Loon Preservation Committee NEWSLETTER

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

FALL 2014

Photo Courtesy of John Rockwood

The Loon Preservation Committee
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The Loon Preservation Committee (LPC) is a non-profit, self-directed and self-funded organization affiliated with 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.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Hard Work Pays Off for Loons

The late spring/early summer of 2014 was, for a change, relatively unremarkable weather-wise in New Hampshire. May and June passed with about average temperatures and rainfall, and many loon chicks were safely hatched before the abnormally heavy nest-flooding rains of July. That short window of relative calm, combined with a frenetic period of activity for Loon Preservation Committee volunteers and staff, stood our loons in good stead this summer.

LPC's Loon Recovery Plan has dramatically ramped up our work in support of loons, and this year was another in which our volunteers and staff set new records in our efforts to protect and encourage loons throughout the state. Close to 90% of loon chicks hatched in New Hampshire this year came from an LPC nesting raft, were protected by "Loon Nesting Area" signs and ropelines, or benefitted in some way from another of LPC's management initiatives (see the article on page 6 on our work with the NH Department of Environmental Services to secure stable water levels for nesting loons as one example). It was especially gratifying to see the success of loons on Lake Winnipesaukee. If loons can survive and thrive on the Big Lake, then they can do so anywhere in New Hampshire given thoughtful and coordinated outreach and management.

At the same time, loons on Squam Lake continued to struggle after the loss of almost half of that lake's loon pairs nine years ago and continuing deaths from lead fishing tackle. Loons on Squam, like loons everywhere, are facing multiple stressors. They are living close to the edge, and even a small increase in those stressors can tip them over. When that happens, we are learning that the effects can be catastrophic and long-lasting. With an animal of limited reproductive potential like loons (hatching only one or two chicks each year, but see page 5 for some enterprising loons that are trying to beat those limitations!), we must be especially cautious and mindful of the effects of our activities.

As gratifying as the results of our hard work was, it was only the third time in the past nine years that the breeding success of our loons topped 48 surviving chicks per 100 loon pairs – the success rate shown by published research to be necessary to maintain our loon population. Increasing extremes of temperatures and precipitation will increasingly challenge this northern species that nests at the water's edge. For a loon population that is only half-recovered, and facing growing numbers of other challenges, that is still a sobering thought. But we have proven that recovery through management is possible, and we have not run out of things we can do to help our loon population survive and thrive. With your support we will continue our work to return loons to New Hampshire's lakes.

Summer 2014 Field Season Summary

Changing of the Guard: Winnipesaukee Leads 2014 Nesting

The state's loon population edged higher in 2014, and nesting success rebounded from a wash-out last year, but the biggest news was the changing fortunes of different regions within the state. Overall, 152 loon chicks were fledged from 289 occupied territories. This was a 1.7% increase in the adult breeding population, and the number of chicks fledged was almost a third better than 2013, but only slightly better than the long-term average. In spite of good nesting weather and intensive nest site management, breeding success this year fell near the middle of the bell curve, ranking only 15th highest out of 40 years of monitoring.

Within the state's nine monitoring regions, it was a dark horse, Winnipesaukee, that outshone the usual favorites in terms of overall breeding success. Winnipesaukee, along with Squam and Umbagog (the other two of the state's three biggest lakes) has consistently lagged in most recent years, with productivity rates often only half that of regions like the Sunapee area, where loon population recovery has been strongest. But this year the tables were turned, and Winnipesaukee led the way, with 0.70 chicks surviving per pair, 32% higher than the state as a whole (and by coincidence, than the Sunapee region). The Seacoast and Lakes Region lakes also did well, followed by Monadnock and Sunapee. We watched the North Country continue to trend below average, and productivity on Umbagog and Squam was less than half of the Winnipesaukee rate.

This year's breeding success on Winnipesaukee brought it from almost dead last to the front of the pack. This success was in part the result of intensive nest site management: the rafts, signs, ropelines, and outreach that mitigate some of the multiple co-occurring stressors impacting loons. And some of the success was probably just good luck: a flash-in-the-pan good year in terms of weather and other random forces. But there also seemed to be an internal dynamic at play, causing loons across the lake to get down to the business of nesting, and nesting successfully, en masse. The Winnipesaukee loon population paired up this year in greater numbers, more of those pairs nested, and nesting pairs were more successful in hatching and fledging chicks. Most of these factors have been trending upward on Winnipesaukee in recent years. Their convergence this year marked a "perfect storm" for loon productivity on the lake.

For other regions besides Winnipesaukee that did not do as well as usual, like lakes in western and northern New Hampshire, a few factors stood out. Statewide, May and June precipitation totals were within a few hundredths of an inch of the 30-year normals. However, rain events in the last week of June and early July caused a string of nest failures, especially in the Monadnock and Sunapee regions. A few more storms in July brought the precipitation total for the breeding season (May-July) well above normal, putting 2014 in the top five rainiest seasons over LPC's monitoring history. This resulted in flooded nests in the Sunapee region and elsewhere.

Even though nests that hatched by late June escaped most of the rain, the high cumulative rain amount for the season may explain not only the nests that were obviously flooded, but also some of the unhatched whole eggs found at other nests. We collected a record number of unhatched eggs (70) and saw a high rate of overincubation, or nests that are

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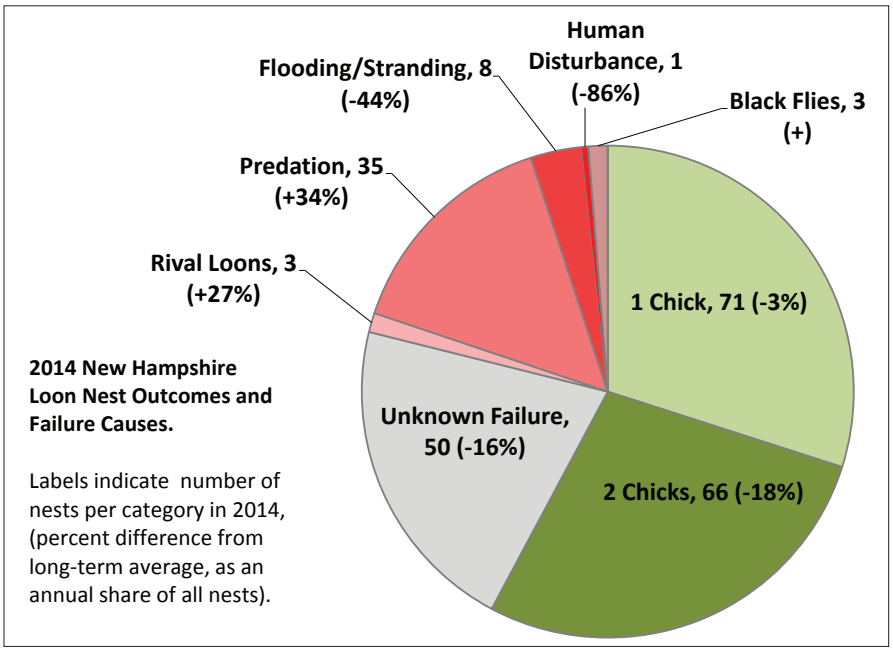
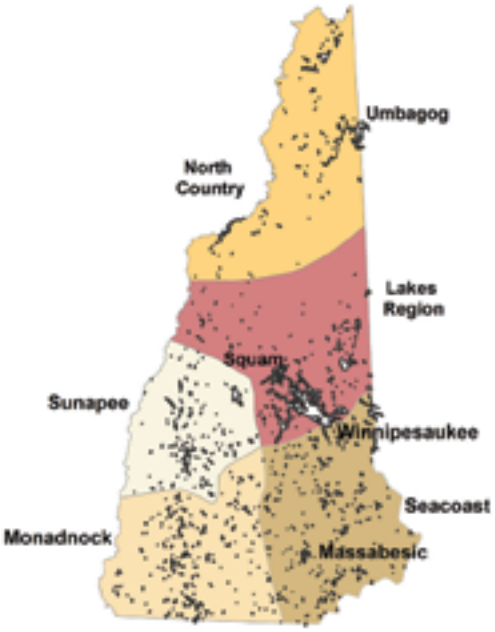


2014 New Hampshire Loon Nest Outcomes and Failure Causes.

Labels indicate number of nests per category in 2014, (percent difference from long-term average, as an annual share of all nests).

