



# *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 2011



Photo Courtesy of Kittie Wilson

## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

### *The 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 constituent organization of the Audubon Society of New Hampshire (ASNH). Autonomous in membership and fundraising, LPC works to preserve loons and their habitats in New Hampshire through monitoring, research, management and education.*

#### **LPC Staff:**

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*Senior Biologist/Executive Director*  
Susie Burbidge  
*Volunteer Coordinator*  
John H. Cooley, Jr.  
*Senior Biologist*  
Linda Egli Johnson  
*Special Assistant/Newsletter Coordinator*  
Anna P. Koester  
*Loon Center Assistant*  
Nancy C. McDonald  
*Loon Center Manager*  
Lin L. O'Bara  
*Development Coordinator*  
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## *Lead, or Loons*

I went on vacation in May – last chance before the craziness of the summer field season – and spent eight days exploring a sizeable wilderness lake in Ontario. I was only five minutes into a five-hour paddle to my first campsite when I found myself being watched by a loon. Not the first one I had seen this year, but the first “intimate encounter” as two lake users on more or less equal terms. We were each paddling under our own steam, and though I had the edge in technology (even if only a canoe and camping gear), I was still reminded that I was only a visitor here, a guest in this loon's home.

A long paddle across a mirror-calm lake in the company of loons is the most peaceful and zen-like state I have ever known. That same paddle into a stiff wind is an entirely different experience, but can be an exhilarating test of endurance that is just as rewarding. The Loon Preservation Committee's experience has been more the latter case; this small organization has been battling headwinds since the day it was created, and its many accomplishments speak to its success in overcoming those challenges. An unyielding focus on mission, the highest scientific standards, and dogged determination have been its constant companions along that journey.

LPC has celebrated many successes over its 36 years of ground-breaking work to protect loons (please see a report on our Loon Recovery Plan progress on pp. 8 to 10 for our latest achievements); but there is much work left to do. Last year we lost 12 loons to lead poisoning from ingested lead fishing sinkers and jigs – the largest number ever, despite New Hampshire's legislation restricting the sale and use of small lead fishing tackle. Five of these loons were killed by lead-headed jigs an inch or longer in length including the hook, a size that is still legal; the others were killed by smaller jigs or sinkers that are illegal for use or sale in New Hampshire.

Obviously we need to step up our efforts to make the public aware of this hard-won legislation and go above and beyond New Hampshire law to stop using all lead tackle in our waters. It would seem that, at long last, we have an environmental problem with an easy solution: Loon-safe sinkers and jigs made of steel, bismuth, tungsten, stone, and a large number of other non-toxic materials exist and are widely available.

Unfortunately, there are still some who deny that lead tackle is harming loons or other wildlife – a sadly misinformed view that needs to be corrected if we are to make headway on this critical problem. And every time an organization suggests that wildlife would benefit from less lead in fishing tackle, there is an immediate response by certain fishing organizations, manufacturers and retailers intent on maintaining the status quo. We will be paddling into a stiff wind once again on this issue, and maybe a storm; but that has never stopped LPC from reaching its goals.





## *Location, Location, Location!*

**When it comes to choosing a new home, a loon's standards are just as demanding as ours.**

If you follow a pair of loons (but not too closely!) during late-May or early-June, you are likely to get an idea of how much thought they put into choosing a nest site. You'll see them close together, scrutinizing various sites for ease of access, protection from wave action, and cover to hide them from predators. You may also hear them "debating" with cooing and clucking vocalizations, and one or both of them might scramble onto a potential nest site to check for "fit" or toss some vegetation around to get an idea of decorating possibilities. Loons do not enter into a nesting attempt without first giving it a lot of thought.

The fact is, loons are pretty fussy about all of their living arrangements. Here at The Loon Center, lake residents frequently ask us what they can do to entice loons to their lake. The short, simple answer is "probably not much." In addition to a viable nest site, loons are looking for specific physical and chemical properties of the lake water; of prime importance is water clarity – if loons can't see the fish, they can't catch the fish. The lake must also have the proper diversity of food items necessary for sustaining two adults and for meeting the constantly changing needs of chicks as they develop and grow. These needs are not something LPC and our volunteers have much control over. Consequently, our best success comes when we let the loons choose the lake on their own. Then we can implement management practices specific to the challenges present on that lake.

In an ongoing effort to understand what factors influence a loon pair's choice for a home territory, LPC's Senior Biologist John Cooley and Director Harry Vogel are two of the co-authors of a loon habitat research paper recently published in the journal, *Avian Conservation and Ecology*. Working with lead author Anne Kuhn of the EPA's Atlantic Ecology Division and using LPC's 36-year database, the group performed a multi-scale analysis of twenty-one habitat variables and developed a predictive model of loon occupancy. The paper can be accessed online at <http://www.ace-eco.org/vol6/iss1/art4/>.

And what are the top priorities for loon occupancy? A quote from the paper's most succinct paragraph will give us the take-home message: "Overall optimal breeding habitat for Common Loon across New Hampshire was identified

as having the following characteristics: clear, higher elevation lakes with islands; further away from human population centers; with lower surrounding road densities; and with nearby lakes occupied by other loons." The authors discussed the importance of environment quality within a 150-meter buffer around the lake, and their conclusions offer corroboration to previous studies stating the importance of islands and lake clarity.

This research will serve as an important tool for refining calculations of the total loon carrying capacity in New Hampshire, population viability analyses, and the New Hampshire Loon Recovery Plan (see pp. 8-10 for details).

~Chris Conrod



Photo Courtesy of John Rockwood

## Black Flies and Loons

It's hard to make a rational estimate of the buzzing, biting black fly swarms that boiled up out of our lakes and streams this May, but it seemed like a bad year, a real doozy by some accounts. Of course, when it comes to black flies, humans have it easy in any year compared to a nesting loon, committed as the loon is to sitting at the black fly's mercy for four straight weeks during the worst of the season. Get a close enough view and you can see dozens of flies crawling around the loon's eyes and bill, burrowing into the soft feathers on its head with specialized claws. The besieged loon is stoic by any human measure, but this torment can eventually drive it from the nest, causing the nest to fail. It's rarely possible to pin a nest failure squarely on black flies as the primary cause, but such failures are known to have a substantial impact for loon popula-

tions in other regions. Early this June, for example, we heard from Midwestern loon expert Michael Meyer that this year's black fly nest abandonment in northern Wisconsin was the worst seen in almost a decade.

