



Loon Preservation Committee **NEWSLETTER**

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

FALL 2015



Photo Courtesy of Kittie Wilson

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.

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Strikes and Gutters

It is appropriate and necessary at times for a director to sit back to take stock of successes and anticipate future challenges of an organization. I have had occasion to do both over the past few months as I've worked to wrestle the considerable breadth of LPC's activities, and the accomplishments we can report as a result of them, into a 40-Year Report that will soon arrive at your door or mailbox.

It is an impressive list of achievements for a small organization (I can say this because I am a relative newcomer to LPC), and it has frankly been difficult to decide what to include in that report. Many considered the loss of our loons to be the inevitable price of progress in New Hampshire; certainly our work to reverse their fortunes has resulted in growth that has at times seemed painfully slow and not always steady. The threats facing our loons have been steady in their increase though, and we have risen to those challenges and increased our research, management and education to help our loons overcome them. And we have been successful, despite the long odds facing loons and non-profit organizations, in not only halting the decline of loons but in more than tripling their numbers, and in the process returning loons to many lakes that had been waiting for long years.

Our successes have been the result of careful science to identify the factors limiting our loon populations; focused management to help loons overcome the threats our research has revealed; and most of all, education of lake users, the public, and decision-makers to create a culture of respect and appreciation that would allow loons to persist and thrive in the company of people. There can be no doubt that the results of this comprehensive conservation effort have had their desired result to date; the Loon Preservation Committee has surprised even the most optimistic among us in its persistence and its success in helping loons overcome their trials over the past 40 years. At the same time we have learned painful lessons about the effects on our loons of everyday practices like fishing with lead tackle, and the long-lasting consequences of population crashes on lakes like Umbagog and Squam. These issues have revealed that our loon populations are living on the edge, and how little it takes to push them over that precipice. Our challenge in the next 40 years will be to stay ahead of those old and new challenges through the continued application of the core principles that have served loons so well since LPC's inception.

Those new challenges will demand more of us than we've yet been called on to give — but we've not yet failed a task that has been set us. In the process, as the success of this little organization has become widely renowned, LPC has provided a model for loon and other wildlife restoration programs throughout the United States and Canada. Here's to another 40 years of stretching to do great things.



Summer 2015 Field Season Summary

Winni Leads the Way Again

For the second year in a row, Lake Winnepesaukee led New Hampshire's loon population in nesting success, paving the way for a banner season across the state. This year, Loon Preservation Committee field staff and volunteers observed 211 nesting pairs, with 142 successful nest attempts and 79 nest failures. The successful pairs hatched 234 chicks, of which 174 survived to mid-August, the end of routine monitoring. As early hatch reports began to come in during the first half of June, we watched the rainy forecast with bated breath, hoping that shoreline nests would not be flooded. Luck was on the loon's side in most cases: they hatched before the water rose, or waited to start nesting until after the storm events, or used a floating nest raft that could "ride the tide," or built their natural nests higher underneath the eggs, stay-

ing just ahead of the rising lake levels. In spite of June precipitation that was 40% higher than normal, the end result was a bumper crop of loon chicks—the highest nesting success in over a decade. The average rate this year—0.60 chicks produced per pair—has only been surpassed in two other years over the last thirty.

How lucky is it to have such a good season? The strong nesting success was spread evenly throughout the state, from Monadnock and Sunapee regions to central New Hampshire and Umbagog in the north, with more lackluster results in the North Country, Seacoast, and on Squam. Nesting loons making their annual gamble could put their chips down on any lake in the state and stand an equal chance, favored by weather conditions that prevailed throughout New Hampshire this season. Success, for these gambling loons, is not so much the

improbable appearance of cherries in all three slot machine windows but avoiding the abundant lemons: rain, heat waves, black flies, raccoons, rival loons. To the extent that favorable weather removed what is usually one of the biggest constraints, this was a year when nesting loons came that much closer to realizing their unconstrained potential. As LPC works to manage nest sites to mitigate stressors, this potential for success is informative. This year we could see how well loons can do when—either through luck or our mitigating management—they are less constrained.