Table 1: Results and Highlights for 2014 Common Loon Breeding Season in New Hampshire

Population and Productivity	2014	Pre-Loon Recovery Plan (2005-2009 avg.)	2014 vs. Pre-Loon Recovery Plan
Territorial Loon Pairs	289	231	+25%
Immatures	2	5	-60%
Nesting Pairs	208	155	+34%
Chicks Hatched	201	138	+46%
Chicks Surviving to Mid-August	152	105	+45%
Nest Failures	100	78	+28%
Chicks Surviving/Territorial Pair	0.53	0.46	+15%
Management Activity			
Rafts (including Umbagog NWR)	96	56	+71%
Signs/Ropes	114	61	+87%
Successful Rescue/Releases	2	2.4	-17%



1st Time Nesting Pairs	Adder Pond (Andover), Gloriette Lake (Dixville), Long Pond (Northwood), Meetinghouse Pond (Marlboro), Mirror Lake (Whitefield), Shellcamp Pond (Gilmanton), Cook's Inlet (Madison), Smith Pond (Washington), Sunapee Lake (Sunapee), Tewksbury Pond (Grafton)
1st Successful Nesting Pairs	Adder Pond (Andover), Kezar Lake (Sutton), Mirror Lake (Whitefield), Ossipee Lake (Ossipee), Shellcamp Pond (Gilmanton), Cook's Inlet (Madison), Thorndike Pond (Jaffrey)
1st Time Pairs	Adder Pond (Andover), Gilmore Pond (Jaffrey), Gloriette Lake (Dixville), Meetinghouse Pond (Marlboro); and several lakes with a new additional pair (Franklin Pierce, Mascoma, Silver Lake/Madison, Little Sunapee Lake)

A Record Effort by LPC Field Crew:

In 2014 the Loon Preservation Committee employed seven seasonal field biologists and hosted three volunteer interns. Field staff surveyed 366 lakes and just over 500 occupied or suitable loon territories, conducting over 3,000 individual surveys or visits. If you catch sight of a paddler in a green kayak peering through binoculars, anywhere in New Hampshire, it is likely to be one of this intrepid crew. In 2014, quantum leaps in the levels of management, research, and outreach projects were possible because of their dedication. Most of the best moments, and many of the heroic efforts, go unrecorded. Look for selections from their field notes throughout this issue for a sense of their outstanding work.

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tended by the loons beyond the normal four-week incubation period. Seven nesting pairs incubated their eggs for at least three weeks beyond the expected hatch date. These nests and inviable eggs were not clearly flooded but may have become inviable during cold, rainy weather.

Lower nesting success and a greater number of inviable eggs may also have been caused by an increased number of black flies in some locations this year. Black flies drove loons off the nest repeatedly at various nest sites and caused at least three known nest failures. This could also explain the drop we saw in the number of known nest attempts on North Country lakes, where early nest failures caused by black flies might have been overlooked on surveys later in the season. In Wisconsin, black flies caused catastrophic failure for breeding loon populations this year—as many as 70% of nesting loon pairs abandoned their first attempts. Fortunately, a bad black fly year for our New Hampshire loons comes nowhere close to that level of pestilence.

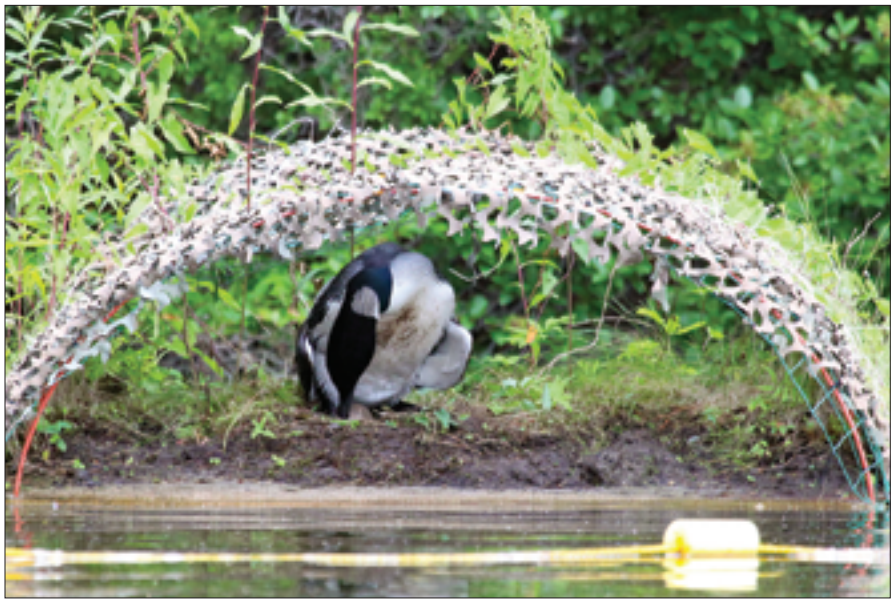

Photo Courtesy of David Blohm, blohmphoto.com

For the first time in LPC's monitoring history, loons nested on Lake Sunapee. Unfortunately, two successive nesting attempts failed, but much hope remains for next year.

A Milestone on Sunapee

For the first time since monitoring began in 1975, loons were documented nesting on Lake Sunapee. And they nested twice—first on a natural island and then on a nearby nest raft placed in 2011. Unfortunately, neither attempt was successful. In fact, the pair tended the second nest attempt for almost a month and a half after the eggs should have hatched—a total of 72 days. Three whole eggs were collected from the two attempts. The vigorous community of loon volunteers on Sunapee has been waiting for nesting to take place for years and watched over this year's attempts with a close eye. There is hope that an obviously determined pair of loons will return and nest successfully next season.

Other Notable Happenings

Not just once, but on two lakes this year observers documented broods of three loon chicks. On both Bow Lake and Silver Lake in Madison, a displaced chick was adopted by a neighboring loon pair with its own two-chick brood. On Silver Lake, the adopted chick was about a week older than its new siblings. On Bow Lake the new chick was a few days younger, but both broods were only about a week old. Although three-chick broods are extremely rare in loons, volunteers on Bow Lake recall another case in the 1990s.

FIELD NOTES:

Janelle Ostroski; Duncan Pond, Ossipee; June 7.

Went over this place with a fine-toothed comb. Scoured shoreline of pond and islands. Only saw one loon today… Got a clear look at each leg multiple times while the loon preened, definitely not banded. Went around entire perimeter…if they are nesting here under my nose, I'll be darned. Is there an actual pair here or not? Perhaps one was responsible for the ruckus over at White Pond. Will be talking more to my vols...stay tuned.

MANAGEMENT

With nesting rates peaking on Winnipesaukee and other busy lakes, warning signs were placed at 113 territories this year, an increase of 30 from 2013. Because multiple buoys and signs are used at some sites, a total of over 175 floating signs were deployed, along with thousands of yards of floatlines. This is a new level of management—an almost 90% increase over the number of ropes and signs in use before the recent implementation of LPC's Loon Recovery Plan. The Loon Recovery Plan funded the construction

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and use of floating signs and the use this year of several heavy-duty buoy markers.

LPC staff and volunteers also floated a record number of nest rafts in 2014. Including nine rafts floated on Lake Umbagog by National Wildlife Refuge staff, 96 rafts were placed around the state. This total, funded by the Loon Recovery Plan, is more than double the number of loon nest rafts deployed ten years ago. In 2014, volunteers and staff constructed 11 new rafts, placed five of those at new locations (one was used for nesting), and replaced rafts at three territories. Eight other rafts were fitted with new or replaced covers.

This year over half of all chicks hatched in New Hampshire came from a nest site protected by ropelines and/or signs, and 60% of all chicks hatched came from a site with a sign or raft. Including water level outreach work (see box at right), 89% of all chicks hatched in the state came from a managed loon territory.

The Loon Preservation Committee is deeply grateful to Marjorie Buckley for her leadership role in supporting the Loon Recovery Plan (LRP), the successes of which are outlined throughout the field section of this LPC Newsletter. Please consider joining Marjorie and our other LRP donors in support of the monitoring, research, management and outreach activities critical to recovering New Hampshire's loon population. To learn more about the Loon Recovery Plan, please contact Harry Vogel (Senior Biologist/Executive Director) at The Loon Center, 603-476-5666 / hvogel@loon.org.