In fact, Meyer recently contributed to an in-depth look at the ecology of black flies and loons, undertaken by Northern Michigan graduate student Meggin Weinandt. Besides enduring the occasional bumper crop of black flies, loons face the added insult of hosting a specialist species, *Simulium annulus* (Lundstr.), that preferentially parasitizes loons. Weinandt's first focus was to test the extent of this black fly specialization. To simulate a nesting bird, Weinandt equipped loon, goose, and duck decoys with fly-paper traps and exposed them for brief intervals on lake shorelines. This, she hoped, would determine the black fly species present and their host preferences. To determine whether the flies used scent cues or sight to

find the birds, some decoys were outfitted with real wings salvaged from recent mortalities. What Weinandt found was striking: the loon decoy with real wings attracted over 90% of all the black flies trapped on any decoy. In fact, when the loon wings were attached to the goose decoy, the flies followed suit, swarming the goose. Weinandt's experiment confirmed that the captured black flies targeted loons, and that a chemical cue—presumably from the loon's natural waterproofing oil on the wing feathers—was the likely attractant. Furthermore, during two of the three trials, the only species of black fly captured on the real-wing decoys was the loon specialist, *Simulium annulus*.

Weinandt also investigated the microorganisms that black flies can deposit in their loon host as they feed. In other bird species these blood parasites, akin to human malaria, are known to lower the reproductive success of the host bird, compromise its immune system, or even kill it outright. Through genetic analysis of loon blood samples from Wisconsin, Weinandt detected several common avian blood parasites, previously unreported in loons. Her results were consistent with preliminary findings from the New Hampshire work of Tufts veterinary student Heather Crispell in 2010, where blood parasites were also detected.

Finally, Weinandt compared parasite infection rates with blood mercury levels. More mercury, it turned out, was associated with a higher likelihood of blood parasite infection. This result suggests that mercury, in addition to poisoning a loon's nervous system,

*Black flies on a nesting loon at Pleasant Lake, New London, in May 2011. Photo courtesy of Kittie Wilson.*

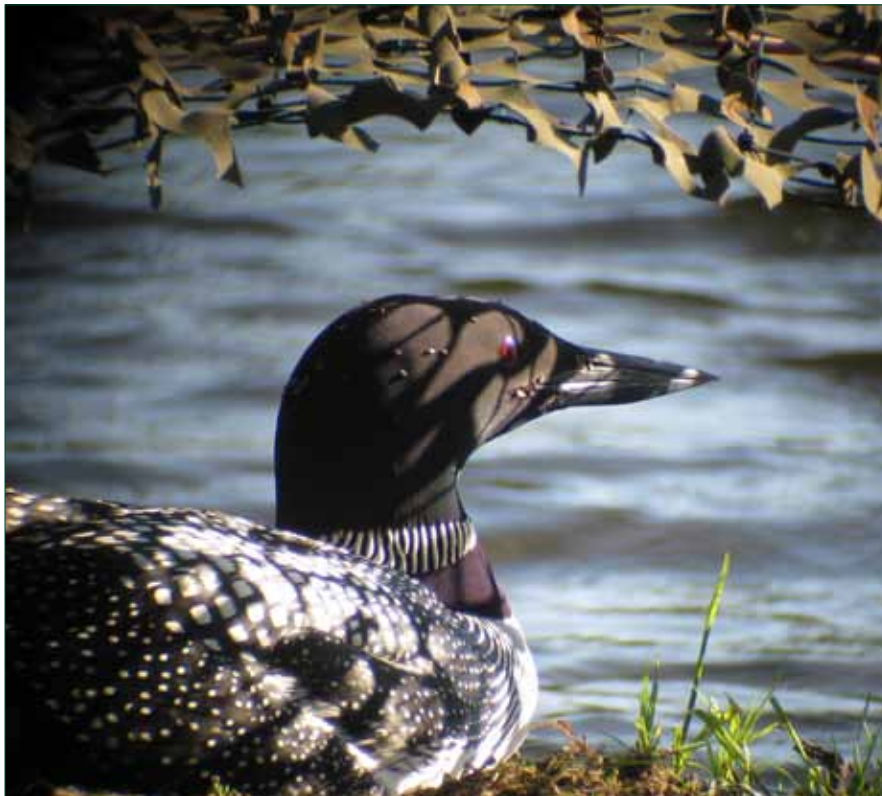


Photo Courtesy of Kittie Wilson



may compromise the loon immune response, in this case its ability to fight off blood parasites introduced by black flies. Weinandt points out that if mercury and parasite infections both depend on a common factor not addressed in her analysis, the association she found may not indicate a cause and effect relationship between mercury and parasites. Testing for a causal relationship would take more work.

What does Weinandt's project mean for loon conservation? It brings to light a complex natural history, helping to explain black fly impacts beyond the immediate torment they impose on a nesting loon. And it provides an example of the potential synergy between natural stressors, like black flies, and preventable human-caused stressors, like mercury. For the black fly's part, our usual arm thrashing, swatting, and muffled cursing at this time of year may be infused, next time around, with a dose of appreciation for the subtlety of a species that has apparently evolved a preference for the loon host. After all, for the emerging black fly on a northern river in early May, what harder task is there than to locate the nearest loon when the odds are one loon in every couple of hundred acres of lake? Perhaps other host species are part of the diet. If a few squashed fly corpses stick to my field notebook at a loon nest next May, I'll be tempted to try my hand at black fly taxonomy, checking to see whether *Simulium annulus* is the loon culprit in New Hampshire, too.

~John H. Cooley, Jr.

Weinandt, M.L. 2006. *Conservation implications of Common Loon (Gavia immer) parasites: black flies, haematozoans, and the role of mercury. Master's thesis, Northern Michigan University, Marquette, MI. 86 pp.*

### The Hoot by Chris Conrod

I don't give a hoot. I'm not a loon,  
But I strive to learn the language.  
A hoot is reassurance:  
Support between mates,  
A bond between generations,  
Peace between neighbors.  
On a glassy, calm, mid-morning pond,  
When anything more than a whisper,  
Anything more than the smoothest,  
Slowest paddle stroke  
Would be irreverent,  
They joined us.  
Kayak-loon-kayak-loon,  
In perfect parade rank.  
A single hoot:  
"I am here.  
All is well.  
Life is good."



