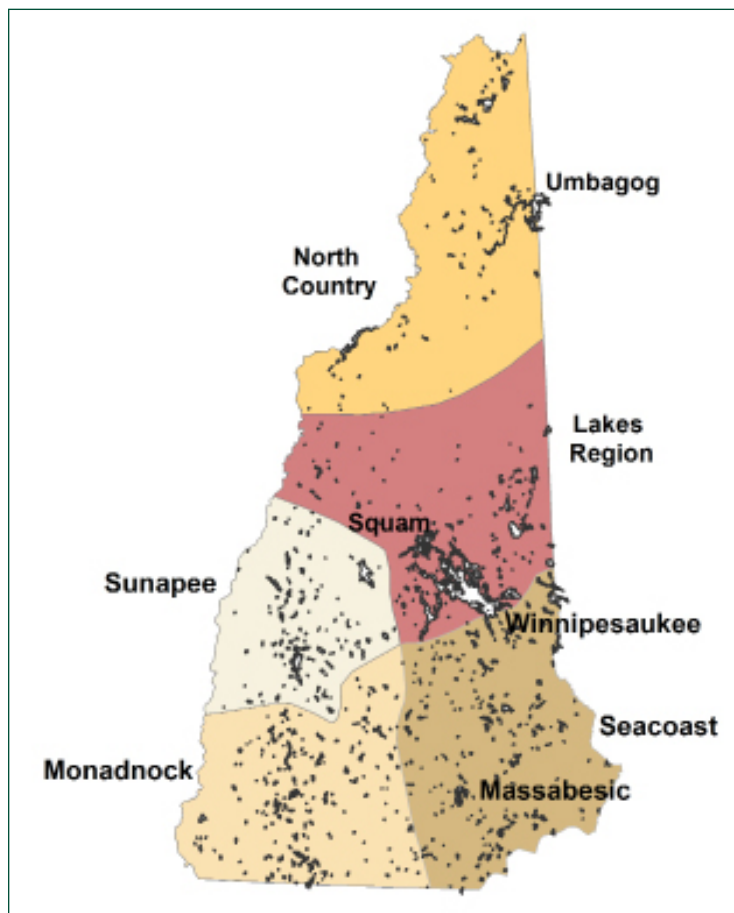
***We are tremendously grateful for our many friends and legislative champions who have carried on Senator Johnson's tradition of tireless and effective advocacy for our loons.***

*~Sheridan Brown*

## LPC DESIGNATES NEW SUNAPEE MONITORING REGION:

LPC members and loon watchers in western New Hampshire, between Lake Sunapee and Newfound Lake, will be pleased to know that they are now within our Sunapee monitoring region, and that we are no longer using the name "Monadnock-North" (see map). The old label was a geographical misnomer, as more than one area resident has pointed out. And it was high time for a more accurate name, given the dense, relatively productive subpopulation of loons there in recent years. In 2013 a full-time seasonal field biologist, Matthew Bartolotti, will be focused exclusively on these lakes for the first time (see profile on page 11). Please welcome him, hope for another successful nesting year, and enjoy the new, more accurate designation!

~John Cooley



## Find us on facebook!

### SAVE THE DATE! Annual Loon Census - July 20, 2013

LPC's Annual Loon Census will be held on Saturday, July 20, 2013 from 8-9 a.m. Last year 518 observers covered 122 lakes around the state. A total of 492 adults, 17 immature loons and 73 chicks were counted.

You can submit your census observations online ([www.loon.org](http://www.loon.org)) or fill out the census form at the back of this newsletter and send to: Loon Preservation Committee, PO Box 604, Moultonborough, NH 03254.

If you would like more information please send an email to [volunteers@loon.org](mailto:volunteers@loon.org).



# 2013 LPC SUMMER STAFF

## LAKES REGION



Janelle Ostroski

Janelle became hooked on loons while interning at the Squam Lakes Association last summer. She is eager to put her degree in Conservation Biology from the University of New Hampshire to work in lake conservation, from wildlife monitoring to managing invasive species.

## SEACOAST



Alexis Rudko

Alexis returns for her third season as Seacoast field biologist. She earned a Master's Degree at the University of New Hampshire, creating a GIS-based habitat suitability model for loons. She is currently also a part-time environmental educator at the Seacoast Science Center.