Stable Water Levels Protect Nesting Loons

For a fourth year, New Hampshire's nesting loons were protected from fluctuating water levels through collaborative outreach by the Loon Preservation Committee and the state Department of Environmental Services Dam Bureau. Many dam operators are unaware of the presence of loons on the waterbodies they manage. Our outreach explains the vulnerability to flooding and stranding of loon nests at the water's edge and provides specific guidelines to protect these nests. We contacted over 90 dam owners with this information, covering over 160 lakes and ponds. The contact database also allowed case-by-case communications on lakes where nests were especially vulnerable or when local weather events threatened specific nest sites. We are confident that the outreach has ensured successful nesting for a number of nest sites in the last two seasons and that it has fostered coordinated management that will prevent other nest failures in the long term. DES Dam Bureau's advice and cooperation has made this outreach possible. We are especially grateful for the time and vision of Chief Engineer James Gallagher, engineers Dan Mattaini and Steve Doyon, and the operations staff. The energy and enthusiasm of LPC volunteer Dana Duxbury-Fox was pivotal in seeing the project through, from planning, to editing outreach materials, to stuffing envelopes and ensuring follow-through. -John H. Cooley

LPC Senior Biologist, John Cooley (left), and LPC Volunteer, Dana Duxbury-Fox (4th from left), express LPC's gratitude to DES Dam Bureau engineers Dan Mattaini, Steve Doyon and James Gallagher, with a framed loon photograph by John Rockwood.

RECOVERIES

To date in 2014, Loon Preservation Committee volunteers and staff have collected thirteen adult loons, one immature (1-2 years old), and twelve loon chicks. The 13 adult mortalities represent over 40% of all the adult mortalities we would expect to occur in the population during the breeding season. In addition to the two gunshot mortalities profiled in our Summer Newletter, other causes revealed in preliminary necropsy data include lead fishing tackle, fishing line entanglement, and attacks by rival loons. We are sorry to report that among the adult mortalities was the male loon from Hatch Pond in Eaton, rescued as the ice closed in last December and released on the coast of Maine. He returned in

the spring but was displaced from his breeding territory and by August had begun to beach himself on nearby Crystal Lake. LPC staff rescued him on August 6th, but efforts by the same wildlife rehabilitators in Maine who had helped him a year before were unsuccessful this time. The results of a post-mortem examination, which may shed more light on what caused his stranding at ice-in last fall and beaching this summer, are pending. On Nubanusit Lake in Nelson, an adult loon was found dead near its nest with injuries that a necropsy identified as consistent with a bird of prey. And on Waukeena Lake, residents watched an eagle predation of a six-week old loon chick, confirming that eagles are an isolated but real cause of mortality in New Hampshire's loon population. For juvenile loons (chicks), most mortalities were assigned to sibling rivalry, where a smaller, second chick was unable to survive. However, two loon chick mortalities were attributed to boat strikes, both on Winnipesaukee.

RESCUES

LPC field staff and volunteers responded to numerous reports and calls about injured or distressed loons. Dozens of these reports lead to attempted rescues, and in fifteen cases loons were recovered alive and transferred to a wildlife rehabilitator or veterinary care. These missions face long odds: 1 in 4 rescued adult loons survived to be released, and about half of the chicks. In addition to the mortality in Eaton described above, adult loons recovered alive from Winnipesaukee and Lake Sunapee did not survive, and two attempts to rescue and rehabilitate excluded loon chicks on Bow Lake were ultimately unsuccessful. We also collected a stranded loon from the same gravel pit in Farmington where a loon was rescued in 2009; this loon did not survive. The successful rescues are profiled below.

FIELD NOTES:
Rachael Krajewski; Sweats Meadow, Umbagog; June 11.
Territorial pair back in the same general area as their trial nest. Hanging close to the marsh line. It is hard to get back there now that the water level has dropped and the lillies are popping up. ...Bald Eagle bouncing on a branch of a tall tree until it broke. Eagle and branch free fell for about 10 feet until the eagle spread its wings and flew off with the branch.

July 3rd, Pine River Pond On July 3rd, Staff Biologist Chris Conrod came to the aid of two loon chicks on Pine River Pond who were barred from leaving the nest by an erosion control board on the nest island shoreline. Volunteers on the lake noticed that the chicks were unable to leave the nest the day before, but a severe storm prevented Chris from going out on the lake. The next morning, in spite of the presence of a defensive parent loon on the nest, Chris managed to safely retrieve both chicks from the island and place them in the water, near the adult loon. Thanks to David Lee and other Pine River Pond volunteers for sounding the alarm and for watching over the chicks once they were out on the lake.

July 7th, Waukewan Lake In another chick stranding, volunteers on Waukewan were alarmed to see that the second chick hatched on the nest raft in Jenness Cove got stuck in the raft cover as it tried to leave the nest to join the other chick and parent loons on the water. Coordinated by LPC, quick intervention by the volunteer freed the chick from the mesh cover and reunited it with its family. Both chicks were surviving as of mid-August.

July 20th, Lakes Region Webcam Nest Site On Saturday, July 19th, the audience of loon-watchers following LPC's live loon cam nest, and LPC staff, were startled to notice fishing line trailing from the bill of the nesting loon on the camera footage. A flurry of Facebook posts from as far away as Kansas and Canada sounded the alarm late Saturday evening. When another check of the video stream at dawn on Sunday showed that the line was still there, LPC field staff loaded up canoe and capture gear and hurried out to the site. They carefully netted the loon from the nest, covered the eggs, and quickly untangled the line, which was wrapped around both legs and bill but had not been ingested. A blood test showed that the loon had only background levels of lead, and he was released right away at the nest site. He preened in the cove near the nest for about twenty minutes. Just as it seemed that the untended eggs might get too cold, the mate appeared and took her place on the nest. Two days later, webcam viewers tuned in to find that the eggs were beginning to hatch. At last report in late September, both chicks were thriving.

August 23rd, Ossipee Lake Staff Biologist Chris Conrod collected a juvenile loon from the northwest shoreline of Ossipee Lake, where it had retreated under a homeowner's dock. This was one of two chicks hatched on Ossipee, apparently forced into

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FIELD NOTES:
Isabel Brintnall; Walker Pond, Boscawen; June 27.
Observed adult with chick in water. No loon on nest. Adult/chick swam off as I approached nest. Collected egg fragments and sac - got nest coordinates. Paddled down channel to pond - huge black bear crossed channel to get to other side - 20' in front of me! Also saw muskrat, deer, couple of beaver (whacked their tails). Eventually got to pond - loon trio out in middle - tremolos, probably 'cuz 2 kayaks approaching them. Trio headed towards west shore. Confirmed only one chick.

hiding by a rival adult loon intruding on the territory. The chick was rehabilitated and released on a lake in Maine in mid-September.

August 31, Bow Lake In late August, volunteers from Bow Lake reported that one of the Caswell Cove chicks appeared to be stuck to the nest raft by a length of fishing line. The details of this improbable report were convincing, and LPC and NH Fish and Game staff responded quickly, although not before the chick had broken free from the snag and left the cove. As dark fell and a steady rain set in, a small rescue party in a borrowed boat searched the nearby shoreline and lake with a spotlight. Fortunately, this is the same timing and approach involved in capture work with healthy loons—a familiar routine—and the loons were located toward the middle of the lake. The chick was captured, and several yards of line and non-lead split shot sinkers were untangled from it. On follow-up visits and checks by volunteers, the chick was diving, and the adult loons were foraging for it and providing prey items—all was well. Thanks to NH Fish and Game Conservation Officer Mike Matsen and Bow Lake loon-watchers Cheryl Mrozienski and Jeannie Ferguson for their efforts with this rescue. Our September 2014 LPC e-newsletter account of this rescue failedto mention that Officer Matsen was no stranger to loon banding—having met (or apprehended?) the same capture crew a year before on nearby Northwood Lake, as he responded to an alarmed call from the public about spotlights and loons, at four in the morning. He was in much better spirits this time out!

September 2nd, Governor's Island, Winnipesaukee A badly-tangled and emaciated loon was captured with the help of Gilford resident Bonnie Deutsch and local volunteers who had a boat available nearby. The rescue craft proved to be a daycruiser with a foredeck five or six vertical feet off the water, so that capturing the loon in the shallows required a literal leap of faith off the bow—landing in knee-deep water with loon, net, and biologist in a tangled but intact heap. Immediate care at Interlakes Animal Hospital showed that the loon had ingested a large fish hook but no metal sinkers or jigs. The line around the bill and tongue was removed, and the loon was transferred to wildlife rehabilitators in Maine and released in mid-September on Penobscot Bay.

RESEARCH

Banding and Re-sight Highlights

This year LPC biologists conducted capture work on 20 nights on 14 lakes to sample and band healthy loons on their breeding territories. Sixteen adult loons and one juvenile were banded, and 10 previously banded loons were re-captured. Data on contaminant exposure, health parameters, and genetics obtained from this capture work supports the research of LPC and collaborators, as well as the ongoing demographic studies enabled by tracking individual banded loons. The competence and enthusiasm of LPC field staff and Tufts veterinary intern Tory Walmsley, and the training and support of BioDiversity Research Institute and Tufts University allowed an increase in successful capture work this year.