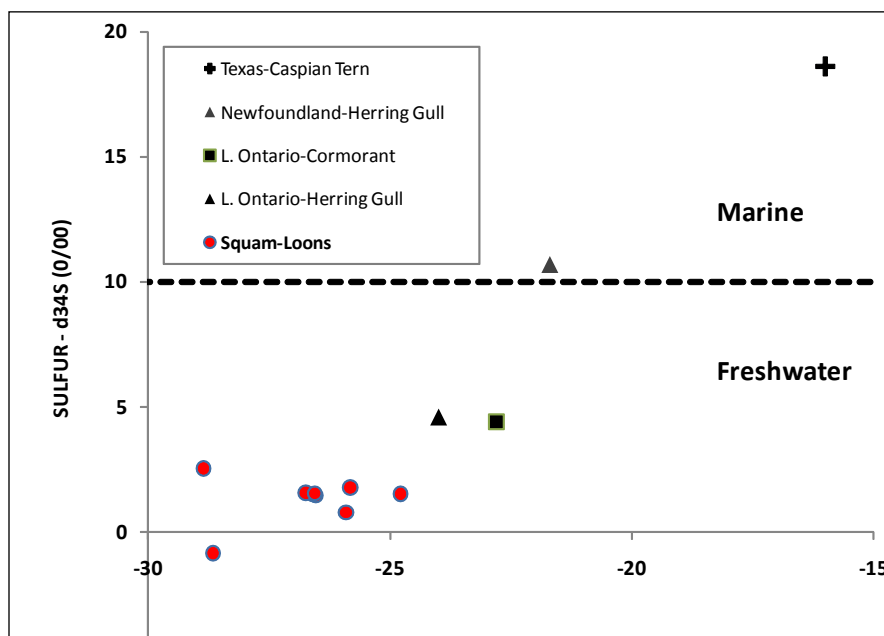
Photo Courtesy of Kittie Wilson

## Stable Isotope Results: Preliminary Data Suggest Loon Eggs Reflect Recent Diet

For loon supporters troubled by recent findings of persistent contaminants in Squam loon eggs, the natural next question has been whether the contaminant source is local. Could a lake as pristine as Squam really have a contaminated food web, or are Squam egg toxins accumulated by the maternal loon over the winter, on the coast, before she returns to breed?

Similar questions about the timing and source of contaminant exposure have already been addressed for other migratory bird species and populations, pointing the way for our work with loons. Many recent studies have used stable isotope analysis to trace the movement of nutrients and contaminants through the food web and across the landscape. Stable isotope concentrations for key nutrients like carbon and nitrogen vary across food webs and between marine and freshwater ecosystems. This isotopic variability has been used to investigate everything from Paleolithic human diets to the seasonal fish-eating habits of grizzly bears, as well as contaminant pathways in birds.

To apply this technique to Squam, stable isotope concentrations of sulfur, carbon, and nitrogen were analyzed for nine Squam loon eggs and one egg from neighboring White Oak Pond. Our results give a surprisingly consistent preliminary confirmation that Squam loon egg nutrients are primarily derived from recent diet, i.e., local fish and crayfish. Sulfur isotope values in Squam loon eggs ranged from -1 to 4 per thousand relative to reference values, well below the threshold of 10 per thousand used to differentiate between marine and freshwater nutrient sources in similar studies of fish-eating



Sulfur (vertical axis) and carbon (horizontal axis) stable isotope values for Squam loon eggs compared to published values and marine-freshwater threshold ( $dS_{34} = 10$  per mil) for known freshwater and marine bird populations (Hobson et al. 1997).

cormorants on Lake Ontario (see graph) (Hobson et al. 1997, Hebert et al. 2008). Carbon results were also consistent with a local freshwater nutrient source for Squam loon eggs. Although Squam loons probably rely on a mixture of reserves and recent uptake to produce eggs, these results indicate that the primary nutrient source is recent uptake. Contaminants found in the eggs are therefore likely to be primarily from the freshwater ecosystem.

The presence of local toxins revealed by Squam loon egg testing is not a surprise in light of other findings about the ubiquitous and pervasive influence of polluting compounds in the environment. Environmental mercury is a well-documented example: regional and local sources broadcast mercury across the landscape through atmospheric deposition, and the mercury accumulates “down

stream” in the lake food web. For other synthetic compounds like PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls), a recent study of western US National Parks found that even some remote, high-elevation lakes on the crest of the Sierras and Rockies were subject to contaminant levels approaching hazard thresholds for human and wildlife fish consumption (Ackerman et al., 2008). Prevailing weather and deposition patterns put these pristine lakes at the endpoint for pollutant accumulation, hundreds and even thousands of miles from the emission sources. If our stable isotope results tie Squam loon contaminants to the local food web, the National Park study findings and others like it show that the original contaminant source could be far away. Instead of looking for a single local point source — one smokestack or oozing barrel of toxic waste — we may

need to turn our attention toward the broader, bigger hazard generated by the everyday manufacture and use of industrial compounds that also happen to be persistent toxins.

~John H. Cooley, Jr.

Ackerman, L.K., Schwindt, A.R., Massey Simonich, S.L., Koch, D.C., Blett, T.F., Schreck, C.B., Kent, M.L., and D.H. Landers. 2008. Atmospherically deposited PBDEs, PCBs, and PAHs in western US National Park fish: concentrations and consumption guidelines. *Environmental Science and Technology*: 42, pp. 2334-2341.

Hebert, C.E., Bur, M., Sherman, D., and J.L. Shutt. 2008. Sulfur isotopes link overwinter habitat use and breeding condition in double-crested cormorants. *Ecological Applications*: 18(3), pp. 561-567.

Hobson, K.A., Hughes, K.D., and Ewins, P.J. 1997. Using stable-isotope analysis to identify endogenous and exogenous sources of nutrients in eggs of migratory birds: applications to Great Lakes contaminants. *The Auk* : 114(3) pp. 467-478.

## VOLUNTEERS WELCOME!

To find out more about  
volunteer opportunities at  
LPC, contact

603-476-5666  
or  
volunteers@loon.org

THANK YOU!



Photo Courtesy of John Rockwood

## Volunteer News from LPC

We are always striving towards better ways to monitor our loon population, especially as it continues to grow in New Hampshire. One of the avenues used to achieve this goal is working closely with volunteers. We hope to eventually coordinate volunteer involvement through a point person on each lake that we monitor in the state who can gather local observations and provide updates and information about loons to the lake community.