But it's not all luck, this loon nesting. The breakout success on Winnepesaukee for a second year in a row, with 29 chicks hatched, and the continued success in the Sunapee region, suggest that these local subpopulations may have settled into a sort of groove of their own, that can take advantage

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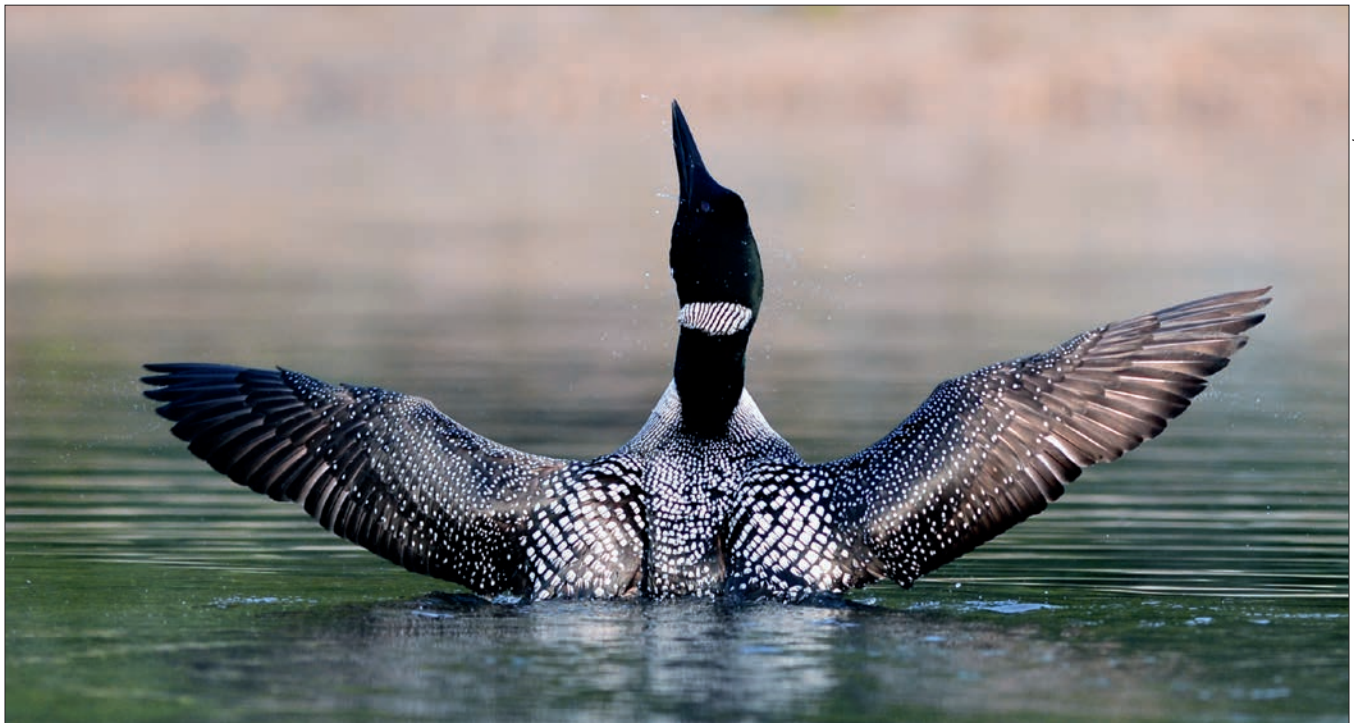


Photo Courtesy of Kitle Wilson

Table 1: Results and Highlights for 2015 Common Loon Breeding Season in New Hampshire

Population and Productivity	2015	Pre-Loon Recovery Plan (2005-2009 avg.)	2015 vs. Pre-Loon Recovery Plan
Territorial Loon Pairs	289	231	+25%
Immatures	2	5	-60%
Nesting Pairs	211	155	+37%
Chicks Hatched	234	138	+70%
Chicks Surviving to Mid-August	174	105	+66%
Nest Failures	79	78	+1%
Chicks Surviving/Territorial Pair	0.60	0.46	+31%



Management Activity

Rafts (including Umbagog NWR)	85	56	+52%
Signs/Ropes	103	61	+69%
Successful Rescue/Releases	4	2.4	+67%