## SUNAPEE



Matthew Bartolotti

Matthew is a recent graduate of St. Lawrence University with a BS in Conservation Biology. Field studies include mountain bird census counts in the White Mountains, mist-netting, monitoring passerine nests, as well as research on butterfly gardens!

## SQUAM LAKES



Tiffany Grade

A veteran biologist on Squam Lake, Tiffany works year-round as the Squam Lake Project Biologist. She worked tirelessly on the lead bill this winter, and continues her monitoring and research work on Squam as well as her research on causes of adult loon mortality.

## MONADNOCK



Kathy Gunther

Kathy is back for a second season at LPC. Her projects in the off-season included raptor banding work in the Pacific Northwest and North Carolina. She's also volunteered at the coastal migratory bird banding station here in New Hampshire at Appledore Island.

## UMBAGOG



Peter Grebowski

Pete is currently a Wildlife and Conservation student at the University of New Hampshire. His work experiences include performing tick checks and blood sampling of moose at a moose check station, brown and rainbow trout fish stocking, and a Wildlife Biology Teaching Assistant at UNH.

## NORTH COUNTRY



Wyatt Puente

A recent graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Wyatt earned his BS in Wildlife Ecology. He has conducted wildlife surveys in south-east Ohio, and served as a research assistant for a sub-arctic ecology and gyrfalcon study in the Alaskan tundra.

## WINNIPESAUKEE



Melissa Leszek

An internship with the Squam Lakes Association first brought Melissa to the Lakes Region and secured her affection for loons. She will enter an MS program at Plymouth State University in Environmental Science and Policy this fall with an emphasis on lead fishing tackle.

## *Loon Recovery Plan Continues to Support Record Efforts to Aid NH's Loons*

The Loon Preservation Committee has monitored loon populations and productivity throughout New Hampshire since 1975 to assess threats to loons and to measure our success in recovering the state's loon population. LPC's monitoring recorded five consecutive years of declines in the number of loon chicks on New Hampshire's lakes from 2004 to 2008, and significant population declines or mortality incidents on the state's three largest lakes between 2002 and 2008. These declines threatened to undo the hard-won gains that LPC's research, management and educational efforts had achieved and were the impetus for the creation of LPC's Loon Recovery Plan.

The goals of the Loon Recovery Plan are to recover, and then maintain, New Hampshire's loon population. We recognized that in order to realize those goals, we needed to achieve two objectives: 1. Increase the breeding success of our loons, and 2. Increase the survival of adult loons. We also knew that there were proven methods to help us do both of those things, as well as yet-un-discovered ways to improve our ability to protect our loons.

LPC's Loon Recovery Plan includes strategies to accomplish these two objectives in support of the overarching goals of the plan. These strategies include increasing our monitoring, research, management and educational work in support of loons.

With the support of our members and volunteers, we have increased all of these efforts each year of the Plan's implementation. In 2012, we floated a record 79 loon nesting rafts, and loon pairs nesting on those rafts hatched 43 chicks, one of every four chicks

hatched in the state. We protected a record 79 nesting loon pairs with signs and ropelines, and those pairs produced close to half of the total chicks hatched in New Hampshire. LPC volunteers and staff also gave a record 138 exhibits and presentations throughout the state, in addition to many other Loon Recovery Plan initiatives to help our loons.

The result of the intensive efforts mandated and funded by the Loon Recovery Plan is that New Hampshire's loons have met the breeding success rate required to maintain their population in two of the past three years; a significant improvement over the one-in-five record in the years leading up to the creation of the Plan.

The other objective of the Loon Recovery Plan, that of reducing human-caused mortality of adult loons, has proven much harder to meet. In the past three years we have lost 23 adult loons to human activities, an average of eight per year. This is an increase over the average of 7.2 adults lost to human causes over the previous five years. Twenty of those loons were lost to lead fishing tackle alone.