Last year more than 500 volunteers participated in the Loon Census, which occurs every year on the 3rd Saturday of July from 8-9 a.m. Not only is the census a good excuse for an early morning paddle or cruise on the water, it gives us a mid-season "snapshot" of loon productivity and also informs us of undiscovered territories.

We continue to improve our volunteer communication network and are excited about creative ways to exchange information including LPC's Facebook page and the e-newsletter. eBird is also a useful tool that casual birdwatchers and avid birders

alike can use to report bird sightings. There is even an eBird site dedicated to the state of New Hampshire (<http://eBird.org/content/nh>). By reporting observations, biologists can track trends in species abundance and distribution. eBird users can also explore interactive maps, graphs and bar charts, including animated maps that track the annual wave of sightings for individual bird species as they migrate north, breed, and head southward (<http://eBird.org/content/eBird/about/occurrence-maps/occurrence-maps>).

If you are interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities with LPC or to sign up for our e-newsletter, please send an email to [volunteers@loon.org](mailto:volunteers@loon.org).

~Susie Burbidge

## WISH LIST

Circular powersaw  
Handheld GPS unit  
Metal storage shelves



## *LPC Invites Its Supporters to Contribute to the Loon Recovery Plan*

The Loon Preservation Committee is extending an invitation to its members and volunteers to support a major new initiative, the Loon Recovery Plan (LRP). The Recovery Plan was created in 2009 in response to a five-year declining trend in the number of surviving loon chicks on New Hampshire's lakes between 2004 and 2008, and significant population declines or mortality incidents on New Hampshire's three largest lakes (Winnepesaukee, Squam and Umbagog) in the past ten years. These declines threaten to undo the hard-won gains that LPC's research, management strategies, and educational efforts have achieved over the past 36 years.

Loons in New Hampshire face many challenges, including lead fishing tackle, mercury, PCBs, and other man-made stressors. LPC's ground-breaking research on loon eggs collected from failed nests has revealed high levels of PBDE (flame retardants), PFOS (stain repellants), and a host of other contaminants in eggs that failed to hatch. The Loon Preservation Committee developed the Loon Recovery Plan to inform and direct its work to promote a healthy and growing loon population throughout New Hampshire. The plan includes analyses that establish the number of loons New Hampshire's lakes can and should support; population models to measure the effects of man-made stressors on loon survival and breeding success; an assessment of our ability to help loons cope with these challenges through research, management activities and outreach/education; and strategies to increase loon populations to as close as possible to historical levels of an estimated 450 loon

pairs — almost 200 pairs above current levels.

The goals of the New Hampshire Loon Recovery Plan are to recover and maintain a viable population of loons in New Hampshire as a component of a healthy regional population and ecosystem. We anticipate that the achievement of these goals will require increased and sustained levels of monitoring, research, management, and outreach activities in New Hampshire for the foreseeable future.

LPC's progress in achieving these long-term goals will be monitored on an annual basis, with the following two objectives to be realized by the end of Year Three.

### **OBJECTIVE #1:**

Decrease mortality of adult loons resulting from lead fishing tackle, boat collisions, and other human causes from approximately 8 yearly mortalities (avg. 2004-2009) to an average of 5.5 mortalities annually – a 31% decrease in human-caused mortality.

### **Year One Progress/Results:**

In 2010 LPC staff recovered 16 deceased adult loons. Of these mortalities, 12 were a result of lead poisoning from ingested lead fishing tackle; one, of injuries from non-lead tackle; and two, from boat strikes. The cause of death of one other adult loon has yet to be determined. This high number of human-caused mortalities might be attributed in part to

### **The New Hampshire Common Loon Recovery Plan**



The Loon Preservation Committee

February 2011

unusually low rainfall and an increase in fishing and boating activity in the summer of 2010 over the previous several years.

### **Plans for Year Two:**

New initiatives in 2011 to decrease human-caused mortalities of loons include efforts to recruit "Loon Ambassador" volunteers to serve as liaisons between LPC and lake associations; new fact sheets, volunteer protocols and other educational products; and increased outreach to lake associations and the general public. In collaboration with graduate student (and LPC Squam Lakes Biologist) Tiffany Grade and the Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine, LPC is undertaking a comprehensive analysis of over 20 years of data on loon mortalities in New Hampshire. It is also preparing a report to the New Hampshire Legislature to inform decision-makers of the continuing serious effects of lead



fishing tackle on loons in New Hampshire.

#### **OBJECTIVE #2:**

Increase reproductive success of loon pairs to a minimum of 48 chicks surviving to fledge per 100 loon pairs from the current 41 chicks surviving per 100 loon pairs – a 17% increase in reproductive success of loon pairs.

#### **Year One Progress/Results:**

The 275 pairs of loons on New Hampshire's lakes hatched 172 chicks in 2010, 129 of which were surviving at summer's end. This gain of 20 surviving chicks over 2009 represents a 15% increase in loon breeding success.

#### **Plans for Year Two:**

LPC will continue to expand its management activities (nesting rafts, signs and ropelines) to mitigate specific challenges to nesting loons; expand its communications with dam owners to maintain stable water levels during critical nesting periods; and increase its outreach and recruitment of volunteers to educate lake users about the needs of nesting loons and loon families.

#### **Strategies to Meet Objectives:**

a. Increase the number of nesting loon pairs protected by floating signs and ropelines from 61 pairs (avg. 2005-2009) to 80 pairs by Year Three of the Recovery Plan. Signs and ropelines educate lake users and reduce nest abandonment.

#### **Year One Activities:**

LPC protected 76 nesting pairs of loons with signs and ropelines, a 30% increase in the number of pairs protected with these measures. Loon pairs protected by signs and ropelines hatched over 40% of all chicks hatched in New Hampshire.

b. Increase the total number of loon nesting rafts floated in New Hampshire each year from 54 rafts (avg. 2005-2009) to 75 rafts by Year Three of the Recovery Plan. Rafts provide alternate nesting sites to loons displaced from traditional natural sites as a result of shoreline development, and help protect eggs from water level fluctuations and increased populations of egg predators such as raccoons and foxes.