Work to band and follow individual loons has been ongoing in

A loon decoy (circled in red), expertly crafted by Tufts veterinary intern, Tory Walmsley, successfully lures a pair of loons. The decoy will eventually be used in day-time capture for banding and rescuing.

New Hampshire since the early 1990s. Of the over 300 loons that have been banded in that period, we resighted almost 100 returning in 2014. Two decades of observation have made us familiar with the cast of individual loons still surviving from the early cohorts—their territories, breeding successes, and even their behavioral quirks. We never know how old an adult loon is when it is initially banded as an adult, but based on the minimum age that the original band year establishes, some New Hampshire loons have remarkably long life-spans. For example, in the cohort of loons banded in the late 1990s and early 2000s, we continue to re-sight almost thirty adults. These are loons with a known minimum age between 15 and 20 years (10-15 years since banding, and 6 years or more to first breed) and who could be much older. One loon resighted on Lake Umbagog this year, for example, was banded as an adult in 1993, and is probably at least 27 years old. For biologists and loonwatchers who watch, handle, and help loons in New Hampshire, it is especially thrilling to be certain from the band returns that these individuals have been breeding, migrating, and surviving the rigors of the wild for multiple decades.

Mercury and Cyanotoxins

In conjunction with loon capture work this summer, LPC took part in a pilot project led by University of New Hampshire's Dr. James Haney that will analyze the accumulation of mercury and cyanotoxins in the aquatic food web. Cyanotoxins are produced by blue-green algae and are a human health concern in New Hampshire when algal blooms lead to elevated concentrations in lake water, usually in late summer and early fall. Cyanotoxins, mercury, and other contaminants all begin to build up or biomagnify in the lake ecosystem with the plankton and other organisms at the base of the food web. To measure these baseline concentrations, LPC staff collected zooplankton and phytoplankton samples on Winnipesaukee and Massabesic Lakes in July and August. Plankton analysis will complement the analysis of loon blood samples from these same sites, since loons reflect contaminant concentrations at the very top of the food web.

Nest Studies

For a third year, the LPC Loon Recovery Plan funded game cameras to document incubation behavior and nest failure causes, including predator presence, at loon nests. Cameras were placed at seven Lakes Region and Winnipesaukee nest sites, and at several Squam Lake nests (see article, page 16). We also continued to track nest and nest site temperatures with iButton temperature loggers. Ten active nests and four other nest sites were equipped with these devices. When paired with monitoring observations from LPC staff and volunteers, game cameras and nest temperature loggers provide the basis for understanding and addressing the multiple stressors, including climate change, that impact nesting loons. Game cameras were made possible through Loon Recovery Plan funding and generous loans of personal camera equipment from US Fish and Wildlife colleague Andrew Major and LPC Staff Biologist Chris Conrod.

LPC Senior Biologist, John Cooley, collecting plankton samples.

With Loon Recovery Plan funding, 2014 outreach and nest research also included a live web camera, streaming video of an active nest to the Internet. Footage of the successful hatch in late July attracted an enthusiastic following. Stay tuned for the 2015 edition.

~John H. Cooley & LPC Staff

FIELD NOTES:

Rachael Krajewski; Magalloway River, Umbagog; July 12.

Bird off of the nest as I came around the corner [in the usual boating channel]. I quickly turned back and landed the boat along the peninsula that borders the back cove. Went to the area I found last time to see into the nest. Could not actually see into the nest. Climbed a tree - could only see one egg and not the entire nest bowl. Went around to a new point, climbed another tree - could only see one egg. Bird returned to nest after about 25 minutes...

Loon Preservation Committee Grassroots Going Strong

A thriving network of over 900 active field volunteers, including census participants, contributed more than 5,800 hours for the Loon Preservation Committee field program in 2014. This gave an incredible depth to our loon monitoring and provided for on-the-spot nest site management throughout the state. It also meant that on most loon lakes there was at least one informed and vigilant spokesperson to spread the word about loons and their needs. We were excited this year to see the number of lakes with organized volunteer groups continue to grow and existing groups strengthen. With the impossible task of recognizing individually the countless good deeds and skills among LPC volunteers, we provide a few representative examples that illustrate the extent of the grassroots network.

In late May, we were surprised to get an odd call from the Madison Police about a snowmobile abandoned in the spring as the ice got thin, perched half out of water, right on top of the loon nest site at Pea Porridge Pond. Within the week, our field staff discovered that the snowmobile was already gone—that local loon volunteer (and LPC's 2003 Squam Lake field biologist) Nordel Gagnon, with the help of the town police officer, had taken matters—and the snowmobile—into his own hands. And within another week, the loons were nesting on the cleaned-up spot. We were equally pleased to hear, at a Conway Lake Association meeting in August, that volunteers there had successfully coordinated with town police to strictly enforce a local ban on fireworks at the north end of the lake, in the interest of protecting a loon nest site due to hatch on the 5th of July. The ordinance held through the holiday weekend, and the nest hatched (the first success at this territory since the late 1990s!). Another unexpected loon project came to our attention while stopping at Lovell Lake in mid-August to pick up an abandoned egg. We were surprised to leave with not just the egg but a copy of The Adventures of Louie the Little Loon of Lovell Lake—a children's book that was new to us, using author Buck Howe's photos from the successful nest and brooding on the lake in 2009 (and available on-line as an eBook). Lastly, in early July we were delighted to attend what was, to our knowledge, the first lead-free fishing derby in New Hampshire, conceived of and organized by 8th-grader Ryan Buchanan and held at Chocorua Lake (see page 17). From snowmobile cleanup to leading the way with a lead-free fishing derby, these various projects demonstrate that even beyond our concerted efforts at the Loon Preservation Committee, people who care about loons are taking the ball (or snowmobile) and running with it, keeping grassroots loon preservation alive and well.

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From an email in mid-July from Black Cove on Lake Winnipesaukee:

We had an incident on Sunday. The birds were in their little nest cove but started getting noisy. I walked over and as I got a first glimpse at the nest (they couldn't see me), I saw one bird on it. The other was out of view but was really alarm calling. Then the one on the nest jumped off and both of the birds were running around screaming... sort of running atop the water with their chests sticking out. As I ran up closer, I expected to find an [intruding loon] in there being attacked, but instead there was a young buck swimming in the middle of the cove. He was scared to death and they were going under water and attacking him. In his panic, he even tried unsuccessfully to climb up on the nest. Then he fell off and managed to bound ashore. I noticed the chick bobbing around in the middle of all the commotion (maybe 6-12 hours old at that point). The loons kept squawking for a good half hour. I can't imagine the deer was in the water to go after the chick (I've heard weird stories about deer predating from time to time), but I have never seen a deer swim across there before so I'm really baffled about what he might have been doing. And I suspect the chick was on the nest with the mother until all this started. After that, they moved out of the nest cove and hung out in the middle of the main cove until after dark…. They were out there Monday morning before we left. -Frank Marino

FIELD NOTES:

Janelle Ostroski; Mountain Pond, Sanbornton; July 24.

(45 min bushwack on logging roads) From eastern shore, scanned lake with bins. Swam out to island and circled it, half wading, taking a look at the other side of lake I could not see from the other shore. There are several marshy spots along the shore where a pair could tuck away a nest. The island shoreline however is very eroded and did not have any good nesting habitat. If the water was a foot higher, there may be somewhat more potential on the island. Beautiful lake. Could definitely see loons coming here, but didn't see any today.

Loon Preservation Committee
ANNUAL REPORT 2014

APRIL 1, 2013 - MARCH 31, 2014

The Loon Preservation Committee exists to restore and maintain a healthy population of loons throughout New Hampshire; to monitor the health and productivity of loon populations as sentinels of environmental quality; and to promote a greater understanding of loons and the natural world.

Our fiscal year which ended on March 31 (FY2014) was a very good year for the Loon Preservation Committee (LPC) from an institutional perspective; although not an outstanding year for loons in New Hampshire as our Director's Message will attest. Overall in FY2014, LPC's revenue increased 28% while expenses increased just 16%. As can be seen in the accompanying tabulations, the overall increase in net assets amounts to $127,439 which has largely been applied to work which will be completed in FY2015. The largest dollar increase was in contributions, most of which are dedicated to specific projects and programs.

I would personally like to thank all of our donors and those attending our many events for your support of the mission of LPC. Without all of you, and our dedicated staff and volunteers, we would not be able to sustain our work to protect and recover loons in New Hampshire.

As I complete my first year as Chair of LPC I can tell you, without a doubt, I have come to a new appreciation of all the work our staff and trustees undertake to support the loon population here in New Hampshire. In addition to working hard throughout the year, the staff have increased the amount of collaboration with other organizations including the Biodiversity Research Institute, Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University, Plymouth State University and the University of New Hampshire. These collaborations have allowed us to undertake and validate a great deal more work than would otherwise have been possible.