One of the strategies outlined in the Loon Recovery Plan is to increase the awareness of legislators and other decision-makers to challenges facing loons to encourage informed discussion and actions to protect loons and other wildlife. The continuing loon deaths from ingested lead fishing tackle led directly to our renewed efforts to pass legislation increasing the protection of loons from toxic lead tackle. LPC and its partners won a major victory for loons with the passage of lead tackle legislation (Senate Bill 89) in June. While this legislation is a big victory for loons and other

wildlife, the law will not take effect until 2016 (a necessary compromise to assure the passage of the bill); and, as we know from continued deaths of adult loons from lead sinkers that have been banned since 2000, it is one thing to have a law on the books and another to have people comply with that law.

It has taken concerted efforts on many fronts to bring loons back to the levels they are at today; but the job is only half done, and the issues facing loons continue to grow in number and in scope. It will take continued and sustained work to increase loon breeding success and safeguard loons from avoidable human mortality to ensure the future of our loons in New Hampshire. To that end we will be continuing and expanding these efforts that have proven to be so successful for our loons.

To make a contribution to support LPC's Loon Recovery Plan, please call LPC at 603-476-5666 or visit our web page at [www.loon.org](http://www.loon.org) and click on the "donate" tab. Thank you for your continued support of our efforts to help New Hampshire's loons!

~Harry Vogel

*The result of the intensive efforts mandated and funded by the Loon Recovery Plan is that New Hampshire's loons have met the breeding success rate required to maintain their population in two of the past three years; a significant improvement over the one-in-five record in the years leading up to the creation of the Plan.*



## *Squam Lake Loon Initiative (SLLI) Focuses on Contaminants*

**I**t was a busy winter for the Squam Lake Loon Initiative (SLLI)! We sent six loon eggs, six crayfish samples, and one perch sample from Squam Lake and one crayfish sample from a reference lake to a lab for contaminant testing. We just received the results of these tests and are preparing to analyze them as this newsletter went to print. We will have an update for you in the Fall newsletter on what we have learned from these samples.

We are continuing our collaboration with Plymouth State University this field season. We will again be working with Prof. Kerry Yurewicz to study contaminant levels in crayfish. While we focused on crayfish samples

from Squam Lake in 2012, we will be broadening our sampling effort to the Squam watershed in 2013 to research potential sources of the contaminants in the Squam loon eggs. We are also collaborating for the second year with Prof. Jeremiah Duncan's Environmental Chemistry class. This year, Prof. Duncan's class studied the presence of heavy metals in water in and around Squam Lake. We will continue working with Prof. Duncan and Prof. Lisa Doner throughout the summer as they sample and test sediments around Squam Lake. As with the crayfish, water and sediment sampling may help point to a source of the Squam contaminants. In addition, we will analyze the water, sediment,

and crayfish testing results in relationship to results from loon eggs to better understand possible changes in the food web on Squam which may have exposed the loons to increased contamination.

This summer, we are again expanding our outreach activities on Squam in collaboration with the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center (SLNSC). This year, Loon Cruises will be held twice a week, on Monday and Friday afternoons. With this addition, we can help even more people enjoy seeing and learning about loons! Please contact the SLNSC (603-968-7194) to book your trip!

*~Tiffany Grade*

## *Spotlight on a Lake: Bow Lake*

**B**ow Lake, near Strafford in the Seacoast region of New Hampshire, is a heavily-developed 1,160 acre lake, with much boating and fishing activity. The lake supports four active loon territories, which have had a mixed history since LPC began monitoring the lake in 1975. LPC has been working to help the loons cope with the human impacts on the lake, with the help of many volunteers. Among those volunteers was LPC Board member Herb Cilley, who famously protected the loons of Bow Lake and garnered national attention (in Yankee magazine and National Geographic) for his abilities as a "Loon Whisperer." Herb certainly earned his place in the annals of loon lore!

Two of Bow Lake's four territories have benefited from artificial

nesting platforms to help loons cope with loss of nesting habitat due to shoreline development. These territories have contributed to the overall high reproductive success of the Bow Lake loons, which have produced an average of 0.76 chicks surviving per territorial pair (CS/TP) since 1975 versus a statewide average of 0.51 CS/TP over the same period. This excellent productivity record

demonstrates both the ability of careful management to help mitigate some of the impacts of shoreline development and the importance of a lake community that is dedicated to supporting the loons and respectful of their needs while they are nesting and raising their chicks.