#### **Year One Activities:**

LPC floated 66 loon nesting rafts in 2010, a 22% increase over the number of rafts floated in the previous five years. Loons nesting on rafts hatched 16% of the total number of chicks hatched in New Hampshire.

c. Increase the number of LPC exhibits at events, and public presentations made by LPC staff from 58 (avg. 2005-2009) to 75 by Year Three of the Recovery Plan. These exhibits and presentations encourage a culture of respect and appreciation for loons; illustrate the challenges facing loons in

New Hampshire from lead fishing tackle, irresponsible boating, and other human practices that directly and indirectly affect loons; and increase awareness and support for loons, and for LPC's efforts to preserve them.

#### **Year One Activities:**

LPC staff and volunteers gave 75 presentations and exhibits for diverse audiences in 2010, a 29% increase over the past five years.

d. Increase the awareness of legislators and decision-makers to challenges facing loons in order to encourage informed discussion and actions that protect loons and other wildlife in New Hampshire.

#### **Year One Activities:**

LPC's Executive Director testified before the New Hampshire Legislature on the impact of speeding boats on loon mortality, and worked with the Environmental Policy Committee of New Hampshire Audubon to shape testimony on other legislation affecting lakes and loons.

*continued on page 10*



Photo Courtesy of Kittie Wilson

*continued from page 9*

e. Investigate new and increasing challenges to loon survival and reproductive success, including but not limited to contaminants in loon eggs and adult loons; increased weather and temperature extremes predicted in global and regional climate change models; and the direct and indirect effects of increasing human populations.

#### **Year One Activities:**

LPC worked cooperatively with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to test four unhatched loon eggs from failed nests for a wide variety of contaminants, and with the Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine to test loon blood for indications of disease, heat stress and blood parasites.

f. Investigate our ability to mitigate these challenges through new management and outreach activities, and enhancements to LPC's current management and outreach efforts.

#### **Year One Activities:**

LPC monitored the effectiveness of its expanded site-specific management (rafts, signs, ropelines), and began working with Plymouth State University to increase the effectiveness of its new educa-

tional products and programs.

Funds raised to launch LPC's Loon Recovery Plan in 2010 allowed LPC to hire a part-time seasonal Staff Biologist and a part-time, year-round Outreach/Volunteer Coordinator to carry out the work outlined in the "Strategies" section above. Year One funding also provided for materials and transport of new rafts, signs and ropelines; new educational products; and the delivery of an increased number of programs.

LPC's work to implement the Loon Recovery Plan also benefited from the in-kind efforts of numerous volunteers who helped monitor loons; built and floated loon nesting rafts; protected nesting loons with "Loon Nesting Area" signs; and educated lake users. Other in-kind donations included veterinary services from Plymouth Animal Hospital, Sandwich Animal Hospital and the Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine. The US Fish and Wildlife Service funded contaminants testing of four loon eggs, and the BioDiversity Research Institute was LPC's collaborator in banding loons and collecting small blood and feather samples for analyses of pathogens

and contaminants. We sincerely appreciate the outstanding support of all of these volunteers and organizations.

#### **Year Two:**

LPC is working to implement Year Two of the Loon Recovery Plan this summer, and we invite you to support this important initiative. Funding to implement Year Two of the Loon Recovery Plan will support the increased monitoring, research and management activities described above, toward the ultimate goal of a recovered and viable loon population in New Hampshire.

The loon is an iconic symbol of New Hampshire's pristine lakes and ponds and an important part of New Hampshire's natural character. With your support of this important initiative, we will continue to expand our efforts to help loons cope with their increasing challenges and ensure a bright future for loons in New Hampshire.

To support the Loon Recovery Initiative, please visit [www.loon.org](http://www.loon.org) and click on the "Donate to LPC" button on the home page. Thank you for your support of this important work!

*~Harry Vogel*

*The goals of the New Hampshire Loon Recovery Plan are first, to recover, and then, to maintain, a viable population of loons in New Hampshire as a component of a healthy regional population and ecosystem. ~Harry Vogel*

# 2011 LPC SUMMER STAFF

## LAKES REGION



Brian Free

Brian is a Conservation Biology student at St. Lawrence University (2013). An avid outdoorsman and Eagle Scout, he is adept at kayaking and exploring the backwoods. His experience with capturing and banding birds of prey will be an asset to LPC's banding project.

## SEACOAST



Molly Lindh

Molly is a student at Unity College where she is pursuing a BA in Wildlife Conservation (2012). A native of Northwood, NH, she is at home in the Seacoast territory. Recent wildlife work includes an internship at the Loki Wolf Clan Refuge in Chatham, NH.

## MONADNOCK NORTH



Susie Burbidge

Susie returns for a third summer covering the northern Monadnock territory, as well as doing year-long, half-time duty as Volunteer Outreach Coordinator at The Loon Center. Her outreach efforts include the e-newsletter and LPC's Facebook page among others.

## SQUAM LAKES



Tiffany Grade

Tiffany will continue her research on the impact of human recreation on loon chick-rearing on the Squam Lakes as part of her Master's Thesis. In addition, she is creating a new educational brochure for LPC informing people of the threats of lead on loons.

## MONADNOCK SOUTH



Sarah Baker

A graduate of Unity College, Sarah holds a degree in Wildlife Care and Environmental Education. She spent her first year with LPC monitoring loons on Squam Lake and returns for her second year in the Monadnock region.

## UMBAGOG



Michael O'Brien

Mike earned his MA in Political Science from Indiana State University where he became interested in bird watching after witnessing migratory behavior at Goose Pond. Now a convert, Mike will spend the summer on the Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge monitoring loons.

## NORTH COUNTRY



Krista Newell

Krista returns for her second summer monitoring loons in the North Country. A native to the area, she's become intimately familiar with the back roads and pristine lakes. She spent the fall working on a deer farm in Texas and the winter at Cannon Mountain.