In closing, I would like to thank our trustees, staff, donors, and our many collaborators for their support of the Loon Preservation Committee as we move into our 40th year of working for the loons of New Hampshire.

KITTIE WILSON

Thank you,

Ron Baker

Ron Baker
Board Chair

Executive Director's Message:

Loon Preservation Committee (LPC) volunteers and staff have monitored loons throughout New Hampshire since 1975 to assess threats to loons and to measure our success in recovering the state's threatened loon population. In 2013, the fourth year of the Loon Recovery Plan's implementation, LPC added a 39th year of data to what was already the most comprehensive and longest-running database of loon populations and productivity anywhere in the world. Staff and volunteers floated a record 83 loon nesting rafts, and loons nesting on these rafts produced 43 chicks – one of every five chicks hatched in the state. LPC floated "Loon Nesting Area" signs at a record 89 loon territories, and loons protected by these measures produced close to half of the total chicks hatched in New Hampshire.

Even these increased efforts did not ensure a good year for loons, as the state and its wildlife were challenged by the 10th wettest June and 10th hottest July in 145 years of records. The 284 pairs of loons on New Hampshire's lakes hatched 157 chicks in 2013; 119 of these were surviving as of mid-August and presumed to have fledged from their natal lakes. This represents a breeding success of 42 surviving chicks per 100 loon pairs – an improvement over pre-Loon Recovery Plan levels, but below the rate needed to maintain and recover New Hampshire's loon population. Increasingly severe storm events and climbing temperatures will continue to challenge these shoreline nesting birds that thrive in cool and stable climates.

LPC staff recovered 19 dead adult loons in FY2014. Ten of those mortalities were caused by human activities, and ingested lead fishing jigs were a confirmed cause of death of five loons. LPC's data and focused outreach to legislators resulted in a major victory for loons with the passage of legislation (Senate Bill 89) to increase the sizes of lead-headed jigs restricted for use and sale in New Hampshire. A necessary compromise to ensure passage of the bill was a delay in implementation of the law until June of 2016, and LPC worked to encourage early voluntary adoption of the new jig standard through a range of new outreach and education initiatives.

The support of LPC's volunteers, members and friends allowed us to significantly expand our work in response to the increasing challenges facing loons in FY2014. With your continued support, I am confident that we can achieve our ultimate goal – a recovered and viable loon population in New Hampshire.

Harry Vogel, Senior Biologist/Executive Director

Photo courtesy of Debra Brown

Governor Maggie Hassan signs Senate Bill 89 at The Loon Center on August 27, 2013.

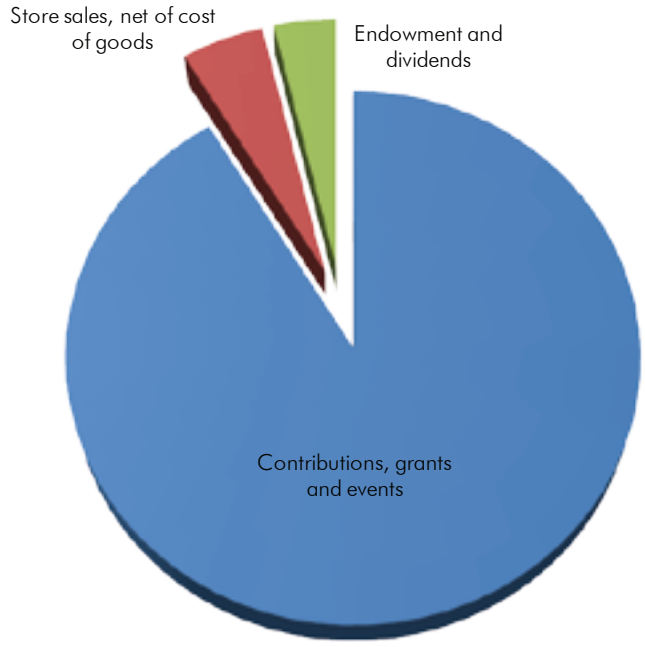
Fiscal Year 2014 Financial Summary:

Loon Preservation Committee

Summary of Activities and Changes in Net Assets
For the year ending March 31, 2014

Revenue:		
Contributions, grants and events	$678,699	91%
Store sales, net of cost of goods	$36,439	5%
Endowment and dividends	$27,701	4%
Total Revenue	**$742,839**	**100%**
Expenses:		
Program expenses	$486,187	79%
Administrative	$80,002	13%
Fundraising	$49,211	8%
Total Expenses	**$615,400**	**100%**
Increase in Net Assets:	**$127,439**	

REVENUE



EXPENSES

LPC's financial records are audited by J. Harding & Company, PLLC, Certified Public Accountants of Plymouth, NH. Copies of the IRS 990 tax return are available at The Loon Center upon request.

KITTIE WILSON

LPC At Work

LIBBY CORBIN

LPC volunteers, Norm Lesser and Harold Quinton, help LPC Senior Biologist, John Cooley (right), assemble loon nesting rafts. Thirty-three chicks were hatched from rafts in 2013.

LPC staff and volunteers floated a record 92 nesting rafts, and loon pairs nesting on those rafts hatched 33 chicks – 21% of the chicks hatched in the state.

JOHN ROCKWOOD

LOON PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

forty years of working to preserve loons and their habitats in New Hampshire.

LPC volunteer Sue Hicks helps place a Loon Nesting Sanctuary sign on Little Squam Lake. Floating signs protect loons from disturbance and nest abandonment.

Lakes Region Biologist, Janelle Ostroski, places a temperature data logger in a nest on Ossipee Lake. Data loggers aid LPC in understanding the effects of increasing temperatures on nesting loons.

Lake Winnipesaukee Biologist, Melissa Leszek, sets up a motion-activated nest camera on Winnipesaukee. State-of-the-art cameras allow us to gather critical data on causes of nest failures.

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Annual Volunteer Loon Census

On Saturday, July 19th, 626 participants turned out for the state-wide, one-hour census, covering 133 of LPC's 250 active loon lakes. This was the highest number of participants in recent years, 30 more than in 2013. Observers noted 549 adult loons, 91 chicks, and 12 immatures (see table below for a comparison with 2013). Five new lakes were included in this year's coverage, and coordinated counts were organized on 14 of the state's largest lakes. We were delighted to hear of a 4th-generation participant on Swain's Lake in Barrington—a long-standing family tradition there—and to celebrate Polly Croteau's 34th year of participation on Silver Lake in Harrisville.

The census is a well-established tradition for many participants and continues to be a good entry point for new volunteers, as well as a useful check on loon activity at the covered lakes. Observations from the census are incorporated into LPC's season-long monitoring effort.

Thank you to all observers and coordinators! Please save the date for next year's event: Saturday, July 18th, from 8-9 a.m.

~John H. Cooley

2014 New Hampshire Volunteer Loon Census Results:

Year	2013	2014
Lakes Covered	138	133
Observers	596	626
Adult Loons	520	549
Loon Chicks	69	91
Immature*	6	12

*1-2 yrs. old

2014 Fall Newsletter Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Squam Boat Livery, NH Marine Patrol, NH Fish and Game dispatch and conservation officers, NH Audubon staff, US Fish and Wildlife Service-New England Field Office staff, and local marinas and vendors who supported a safe and effective summer on the lakes.

For their kind care of injured loons we wish to thank wildlife rehabilitators Kappy Sprenger, Maria Colby (Wings of Dawn), Marc and Diane Payne (Avian Haven), and Catherine Greenleaf (St. Francis Wild Bird Hospital). We are truly grateful for veterinary services from Interlakes Animal Hospital, Meadowbrook Animal Hospital, Concord Area Veterinary Emergency Services (CAVES), and the Weare Animal Hospital.

We were lucky to rely on the generous hospitality of several households for our field staff, including the Glover family in Milan (NH), Claire Emmond, the Grafton Pond Association, and the Von Mertens in southwestern NH.

We appreciated technical support and advice on our Loon Cam project from HD Relay, Time Warner Cable, 123 Lock and Key, Lee Attix and Larry Backlund, and Tamworth Wireless. The permission and moral support of the Smith family and an anonymous landowner at the camera sites was very much appreciated.

LPC's 2014 field work and Loon Recovery Plan initiatives received key advice, loon health and mortality analyses from colleague Dr. Mark Pokras of Tufts University, intern Tory Walmsley, and other veterinary students. We were lucky to have the enthusiasm and energy of Antioch University intern Isabel Brintnall and UNH intern Timothy Roy. We also thank collaborating biologists at BioDiversity Research Institute for their support.