*~Tiffany Grade*



Photo Courtesy of Kevin Warren

### *Janette Richardson: A Watchful Eye on Winnisquam's Loons*

At the north end of Winnisquam Lake there is a small forested cove that locals call The Loon Sanctuary, where loons have nested successfully on a raft for decades. The nesting success, and the status of the place as a well-known sanctuary for loons, is largely the work of Janette Richardson, LPC's coordinating volunteer on the lake. Janette and her family have floated the loon raft, ropes, and signs on Winnisquam since the late 1980s, coordinated the loon census event on the lake, provided LPC field biologists access to the water, and watched over the loons and their young each summer. A year or two ago, Janette pointed out her original Loon Sanctuary to me—a roped-off zone she created in her first year as a loon watcher that covered nearly the entire northern tip of the lake—almost 10 acres. She recalled that the ropes weren't out for more than a day or two before boaters and lake users, denied access to a favorite quiet spot on an otherwise busy lake, lodged their protests with LPC. After several conversations with fellow loon watcher Jane



Irwin, LPC director Jeff Fair, and her husband Allan, Janette relented and agreed to move the ropes to close off only the narrow cove where the loons nest. With only the nest cove roped off, Janette established her intended sanctuary in the wider area by enlisting her neighbors and being a patient but constant outreach presence on busy summer days when the loon nest is active or the young loon family is brooding, and boaters make the pilgrimage to this quiet

end of the lake. Under her vigilant protection, not only the nest cove but the whole north end of the lake has become a shared haven for loons and people. Firmly established as a loon sanctuary in the minds of the human users, and by all appearances, how the loons see it, too. Thank you so much, Janette, for your inspiring care for Winnisquam loons and this treasured corner of the lake!

~John Cooley

### *Volunteers Keep Loon Center Running Smoothly*

Summer comes fast and furious at the Loon Center as tourists and summer residents return to the beautiful Lakes Region. Thankfully we have a wonderful core of volunteers that keep things running smoothly during these busy months. Returning this summer are veteran volunteers Marilyn Coppo, Cydonia Hubicki, Winnie McCullough and Sheila Robusto, and year-round veteran Anne McLean. New this year is Hillary Taillefer. A student at Colby Sawyer College, Hillary is volunteering her time for LPC as part of a summer internship. Joining us soon is Molly Kolby, a Zoology student at the University of New Hampshire. Thank you all for sacrificing time out of *your* summer to make *our* summer run smoothly!

[www.loon.org/gift-shop.php](http://www.loon.org/gift-shop.php)

Your on-line resource for "all things loon" and more!



### *Summer Fun for Everyone*

By the time you receive this newsletter we likely just held our **Annual Luncheon & Auction** at Church Landing on June 30th. Hopefully many of you were able to attend and enjoy the wonderful meal and camaraderie.

Next on the schedule is the **Nature Talk Series** beginning July 11th. These wonderful nature-themed talks will run Thursday evenings through August 29th.

July 12th welcomes the **2nd Annual "Yakking for Loons"** kayak-a-thon. This fun-filled event unites paddlers to raise money and awareness for LPC.

The **Annual Loon Census** and **Loon Festival** take place on July 20th; the Census from 8am-9am and the Festival from 10am-2pm.

August brings **The Swim 2013** on August 2nd and the **Carl Johnson Memorial Golf Tournament** on the 19th. The Swim raises funds for the Squam Lake Loon Initiative while the golf tournament brings in revenues for LPC programs. Wrapping up the season is **LPC's Annual Meeting** on August 29th.

We hope you can join us for one or ALL of these events!

### LOON FESTIVAL

July 20th  
at  
The Loon Center

Mo the Clown  
Arts & Crafts  
Dunk tank  
& more!

10-2



### Yakking for Loons!

**Kayak-a-thon to support New Hampshire's Loons**

July 12, 2013; 8:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.

Lee's Mill Landing, Moultonborough NH

\$10 per person, includes lunch

*Raise \$50 in pledges and receive a "Yakking for Loons" long-sleeved t-shirt!*



Curt's  
Caterers, LLC



Visit [www.loon.org](http://www.loon.org) for more information and registration forms,  
or call 603-476-LOON.