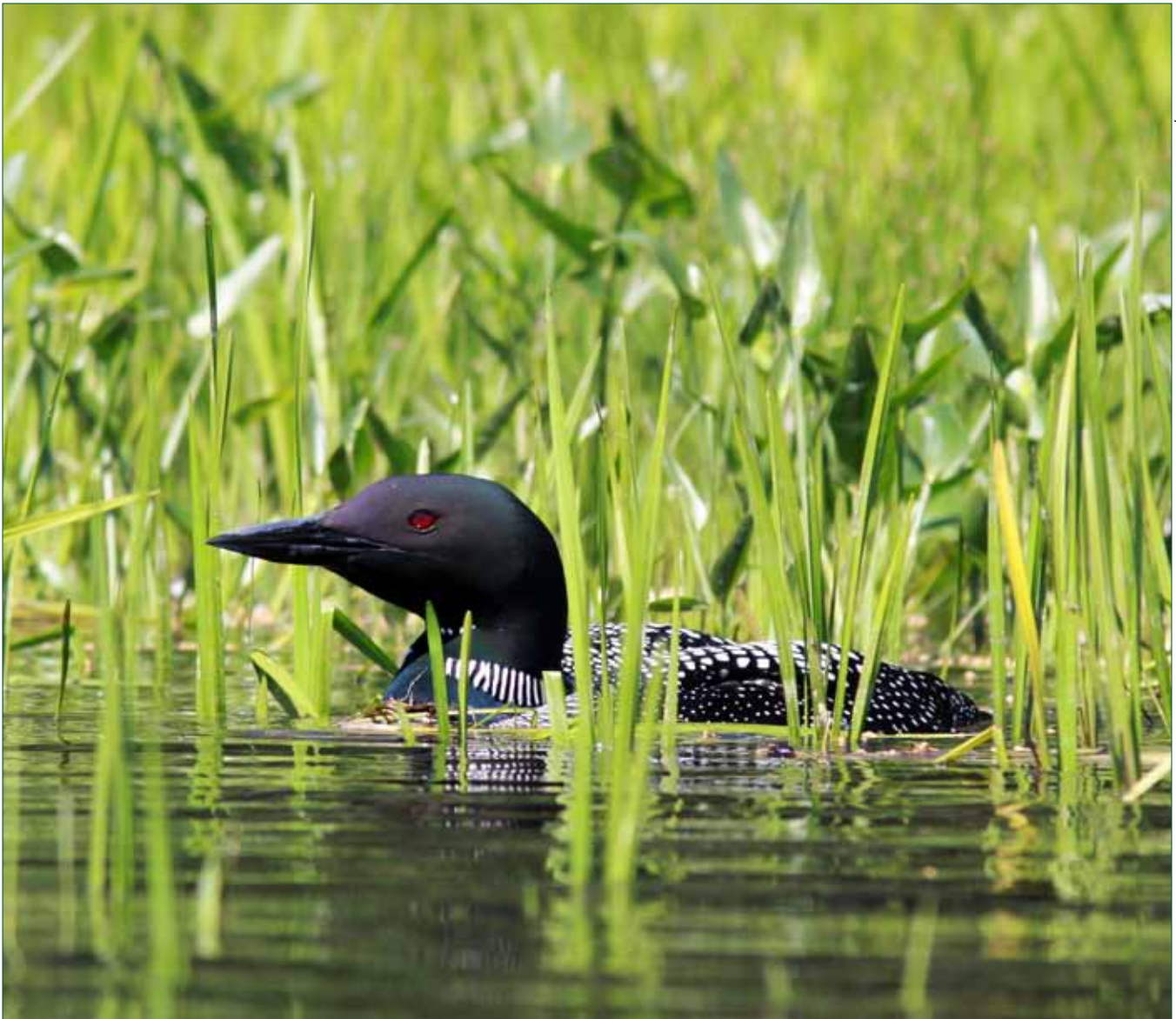
## WINNIPESAUKEE



Elizabeth Jackson

Liz is a student at the University of Vermont where she studies Biological Science. Her family has a home on Lake Winnepesaukee making her no stranger to the big lake. Upon completing her studies at UVM she hopes to further her education in Zoology.





To report a stranded loon, loon harassment,  
or an injured or dead loon,  
please call. . .

Loon Preservation Committee:  
603-476-5666, or  
NH Fish & Game Dispatch:  
603-271-3361

## VOLUNTEER PROFILES

### *Peace, Love & Anne McLean!*

The LPC's only year-round volunteer lives within walking distance of The Loon Center. And walk she does! 30-40 miles a week in rain, snow, and even black flies! Anne McLean is a woman of boundless energy and enthusiasm with a can-do spirit that amazes us time and again. If you send her home with a mailing that would take a week, it's back in half that time. Minding the gift shop, she takes the initiative to organize storage closets, re-stock merchandise, dust, sweep, and even take out the garbage.

Anne retired to Moultonborough after a 25-year career in Lakes Region law firms to be near her daughter and granddaughter. With a desire to be busy and productive and to help her community, Anne divides her volunteer hours between The Loon Center and the Moultonborough Public Library where she works year-round on the book donation collection and the annual 3-day, 4th of July book sale.

From the beginning of her volunteering at The Loon Center in 2009, Anne's appreciation for loons developed rapidly. She

more than she has given through her volunteer activities at The Loon Center and encourages others, who have the time and inclination, to come join in the fun, camaraderie and satisfaction that are all part of the volunteering experience at The Loon Center. Her respect for life has motivated Anne to follow a vegan diet and lifestyle for over 20 years. She has an honesty and sense of humor that entertains us all.

As the go-to person for all of our unfinished, back-burner tasks when there just are not enough hours in the week, Anne is an invaluable asset to LPC's Center



Anne has a particular knack for spotting flaws and ensuring that defective t-shirts and other items get returned to the manufacturer for credit.

You'll see Anne at our summer Festival and at our winter Holi-

*Anne feels she has received far more than she has given through her volunteer activities at The Loon Center and encourages others, who have the time and inclination, to come join in the fun, camaraderie and satisfaction that is all part of the volunteering experience at The Loon Center.*

has been fortunate to be present during two loon rescues: a chick stranded in a rapidly freezing pond last fall and an adult struck down by a bird of prey and struggling to propel itself across a still-frozen lake this spring. Seeing the care with which the LPC staff treated these two injured loons enhanced her admiration for and commitment to the LPC's mission. Anne feels she has received far

Manager in the Gift Shop and to its Development and Membership Coordinator with the mailings. And in the Loon's Feather Gift Shop volunteers and staff have benefitted from Anne's t-shirt folding expertise and guidance. In our goal of providing our customers with an unequalled selection of loon-themed merchandise, every item has to be examined for defects before being put on display.

day Open House lending a hand at the register after helping with set-up and before staying late to assist in the clean-up. Please give her a hearty "Thank you!" as she deserves our utmost gratitude.