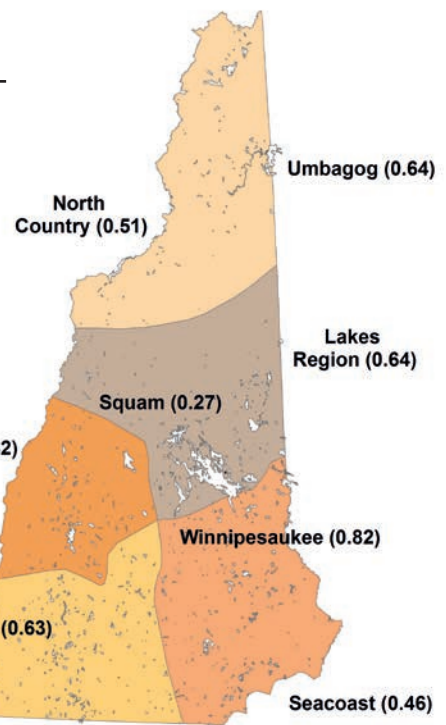


Photo Courtesy of Kitten Wilson



LPC monitoring regions each have a field biologist—labels indicate 2015 breeding success (chicks produced per territorial pair).

1st Time Pairs Kilton Pond

1st Successful Nesting Pairs (Fledged Chicks) Adder Pond, Highland Lake-Stoddard, Kezar Lake, Pearl Lake, Province Lake, Shellcamp Pond, Sunapee Lake, Wachipauka

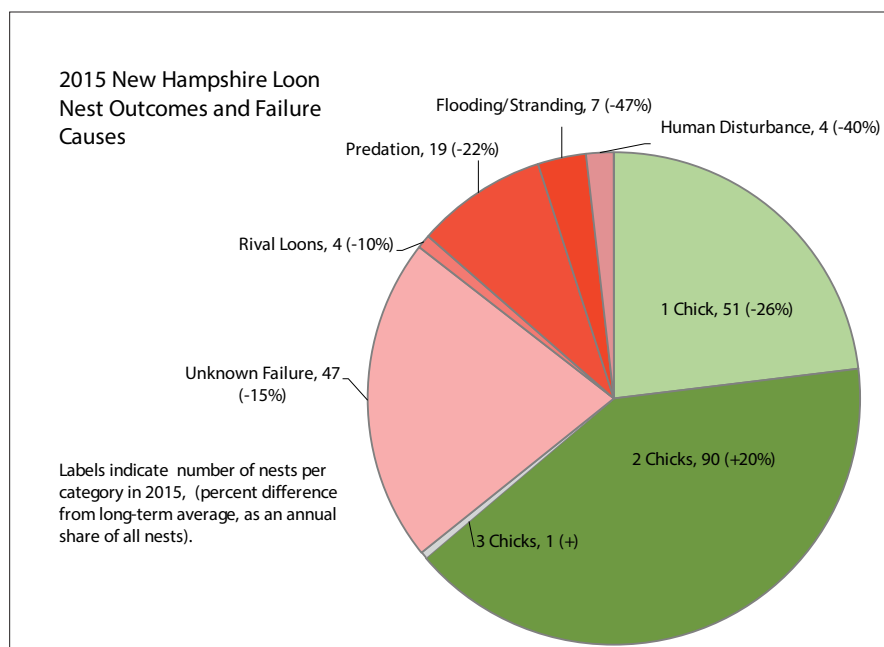
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age of favorable weather years. This, we speculate, is the opposite of the turbulence, or social chaos, that has reigned on lakes like Squam and Umbagog in the last decade. If there is some collective behavioral or social aspect to the recent successes on Winnepesaukee, we can only hope that it will perpetuate itself in 2016 and beyond.

In contrast to the number of loon chicks this year, the size of the 2015 adult loon population in New Hampshire was unremarkable, virtually unchanged from 2014. We counted exactly the same number of occupied territories this year and last: 289 loon pairs (or 578 breeding adults) established a pair bond and defended a territory for at least four weeks. This plateau is not unexpected. We are beginning to see the effects of poor nesting years earlier in the last decade and the continued toll taken by human-caused adult mortalities. Low breeding success 5 or 10 years ago means fewer young adult loons returning to fill natural vacancies, recolonize unoccupied lakes, and to continue recovering the population.