# PLEASE SUPPORT THE SQUAM SWIM

August 2, 2013

7:00 a.m.

Once again an intrepid group of swimmers led by Wendy Van de Poll will swim the 7-mile length of Squam Lake, from the Squam Channel Outlet in Holderness to the Sandwich Town Beach, to raise funds for LPC's Squam Lake Loon Initiative (see page 13). You can show your support for Wendy and her team by coming to the Sandwich Town Beach around 11:30 a.m. on the 2nd to welcome them in, or by making a donation at:

<http://www.loon.org/donation-form.php>

and select the Squam Swim/Squam Lake Loon Initiative option. You can also mail your gift to: Loon Preservation Committee, PO Box 604, Moultonborough, NH 03254.

**2013 Swim Team:** Wendy Van de Poll, Rick Van de Poll, Lisa Davy, Rose de Mars, Carol Fink, Susan Hoag and Mark Longley

## Carl R. Johnson Memorial Golf Tournament

August 19, 2013

Ridgewood Country Club, Moultonborough NH

Registration 7:00 a.m. ♦ Shotgun Start 8:00 a.m. ♦ Lunch/Awards 1:00 p.m.  
Scramble Format/Teams of Four



**★★★PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED★★★**

*Proceeds benefit the Loon Preservation Committee  
and its work to protect loons and their habitats in New Hampshire*



## ATTENTION LPC DONORS

Each year the Loon Preservation Committee (LPC) receives support in many different forms to carry out its mission to restore and maintain a healthy population of loons throughout New Hampshire. Often we don't get the opportunity to publically thank everyone for their many forms of support. This summer we plan to acknowledge our donors in an Annual Report. Please note that we do not plan to publicize the specific value of individual gifts to LPC.

We recognize there may be people who would prefer NOT to be thanked publically. If you prefer that your donations remain anonymous, please let our development office know by August 1, 2013 with a note, an e-mail to [development@loon.org](mailto:development@loon.org), or by phone at 603-476-LOON.

*Thank you!*

*"Philanthropy should twist the tale of the future."  
~Paul Ylvisaker*

## LPC Annual Meeting August 29, 2013



The LPC Annual Meeting will take place immediately following the 2013 Loon Season Report by Executive Director/Senior Biologist Harry Vogel (see page 18). The meeting will be held at The Loon Center, 183 Lee's Mill Road, Moultonborough, NH. The LPC Board welcomes your participation.

# Summer 2013 Nature Talk Series

at The Loon Center Lee's Mill Road, Moultonborough, NH

(603) 476-5666 [www.loon.org](http://www.loon.org)

**Thursdays, 7:30 P.M.**      *Admission Free – Donations Appreciated*

## **Thursday, July 11      LOONS – The Call of the Wild**

Loon Preservation Committee Director Harry Vogel and loon expert, author, and award-winning nature photographer John Rockwood team up for a presentation for loon lovers. John's multi-media show follows loons from their arrival in the spring to their departure in the fall. Harry will talk about the work of LPC biologists and how loon watcher volunteers can help to preserve loons.

## **Thursday, July 18      Butterflies that Flutter By**

Can you imagine eating nectar and mud all of your life? Or flying 3,000 miles on wings that weigh 3/1000th of a gram? Come learn about one of the most beautiful groups of pollinators that have captivated naturalists for centuries. Dr. Rick Van de Poll will share slides and stories about these fascinating creatures during the peak of their season in New Hampshire. He has documented most of the 100 or so species in the state and has studied NH's rarest species, the Federally listed Karner Blue Butterfly.

## **Thursday, July 25      Moose on the Loose in New Hampshire**

New Hampshire Fish & Game wildlife biologist Kris Rines will talk about NH's moose population, its life cycle, management and research. Come learn all about the behavior of our largest mammal. It's an evening the entire family will enjoy!

## **Thursday, August 1      The Life of a River Otter**

Intelligent, playful and an efficient predator, the North American river otter captures the imagination of all wildlife watchers. This presentation on the natural history of the river otter will focus on its behavior and social structure, based on five years of tracking otters in the Sandwich/Tamworth area. When the loons don't demand his attention, seasonal LPC biologist Chris Conrod spends his time tracking mammals. His work is used to identify crucial wildlife connectivity areas for land conservation planning.