Thank you, Anne, from all of the staff and volunteers at The Loon Center.

*~Nancy McDonald*



## *New Birdathon/Bloomathon Record Set*

The Tamworth area Birdathon/Bloomathon – the oldest continuous such event in the state – set a new bird record this year. Even though May 21st was another gray and rainy Spring day, the team was able to count 119 bird species and 77 blooms in Tamworth and contiguous towns.

Wild Calla and Nodding Trillium, not seen in previous years, were spotted by Jane Rice and John Cooley, making a total of 77 wild blooms counted this year.

Five kinds of shorebirds were spotted at the gravel pit while birding eastern Sandwich and western Tamworth. A second stop at the gravel pit at the cranberry bog/lake produced 21 drake Wood Ducks and one hen.

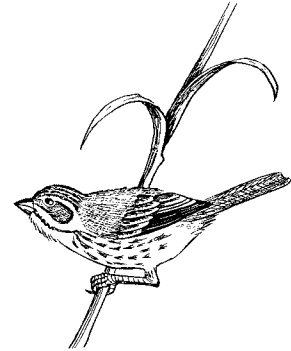
At 3400' on Sandwich Dome, Lynne and Vince Route picked up Bicknell's Thrush and Boreal Chickadees, while Tiffany saw 200 White-winged Scoters and 4 Bonaparte's Gulls on the Sandwich/Moultonborough part of Squam Lake.

The Tamworth area Birdathon/Bloomathon is a team fundraising event involving Loon Center staff, Tamworth Conservation Commission and Lakes Region Audubon volunteers. Donations support Loon Preservation Committee programs and Lakes Region Chapter of Audubon's free, open to the public, wildlife programs held at The Loon Center from Fall through Spring.

Sincere thanks to our Birda-

thon/Bloomathon supporters and Team members: Chris Clyne, John Cooley, Bob Crowley, Tiffany Grade, Gloria Hoag, Jane Rice, Lynne & Vince Route, Joe Scott, and Tony Vazzano.

~Lin O'Bara



## *LPC Welcomes Anna Koester*

The Loon Preservation Committee (LPC) is delighted to welcome Anna Koester as Loon Center Assistant. A recent graduate of Fordham University, Anna comes to LPC with an extensive and impressive background in retail and gallery work. Most recently, she served as the Gallery Assistant and Front Desk Sales Associate at the St. Lawrence County Arts Council in Potsdam, New York. This involved working with a small team on projects that facilitated the growth and promotion of the arts in northern New York. Anna managed all sales data, the Arts Council website, and the online gift shop, as well as the artist directory. She successfully merchandised the shop to reflect welcoming and seasonally appropriate displays. Given her sunny disposition there's no doubt she was the quintessential

greeter!

Anna will oversee marketing, press releases and event planning at The Loon Center, as well as assist Nancy McDonald (Loon Center Manager) with attending to guests and merchandise in The Loon's Feather Gift Shop. She has hit the ground running and is already a much admired and productive member of our team!

~Linda Egli Johnson



*Anna Koester*



### *Annual Benefit Raffle: Take a Chance for Loons!*

The Annual Benefit Raffle is a big money maker for LPC and New Hampshire's loons. Thanks to the generosity of local supporters of LPC, we have three impressive items to raffle again this year. Winners have hailed from as far away as Hawaii and Ontario! Tickets will be mailed shortly to our members and are \$5.00 each or 3/\$10.00. Additional tickets can be purchased at The Loon Center or by phone (603-476-5666). Don't miss out on a chance to win one of these amazing raffle items!

#### **"Finally Summer" Quilt**

It's been a long winter but now we're on the verge of summer with all its wonderful activities. Swimming and boating on the lake, local flowers, small critters, ducks, loons and the Loon Preservation Committee logo are all featured in this masterfully designed quilt. Approximately 80" x 90" in size, the quilt is hand appliquéd, depicting the best of summer memories on the lake. Adapted from an original design by Cindy Taylor Clark of Embden, ME, four talented women from the Lakes Region donated many hours of work to the quilt. They are Joan Colona of Meredith, Frieda Haynes of South Berwick, ME, Stephanie Drake of Lakeport, and Nancy Collins of North Sandwich. The piece was machine quilted by Dick Castrucci of Laconia.

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#### **Old Town, "Vapor 10" Kayak**

This 10' kayak sports a "cloud" finish of blue and white. Weighing 48 pounds, it has a built-in carry handle, adjustable foot pegs, thigh pads, and an adjustable Comfort Flex padded seat. These are just a few amenities that come with this portable, recreational kayak.

The kayak is compliments of



LPC Board member Bill Irwin of Irwin Marine ([www.irwinmarine.com](http://www.irwinmarine.com)).

#### **Emerald Lake – Loons by Susan Bourdet**

This lovely, limited edition print of two loons gliding peacefully on "Emerald Lake" was donated by The Loon's Feather Gift Shop with the exquisite matting and burled wood framing donated by our good friends Suzette and David Winchester of The Blue Shutter Gallery in Wolfeboro, NH.

## *The Squam Swim Celebrates its Sixth Year*

**I**t might seem that loons on Squam Lake have little reason to be thankful over the past several years; since their numbers plummeted between 2004 and 2005, the loon population on Squam has struggled, raising an average of fewer than three chicks each year. But a group of concerned friends of the loons, led by Wendy Van de Poll, has taken up the cause of Squam's loons. This summer will mark the sixth time that first Wendy, and then a group of swimmers, have raised funds by swimming the seven-mile length of Squam Lake, and the fifth time that this tremendous effort has benefitted Squam's loons.

This year's team of intrepid swimmers includes Wendy and husband Rick Van de Poll; veteran swimmers Rose de Mars and Blair Newcomb; and enthusiastic newcomers Jacob Jason, Mark Longly and Sara Prouty. The Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, LPC's valued collaborator on Squam Lake, has generously offered to donate a boat and boat captain Dale Lary to the cause. The Squam swimmers will be training throughout July for an early August swim.