We thank the 2014 seasonal LPC field staff: Staff Biologist Chris Conrod, Matthew Bartolotti, Tim Demers, Meg Harrington, Gary Janco, Rachael Krajewski, Melissa Leszek and Janelle Ostroski.

FIELD NOTES:

Matthew Bartolotti; Morgan Pond, Springfield; August 1.

Hiked a kayak up (30-40 minutes one way) with the help of mi madre (took the trail off Webster Pass). I paddled out from the rock and scanned the islands to the S, found nothing, then paddled to the islands at the N, and again found nothing. I did see 1 adult w/ the chick diving together in the middle of the pond the whole time I searched. They made their way S as time went by. I did not see signs of the 2nd adult. Where'd he/she go? I kept paddling farther E and what I thought was shore from the rock where I usually surveyed from shore turned out to be more pond! I paddled back into this far E section, and found a clump of grasses with…yes! The nest! The membrane of the egg shell was moldy. It looked like there were only fragments from one egg. I could not find a second. I wonder if this nest would be visible from the trail on the other side of the pond—you can hike up from the town of Springfield I believe, but it's a 3-mile hike up, so it would take the better part of the day to do.

SLLI Update: Zeroing in on Loon Nests and Contaminants

9:30 AM, July 31, 2014: It was a cloudy and mirror perfect morning, but the calm waters belied my jittery nerves as I motored towards the site of the last active nest site on Squam of the year. It was the expected hatch date for the pair, and I had been anxiously watching the nest for the last several days, hoping for at least one more chick to add to Squam's meager total for the year. This pair had had a tough summer. They were forced to abandon their first nesting attempt due to black flies. Then two other loons nearly took over their territory, but the determined pair finally succeeded in regaining control. They then settled in for a late nesting attempt that had them incubating through the busy summer season. Now, it was time to learn if all their efforts paid off.

A Squam Lake loon successfully defends its nest against a nocturnal predator that is just off camera.

Harry Vogel, LPC's Senior Biologist and Executive Director, was with me for some final preparations before the Squam Swim (see article on page 23). We spotted two adult loons just out from the nesting area as we approached. "Can you see anything?" I asked nervously as Harry looked through his binoculars. "I think there might be a chick on the back!" Harry said. I scrambled to grab my binoculars, hardly daring to hope it was true. As I raised my binoculars, my fears turned to elation as I saw what, for me, is the most beautiful sight on Squam—a newly hatched loon chick sleeping peacefully on the back of its parent.

This chick was one of four hatched on Squam Lake this past summer and one of three that survived. While this is an improvement over last year, when only two chicks hatched and one survived, it is still well below our pre-2005 (i.e., pre-decline) average of 10 chicks hatched and 6.6 surviving. Squam continued to suffer low rates of nest initiation and chicks hatching—much of it due to ongoing territorial fighting and the social chaos that has resulted from the high rates of adult mortality on Squam over the past decade. The one reproductive parameter that improved this year was chicks surviving/chicks hatched, which was above the long-term, pre-decline average for this rate. A special "Thank you" to our Chick Watch volunteers who helped watch over the families this summer!

This summer we got a closer look into the lives of Squam's nesting loons. LPC placed three cameras at loon nests this spring to help us understand disturbances to nesting loons and causes of high nest failure rates on Squam. We deployed cameras prior to nesting so as not to disturb the loons once nests were initiated. Loon pairs nested at two of the sites, and both sites hatched chicks. Our cameras did capture a loon vigorously defending its nest against a predator, likely a mammal, although it never appeared in the picture (see photograph above). Prior to nest initiation, the same camera spotted several visits by raccoons and coyotes. Thanks to LPC Staff Biologist Chris Conrod for help identifying the small glimpses of mammals that appeared on our pictures.

Not only has LPC focused on nest disturbances and potential failures this past summer, we have also continued to zero in on the sources of contaminants found in Squam loon eggs. Evidence from loon territorial occupancy and productivity, hydrology, and patterns of contamination suggested that contaminants may have come from a point source in the northeastern sector of the lake. In collaboration with Dr. Kerry Yurewicz and her students from Plymouth State University, LPC sampled crayfish from tributaries flowing into this part of the lake. Testing the crayfish for contaminants identified one tributary flowing into Squaw Cove as much higher than background for flame retardants (PBDEs) and a tributary flowing into Sandwich Bay as much higher than back-

ground for PCBs and organochlorine pesticides (such as DDT and chlordane). LPC is continuing to investigate these tributaries in an effort to identify the sources of contaminants in the Squam ecosystem. As LPC works to identify and mitigate stressors to loons on Squam, we are working to restore a healthy population of loons to the lake and gaining critical information about how loons respond to multiple stressors that will help us preserve and protect loons throughout the state.

~Tiffany Grade

Spotlight on a Lake: Chocorua

Chocorua Lake's nesting loons were again successful in 2014, hatching two chicks that survived through the end of Loon Preservation Committee's regular monitoring in mid-August. This continued a long string of successful years. With the exception of 2011, loons have bred successfully on the lake in all of the last 15 years, hatching 23 chicks in that time, with 20 surviving. This is more than double the state-wide average for reproductive success during that period, and establishes Chocorua and its loons among the small set of lakes that are core habitat. These lakes play a disproportionately large role in the long-term viability of the whole population.

Like people, loons are looking for clear water, quiet shorelines and good fishing, and they have found those qualities on Chocorua. A small island might be the only thing a loon would add for ideal nesting, but sites on the shoreline have served well. Although adult loons had been noted on the lake since monitoring began in the mid-1970s, almost a decade passed in the early 1990s with only intermittent loon presence. And successful nesting wasn't documented until the year 2000. The lake is prime loon nesting habitat but sat vacant—as far as nesting goes—for a quarter century. The long wait for loons to become an established, successful presence at Chocorua reflects the trajectory of the population as a whole in New Hampshire. From a low point in the 1970s, this threatened species has slowly re-occupied its historical distribution in the state. Loons disperse and colonize a few miles at a time, so the pace of recovery is gradual. But once established, a fit pair of individual loons can live and breed on the same lake for decades, turning it into a powerhouse.

~John H. Cooley

Ryan Buchanan Spearheads "Save the Loon Fishing Tournament" on Chocorua Lake

The loons on Chocorua Lake had excellent help this year from the first annual "Save the Loon Fishing Tournament," conceived of and carried out by 13-year old Ryan Buchanan (pictured far right) and his family and friends. Held on July 5th, the contest attracted a small but enthusiastic crew of anglers to the parking lot at the Narrows. Providing loon-friendly non-lead tackle, information on loons, great prizes, and a sibling crew of painted-rock vendors, the event was fun for all, with proceeds benefitting the Loon Preservation Committee. The bridge at the Narrows is a popular fishing spot, and this was a good place to promote safe angling. Indeed, in 2006, LPC staff collected a dead adult male loon at the bridge that had been poisoned by a lead fishing sinker. Ryan's tournament this year is a great counterpoint to the 2006 mortality. Such efforts are exactly what is needed to turn the tide and prevent lead poisoning in loons and other wildlife—currently the biggest handicap in the continued recovery of loons throughout the state. A huge thanks to Ryan and family for leading the way. -John H. Cooley

LPC Honors Paul Miller at Annual Meeting

2014 LPC Annual Meeting

A capacity crowd of LPC members, volunteers, and friends gathered at The Loon Center on August 21st for LPC's Annual Meeting and to hear the preliminary results of everyone's efforts during the 2014 season. The evening started with a "Pot Luck" supper to thank volunteers for their invaluable work.

During the business meeting LPC Chair, Ron Baker, reported on the hard work of the Trustees during the past year. He also shared some of the challenges the Board will face in the coming year including the need to replace Trustees who are cycling off.

Ron thanked the staff for their efforts and remarked on the vastly increased communications with our members and volunteers through the use of our e-Newsletter, direct e-mail, and social media. Next he thanked all the members and donors for their financial support, noting that LPC has been able to do more for the future of our loon population than ever before. And last, but by no means least, Ron thanked the volunteers for their work supporting the mission of LPC.

Nominating Chair, Peter Sorlien, presented the new Trustee nominees: Kristen Begor from Wilton, CT, and Sunapee, NH; Glyn Green from Enfield, NH; and Robert Rotberg from Lexington, MA, and Chocorua, NH (a complete list of Trustees appears on page 2 of this Newsletter).

The final item on the agenda was a report from Bill Crangle, Chair of the LPC Finance and Facilities Committee, summarizing the financial section of the LPC 2014 Annual Report (see pages 11-14 for the complete Annual Report). He noted that although LPC ended the fiscal year with a substantial surplus, those funds are largely committed to work to be undertaken over the winter.