## **Thursday, August 8      Dragons and Damsels of NH**

Welcome to the fascinating world of the insect order Odonata! You will discover the biology and ecology of dragonflies and damselflies and see some of NH's notable species. Also, you will learn the results of the "NH Dragonfly Survey," a five year volunteer-based project that documented the distribution across the state. As Avian Conservation Biologist for NH Audubon, Pamela Hunt assists the NH Fish and Game Department in implementing bird conservation across the state, including monitoring, research, and species assessment. An active birder for over thirty years Pam studies whip-poor-will biology and coordinated the NH Dragonfly Survey.

## **Thursday, August 15      Bald Eagles – The Story of their Recovery in NH**

Chris Martin, wildlife biologist for NH Audubon, monitors and manages the state's endangered and threatened birds of prey, such as bald eagles. Chris will describe eagle recovery successes and failures in the Lakes Region and beyond, describe key management efforts and partnerships to help eagles, and tell you how you can get involved.

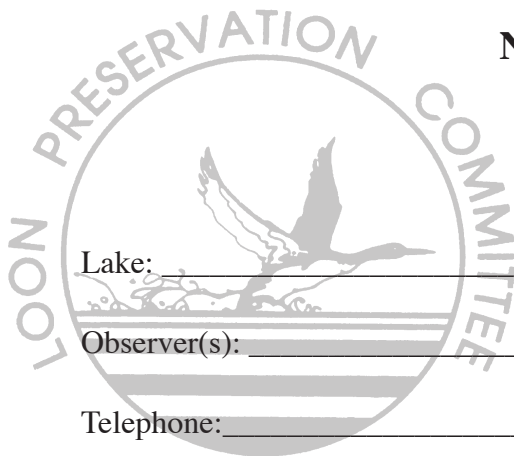
## **Thursday, August 22      New Hampshire's Wild History: 350 years of NH Wildlife**

The Wild History slide presentation takes participants on a virtual journey through New Hampshire's past, focusing on changes in the land and how wildlife populations have responded over time. You'll learn why changes in habitat in our past are behind the decline of many of our rarest species today, and what you can do to help. The presentation is provided by the UNH Cooperative Extension through its COVERTS Project initiative for which Lou and Marilyn Lieto are cooperators.

## **Thursday, August 29      2013 Loon Season Report**

LPC Director Harry Vogel will present trends in New Hampshire's loon population and preliminary statistics on how loons fared in New Hampshire over the last year. Also featured will be a slide show by nature photographer John Rockwood. The Loon Preservation Committee Annual Meeting will follow.





## New Hampshire Loon Census

Saturday, 20 July 2013

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM

Lake: \_\_\_\_\_ Town: \_\_\_\_\_

Observer(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of people in party: \_\_\_\_\_

### Observations

	Time	# Adults	# Chicks	# Immatures	*Location/Direction
Example	8:17	1 AD			Flew in from east
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
TOTALS					

Please note any osprey sightings during this hour: \_\_\_\_\_  
(to assist NHA osprey field surveys)

(1) Record only the FIRST sighting of each loon or group, then be sure to total the number of loons observed on the appropriate line. Note the direction in which the loons move or fly.

(2) If possible, please attach a sketch/map of census area and the location of any loons you observe.

(3) It is CRITICAL that observations continue for the ENTIRE HOUR.

(4) Remember, a report of zero is just as biologically important as a report of 10 loons.

(3) Your sightings from throughout the summer are also valuable. Please comment on loon activity observed at other times on the reverse of this page.

**CENSUS FORMS MUST BE RECEIVED BY JULY 31 TO BE INCLUDED IN THE FALL TALLY.**

Please return this form to your coordinator, LPC staff, or to the LPC office as soon as possible. Thank you!

Loon Preservation Committee, P.O. Box 604, Moultonborough, NH 03254; (603) 476-5666/x5497(fax)  
Email: [volunteers@loon.org](mailto:volunteers@loon.org). On-line at [www.loon.org](http://www.loon.org)

Loon Preservation Committee  
P.O. Box 604  
183 Lee's Mill Road  
Moultonborough, NH 03254

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