Donations raised through the efforts of these dedicated swimmers will fund LPC's Squam Lake Loon Initiative, an ongoing effort to increase monitoring, research, management and outreach on the lake to benefit its loons. Support gained through The Swim will allow LPC to extend its field seasons on Squam; test for contaminants and pathogens to increase our understanding of the role they play in loon mortality and reproductive failure; track changes in pathogens and contaminant levels over time; educate lake users to



*Wendy and Rick Van de Poll share a congratulatory embrace following a recent Squam Swim. Wendy was the maiden Squam Swimmer having swum solo (with Rick following closely alongside) to bring awareness to a declining loon population on Squam Lake back in 2004.*

**“N**ever doubt that a small group of concerned and committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, that's the only thing that ever has.” ~Margaret Mead

encourage a culture of respect and appreciation for loons; and increase our management to help loons cope with their challenges on Squam.

As of this writing, we have seven pairs of loons on the nest on Squam, a hopeful sign for a good breeding season this year. We are confident that LPC's increased efforts, and the continued support of friends of Squam loons, will recover a healthy population of

loons on Squam. Please see LPC's website, [www.loon.org](http://www.loon.org), for more information on the Squam Lake Loon Initiative. To pledge your support for the swimmers and for Squam Lake loons, call LPC at 603-476-5666 or visit the [www.loon.org](http://www.loon.org) "donations" page and note "SWIM" in the donation box.

Thank you for your support!

~Harry Vogel

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

Many of our members and visitors, and other loon lovers looking for gifts for friends and family or decor for their homes, live great distances from The Loon's Feather Gift Shop. There has been increasing demand for an expanded online store and we have responded by adding new items monthly. Please don't hesitate to call about products you seek or to place an order directly. We will email or mail photos upon request. Customers have requested a print-out of every book available in the store or photos of our jewelry selection, or have asked us to locate and purchase out-of-print books for them. We are willing and waiting to hear from you!

New merchandise from domestic and local sources includes a custom-designed line based upon the John James Audubon Plate 306, Common Loon image; apron, hand towel, ladies tee shirt and tote are hand-printed by a home-based Maine artist.

We are happy to order any of the Village Wrought Iron line of switch and outlet plates, bathroom and kitchen accessories, and housewares drop-shipped to your home or business. The items are manufactured in upstate New York and the variety is extensive. We are only able to display about a dozen of the loon items in the gift shop.

We look forward to assisting you with any and all of your loon needs!

*~Nancy McDonald, Loon Center Manager*

## Loon Preservation Committee Annual Meeting

August 25th, 2011; 8:30 p.m.

The LPC Annual Meeting will take place immediately following the 2011 Loon Season Report by LPC Executive Director 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.



Photo Courtesy of Kattie Wilson



# Summer 2011 Nature Talk Series

at The Loon Center

Lee's Mill Road, Moultonborough, NH

(603) 476-5666

7:30 p.m. ♦ Admission Free ♦ Donations Appreciated

**Thursday, July 7**

## **LOONS – The Call of the Wild**

Loon Preservation Committee Director Harry Vogel and award-winning nature photographer John Rockwood team up for a presentation for loon lovers. John's slide 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 14**

## **Clean Water Starts in Your Backyard**

Join Sheela Johnson for an eye-opening presentation on water quality issues. Nutrients, mercury and acid deposition affect our wetland habitats and are especially relevant to loons. With her EnviroScape Watershed Model she'll instruct us on what we can all do in our daily lives to improve and protect water quality. Sheela Johnson is a hydrologist for the White Mountain National Forest.

**Thursday, July 21**

## **Bats**

Leighlan Prout, Wildlife/TES Program Leader for the White Mountain National Forest, will update us on white-nose syndrome. This devastating condition has been decimating hibernating bat populations for the last 4 years. Learn the signs and symptoms of the disease, what's been done on a national and regional level, and what's been happening around the White Mountains.

**Thursday, July 28**

## **Northern Forest Songbirds**

Join Iain MacLeod, Executive Director of the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, for an in-depth workshop focusing on the birds that inhabit New Hampshire's boreal forests. Learn to identify Black-backed Woodpeckers, Boreal Chickadee, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, crossbills, kinglets, and the huge variety of northern forest dwelling warblers.

**Thursday, August 4**

## **The History of Hiking in the White Mountains**

If you have wondered why trails in the Northeast's most jaw-dropping range go straight up, rather than follow switchbacks, come hear an illustrated talk by Appalachia journal editor Chris Woodside on trail-following in the Whites going back to Thoreau, whom many thought strange. She will cover trail-making, women's notable exploits, horse riders, peak baggers, and the unprepared.

**Thursday, August 11**

## **What's the Buzz on Honeybees?**

Learn about the exciting and industrious life of the honeybee, the importance of honey bees to agriculture, and the latest research in the fight to save the bees, from Wendy Booth, NH Beekeeper of the Year 2008. There will be honey for tasting and honey and lip balm available for purchase. Wendy is currently the NH Beekeepers Vice President and Newsletter Editor.

**Thursday, August 18**

## **Moose on the Loose!**

Wildlife biologist Judy Silverberg of the New Hampshire Fish & Game will share slides and stories about the adaptations and behavior of the state's largest mammal. From a demonstration of a moose call to a close look at a moose hide, Judy's presentation will enthrall young and old alike.

**Thursday, August 25**

## **2011 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.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NORDEL GAGNON



# VOLUNTEER SNAPSHOTS



*First hovercraft rescue of a stranded loon: LPC Senior Biologist John Cooley assisted by hovercraft crew Jerry Whiteleather and Caroline McNerny (not pictured), retrieve an injured loon from the ice of Winnepesaukee in early April.*



*First raft launch by sailboat: At Roberts Cove on Lake Winnepesaukee, volunteers Jeannie and Duff Lewis recruited neighbor Tom Stephens' daysailer for a raft launching at Plum Island.*



*Thanks to Bob and Dale Cunningham from Rockybound Pond in Croydon who helped crank out 4 new nest rafts at a morning work session on May 6. Bob's chain saw skills made short work of the pile of cedar logs purchased from Goodridge Lumber in northeastern Vermont. The finished rafts are heavy (back-breakingly heavy), but stable in the water, and sturdy enough to last a decade, or more.*



*Volunteer Larry Metcalf laughs – a bad joke but a good day – on the Connecticut Lakes, with Mount Magalloway in the background.*

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

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
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MOULTONBOROUGH, NH  
PERMIT NO. 12

# Carl R. Johnson Memorial Golf Tournament

August 15, 2011

Ridgewood Country Club, Moultonborough NH



Photo courtesy of Jordan Prouty

Carl Johnson and Luis Tiant, Ridgewood Country Club, 2008

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*