Photo Courtesy of Virginia Amsler

Paul Miller is the 2014 recipient of the "Spirit of the Loon" Award.

Following the Annual Meeting, John Rockwood presented a wonderful multi-media program on the life cycle of loons, and Senior Biologist and Executive Director, Harry Vogel, presented the 2014 State of the Loon report (see the LPC Afield section of this Newsletter for a complete report).

Paul Miller Honored with 2014 "Spirit of the Loon" Award

A highlight of LPC's Annual Meeting was the presentation of the sixth annual "Spirit of the Loon" Award, created to honor LPC's founder, Rawson Wood, by recognizing an individual who exemplifies outstanding volunteer service to loons and the Loon Preservation Committee. This year Paul Miller was honored in recognition of his forty years supporting loon preservation and inspiring others to join him.

Since LPC's inception, Paul has led the Squam community in recognizing that loons were in danger. He has participated in every loon census on Squam Lake, dating back to 1975. He always involved family and friends, to the point that his daughter became an environmental scientist and married one! When the disappearance of close to half of Squam's loon pairs in 2005 demanded an intensified research and conservation effort, Paul became a lead supporter of LPC's Squam Lake Loon Initiative and has inspired his neighbors to give generously as well. LPC was happy to honor Paul's long-term commitment to loons and to LPC's efforts to preserve them by presenting him with the "Spirit of the Loon" Award.

~Harry Vogel

A Little Gem in the Woods: the Markus Wildlife Sanctuary

If you have never visited the Markus Wildlife Sanctuary, you might not be aware of the beautiful, undeveloped tract of land on which The Loon Center sits. This piece of land has quite a history, too. Frederick Markus, a prominent hospital architect, and his wife Paula (Wutschert), a teacher, linguist, and artist, purchased a 150-acre tract of land on Lake Winnipesaukee in the winter of 1932 for less than $3,000. They spent their summers on an area of the property known as Hemlock Point, which is connected to the rest of the lake by a narrow channel. At the time, it was the northernmost camp on the lake. Hemlock Point now houses our summer field staff in the rustic cabins on site. Even though the property had more than 5,000 feet of shoreline, the price was most likely reduced due to the fact that the water's edge was very rocky and the lake bottom was not clear. This was a result of the sawdust generated by Lee's Mill that floated down the lake and gradually sank to the bottom.

One of the first projects they worked on after purchasing the land was establishing trails on the property and out to Hemlock Point. In fact, the trails that visitors hike on today are the original trails created by Fred. The Markus family came out to Hemlock Point in all seasons—by boat, ski, ice skate or snowshoe! One day while Fred was exploring the property, he came across a nesting loon. He soon became a champion for loons and one of the original "Loon Rangers." He wanted to protect loons and their habitat, and after noticing a decline in the number of birds and other wildlife on the property, he purchased an additional 50 acres in the early 70's.

In 1965, Fred created the Paula Anna Markus Foundation as a memorial to his late wife. The foundation granted a 99-year lease to New Hampshire Audubon, and the site now serves as the headquarters of the Loon Preservation Committee.

The trails are open year round from dawn to dusk. Winter is a great time to explore the sanctuary, especially now that the pesky black flies and mosquitoes are gone! Bring your snowshoes and head out to look for tracks—you never know what you might find. While you are here, come inside to learn more about loons through one of our many exhibits or pick up a unique gift for the loon-lover in your family at The Loon's Feather Gift Shop (seasonal winter hours: Thursday - Saturday, 9am - 5pm).

During the 2014 summer season, we had more than 6,000 visitors from 39 states and 11 countries. Just to our North, our Canadian friends came from five different provinces: Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Other countries represented include England, Ireland, United Arab Emirates, Germany, Netherlands, South Africa, New Zealand, Mexico, Singapore and France. As you can see, loons and The Loon Center and Markus Wildlife Sanctuary really have a worldwide appeal!

~Susie Burbidge

The history of the Markus Wildlife Sanctuary was taken from a slide show prepared by Nancy McDonald from materials collected from Markus family and friends.

Events Galore in Support of New Hampshire's Loons!

SUMMER LUNCHEON & AUCTION

Eat, drink and be merry! Wine, food and fun were among the themes of this year's Summer Luncheon & Auction. As always, Church Landing was a lovely setting along the shores of Meredith Bay where guests were likely to spot a loon or two foraging for lunch of their own!

The mood was relaxed and pleasant as guests perused the over 70 silent auction items, from local entertainment and dining gift certificates to wrought iron candlesticks and custom designed vintage wool, cashmere and tweed mittens. The selection was unique and diverse making for some fun bidding wars! Baskets brimming with locally crafted wine and beer, gourmet foods and handcrafted treasures, and a wine touring trip through Napa Valley's back roads were among the many enticing items offered at this year's live auction.

Guests enjoyed a delicious buffet lunch while LPC's Chairman, Ron Baker, and Executive Director, Harry Vogel, welcomed guests and made short remarks. The event was well attended with LPC members, volunteers, staff, and interested folks from throughout the state and beyond. A wonderful day of camaraderie among loon enthusiasts!

Thanks go out to our Summer Luncheon Committee and their tireless work to make the event a success: Liz Gabel (Chair), Renée Speltz, Amy Lindamood, and Lin O'Bara; and to Jaime Laurent for her generous donation of services and time as auctioneer. Additionally we'd like to thank our greeters, Nate and Lydia Torr; and our stalwart volunteers Bob Gabel, Carl Johnson and Ron O'Bara.

Yakkers gather at Lee's Mill Landing for the 3rd Annual "Yakking for Loons."

We couldn't have an auction without the generous contribution of gifts and services from area residents and businesses. Our deepest gratitude to: Deb and Gary Allard, Andrew's Auto Body, The Bay Restaurant, Bayswater Book Co., Suzy Beach, Bella Beads, Beveridge Craft Beer, Chip Broadhurst, Butternuts, Cactus Jack's, Cape Shore, Chick-A-Dee Station, Church Landing, Corner House Inn, The Country Carriage, Mary G. Di Maria, Dion's Landscapes, EM Heath's Hardware, Fratello's Ristorante Italiano, Bette Frazier, Liz Gabel, Gatherings, Gilmanton Winery, Gunstock Adventure Park, Hannaford/Meredith, Hermit Woods Winery, High Meadows Farms, Hobbs Tavern & Brewing Co., Home Comfort, Inn on Main, Joal Tree Farm, Sheila Kabat, Elinor Kehas, Lavinia's Restaurant, Lemon Grass Restaurant, Amy Lindamood, Lindt, Lydia's Café, Mill Street Market, Karin Nelson, NH Music Festival, Oglethorpe, Dr. Mark Painter, Park Place Salon, Mary Rice, Helga Seibert, Spa at Mill Falls, Renée Speltz, Squam Brewing Company, Village Kitchen, Walter's Basin, Larry Warfield, Waukewan Golf Club, Kittie and John Wilson, Winnipesaukee Chocolates, Winnipesaukee Forge, Winni Paw Station, and Yikes American Craft Gallery. Please consider these vendors and their support of loons when doing your personal shopping!

LPC's 40th anniversary Summer Luncheon & Auction will be held on Sunday, June 28 at Church Landing in Meredith. Willem Lang of NHPTV's "Windows to the Wild" will be our guest speaker. We hope you will join us for this special celebration!

YAKKING FOR LOONS

What could be more fun than a flotilla of kayaks (and one canoe) embarking on a 4.6 mile paddle to admire loons? That is exactly what 50 plus paddlers did on July 11, 2014 for the 3rd Annual Yakking for Loons event!

It was a sea of color as participants launched from Lee's Mill Landing in Moultonborough for the paddle to Green's Basin and back. Senior Biologist and Executive Director, Harry Vogel, and Staff Biologist, Chris Conrod,

2014 Field Crew *Back row: Matthew Bartolotti (Sunapee), Meg Harrington (Monadnock), Tim Demers (Seacoast), Melissa Leszek (Winnipesaukee), Chris Conrod (Staff Biologist), Front row: Tiffany Grade (Squam Lake Project Biologist), Janelle Ostroski (Lakes Region), Rachael Krajewski (Umbagog), John Cooley (Senior Biologist), Gary Janco (North Country)*

were along for the ride imparting their local loon lore. The group was lucky to witness a loon family with two-day old chicks, taking turns to observe from a respectable distance. The weather was perfect, the lake calm, and the company enjoyable!

As if paddling wasn't fun enough, a wonderful lunch donated and prepared by Curt's Caterers awaited participants at the landing. Prizes were awarded to Megan Chesley as top fundraiser, raising over $500, as well as Joanne Chesley and Linda Allen (second place), and Karen Morris, Jill Piper and Bruce Neff respectively. Those who raised $50 or more also received a "Yakking for Loons" long-sleeved t-shirt!

We are most grateful to the Yakking Prime Sponsors: Curt's Caterers and Irving Energy, whose significant contributions made the event possible. Many thanks to Wild Meadow on Winnipesaukee for their assistance with rentals and prizes; and to our spotters: John Allen, Elaine Chesley, Beverly Leonard, Ralph Rannacher, and Warren Reynolds.

Lastly, a heartfelt thank you to our Co-Chairs, Linda Allen and Joanne Chesley, whose love for loons and kayaking inspired this event three years ago! Their continued energy and hard work have seen the event grow each year with more participants and more financial resources for LPC.

We hope you will "Yak" with us next year on July 10!

LOON FESTIVAL

There's nothing like a dunk tank on a hot summer's day to draw a crowd! LPC's summer field biologists were great sports as they took turns being dunked by eager young guests. You could either pay to try your hand at dunking or use your loon knowledge to earn a free try. Either way we had some pretty soggy biologists by day's end! The biologists were also on hand giving informative slide presentations throughout the day.

Mo was in high demand as youngsters lined up for one of his amazing balloon creations while parents were entertained by his delightful banter. Caitlyn Dowell was equally busy painting faces, and the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center was here with their ever popular Discovery Table and live animals. There were arts and crafts projects, pin the loon on the chick and bean bag games, and storytelling by Jo Putnam for young minds to enjoy. Special deals in The Loon's Feather Gift Shop kept volunteers Anne McLean and Marilyn Coppo on their toes!

The Meredith Rotary Club cooked up a wonderful grilled hot dog lunch complete with chips and drink, with ice cream donated by Ben & Jerry's of Meredith; while The Carol Ramsay Duo Band set the mood with their musical entertainment. It was an all-around festive occasion enjoyed by all who attended!

Needless to say we have many volunteers to thank for making the Festival a success: Liz Bentz, Bob and Marilyn Coppo, Chase Gagne, Mary LaHut, William Joyce, Sheila Kabat, Anne McLean, Mike Ruyffelaert, and John and Sue Scudder. In addition we are most grateful to Ben & Jerry's of Meredith, CG Roxane, The Carol Ramsay Duo Band, Hannaford of Meredith, Meredith Rotary Club (Tom Fairbrother, Ted Fodero, Dean and Jan Galez-

continued on page 22

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ean, Dick Gerkin, Carl Johnson, Ron Maher, Jim Matthews, Bernie Nealon, Donna Ulbricht, and Jim Weidman), Jo Putnam, and the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center (Audrey Eisenhauer, Carol Foley, Dom and Irene Marocco, and Nance Ruhm) for their invaluable support.

Many thanks to our Loon Festival Sponsors

Kathy and Carter Barger
Suzy and Tom Beach
Mr. & Mrs. Frederick Bigony
Boulia-Gorrell Lumber Company
Clark and Gloria Chandler
Mr. & Mrs. Robert H. Clark, Jr.
Allan and Judy Fulkerson
Liz and Tom Kelsey
George and Ann Macomber
Jordan and Phyllis Prouty

Vicky Brox
In Memory of Chuck Brox

The Sorlien Family
In Memory of Kenneth E. Sorlien

CARL JOHNSON MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

It only takes one washout (*the infamous tournament of 2011*) to appreciate the anxious anticipation and overwhelming relief that comes with a perfect day for golf! Thankfully, we were blessed with sunny skies for the 2014 Carl Johnson Memorial Golf Tournament which took place on August 18 at Ridgewood Country Club in Moultonborough.

This year attracted 43 players to Ridgewood's scenic 18-hole course. Prizes were awarded to the top three teams as well as for longest drive and closest to the pin. First place went to Jim Murray, Craig Markert, and John Forsberg of Golden View. Bob and Ed Ambrose, Ann Brienza and Claudia McIlvain took second place (following a first-place tie breaker), with Chip Broadhurst, Tom Beach, Tom Crane and Peter Walkley coming in a respectable third. Each winner received an exquisite hand-carved and hand-painted loon decoy. An exclusive raffle sent many players home with additional prizes, including a Taylor Putter, framed loon photographs, and golf gift certificates to local venues.

Jim Murray, Craig Markert and John Forsberg of Golden View were the winning threesome at the Carl Johnson Memorial Golf Tournament.

The Loon Preservation Committee extends its sincere thanks to the 2014 Tournament Prime Sponsors: Advanced Land Surveying Consultants, Mill Falls at the Lake, and Overhead Door Options. In addition, we'd like to thank our hole sponsors: DAK Financial Group, Greg Egli (in memory of Jeanette & Carl Johnson), Golden View Health Care Center, Ippolito's Furniture, Irwin Automotive Group, J.W. Electric, Lakes Region Realty Group, Lakes Region Visiting Nurses, Winnie and Dave McCullough, Sandy and Louise McGinnes, Meadow Pond Animal Hospital, Meredith Village Savings Bank, Moulton Farm, The Bay Restaurant, New Hampshire Environmental Consultants, Northeast Delta Dental, Planet Green Power Renewable Energy, RE/MAX Bayside Realty, Savings Bank of Walpole, Ambassador Paul and Renee Speltz and Stewart's Ambulance Service, and our sign sponsor, Saltmarsh Insurance Agency of Winchester, MA. Although no one succeeded in taking home the $10,000, we are grateful to Kevin Keenan of Paugus Bay Marina for securing the hole-in-one grand prize for many years running.

Lastly, we wish to thank our faithful supporters Winnie and Dave McCullough and Kittie and John Wilson for their generous donation of raffle prizes; John Moulton and Moulton Farm for the lovely flowers; Don Trudeau for overseeing the putting contest; and Mitch Jefferson and Meg Diltz at Ridgewood Country Club for their support and guidance!

We hope you will join us for a great day of golf, prizes and fellowship at next year's tournament on August 17th!

~Linda Egli Johnson

Making Waves for Squam's Loons

This year marked the 8th SWIM across the 7-mile length of Squam Lake to focus attention on Squam's loons and the Loon Preservation Committee's work to recover them. Participating this year were swimmers (pictured above) Rose de Mars, John Eisner, Lisa Davy, Rick Van de Poll, Wendy Van de Poll, Carol Zink, Jen Marts and Mark Longley; spotters Jeff Marts and Gloria Hoag; and boat captain, Ralph Kirshner.

Proceeds from the SWIM help the Loon Preservation Committee continue its research into high levels of contaminants, including flame retardants, stain repellants, and PCBs, found in Squam loon eggs that failed to hatch. They also help us to assess other factors that might have contributed to the recent declines of loons on Squam Lake, including pathogens (disease-causing agents), changing temperature and precipitation patterns, and recreational use of the lake.

In addition, the SWIM helps fund LPC's management and outreach to recover Squam's loon population. This year, LPC floated nine loon nesting rafts and put protective signs and floatlines around eight nesting pairs of loons on Squam, as well as floating "Caution – Loon Chicks" signs in every loon territory that held chicks. We also continued our educational Squam Lake Loon Tours with the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center and gave a total of 41 educational presentations on and around Squam Lake.

Contributions to the SWIM allow us to continue all of these efforts to investigate and reverse the declines of loons on Squam Lake. Over $18,000 has been raised to date this year – a fitting tribute to the tremendous feat of this dedicated team of swimmers!

many thanks to...
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for the post-swim refreshments!

SQUIM
Squam Lake, NH
7 miles for Loons

CAPS FOR SALE!

Support the Squam Lake Loon Initiative (SLLI) by purchasing an exclusive "SQUIM" swim cap! Caps are $20 and come in neon yellow and orange. The "SQUIM" logo (above) sports one side of the cap with LPC's logo on the flip side.

Call LPC at 603-476-5666 to order your "SQUIM" cap in time for the holidays!

Remembering Rosebud

If you visited The Loon Center in the last 12 years you surely met Rosebud—a beautiful chocolate lab who escorted our Executive Director, Harry, to work each day. A gentle soul, Rosebud was eager to greet visitors whether at The Center or on the trails. She always wore a smile and wagged her tail, ready for a treat if there was one for the taking. She was such a fixture that task #12 of the Junior Loon Biologist Challenge read, "Pet Rosebud or Autumn, the Director's dogs." Her spirit will forever be a part of the fabric of The Loon Center and Markus Sanctuary.

Autumn, Rosebud and Harry, "Yakking for Loons," July 11, 2014.

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