And Miles to Go Before I Sleep...

It was another banner year for LPC field staff as well, logging over 2,500 individual site surveys on almost 500 potential or occupied loon territories, covering over 360 lakes. Surveys of over 120 suitable but previously unoccupied lakes – our Tier 3 waterbodies – turned up new or renewed loon activity on a handful, from Burns Pond in the North Country to Messer Pond in the west, to Lee's Pond, a stone's throw from The Loon Center. Our monitoring of these many suitable lakes for new activity is key to tracking the loon population's painstakingly slow recolo-



Nest outcomes from a banner year. Nest failures were down across the board and the fraction of successful nests with two chicks hatched was unusually high.

nization of all of this available habitat.

Thank you to all the volunteers who provided lake access, boat rides, and the scoop on recent loon activity to guide our surveys.

From Umbagog: a hat trick and an old-timer, going strong

Like most of the rest of New Hampshire, loons on Umbagog had an unusually good breeding year, fledging a total of nine chicks from nine nests. But one Umbagog pair trumped all other nests with a hat trick: three loon chicks from the same nest! At Three Island Cove in early July, Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge technician Daniel Eastland was excited to discover the loon pair brooding three small loon chicks. Three chick broods sometimes form when a young chick from a neighboring territory strays and joins two others. But in this case there weren't any nearby broods that could easily account for the extra chick, and the likeliest explanation appears to be a

true 3-egg clutch, the rarest of rarities in loon nesting behavior.

Although in recent years we wondered whether she had finally retired from active breeding, New Hampshire's oldest known loon, the Sweat's Meadow female banded as an adult in 1993 and therefore at least 27 years old, also returned to her old form this season on Umbagog and hatched two chicks, after 8 years of nest failures in the last 10. How long can she keep this up? Albatrosses – close evolutionary cousins to loons – have been known to breed successfully into their mid-60s! The continued fecundity of the Sweat's Meadow female is testimony to the importance of each individual adult loon in sustaining the population; each one really does make a (long-term!) difference.

They did it!

For the first time in 40 years loons nested successfully at Sunapee Lake in 2015, hatching and

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fledging two chicks. The successful pair nested on a raft built and floated by LPC volunteers and succeeded this year after two unsuccessful attempts last year. The successful hatch of two healthy chicks was a particular relief after analysis of an inviable egg from the 2014 Sunapee nest revealed alarmingly high contaminant concentrations, including levels for five toxins (PCBs, PFOS, DDT, PCDD/F, and PBDE 99) that were two or three times the levels known to cause harm in other bird species. Heralded by an enthusiastic network of loon watchers on Sunapee, the 2015 success involved a flotilla of warning signs alerting boaters to the new presence of loon chicks on the water, and accompanying outreach, spreading the word around the lake. With pairs established or forming in two other locations on the lake, Sunapee will likely continue to reflect the ongoing recovery of loons in New Hampshire with more new nests and loon chicks in the near future.

Management

A good amount of human blood, sweat, and aching back muscles went into the boom year for nesting loons in 2015. Nearly a quarter of all hatched chicks came from nest rafts floated by LPC volunteers and staff, and over half of all hatched chicks came from sites with a raft or protective nest signs or signs and ropelines. Enabled by funding received to support LPC's Loon Recovery Plan, we floated 180 signs, buoys, and in some cases ropelines at 100 nest sites. Over 70 of these floating signs were then used with chick warning placards or sleeves to protect brooding areas, once the nests had hatched. These signs and ropelines are often the most visible claim that loons have to pro-



Photo Courtesy of David Blohm, Blohmphoto

tection on the lake. Thank you to the countless volunteers who lent their toolsheds, rowboats, and, yes, sore backs and elbow grease to the work of lugging these signs into place.

In 2015 LPC also continued our water-level outreach, contacting 89 dam owners on 167 lakes around the state at the start of the nesting season, to ensure stable water levels. This paid off once again on Franklin Pierce Lake, where dam operations to stabilize the lake level prevented nest flooding. Water level outreach included 68 active nest sites. All told, between this outreach and the rafts, ropes, and signs, 92% of loon chicks hatched in New Hampshire this year came from territories managed in some way by LPC staff and volunteers.

Mortalities and Rescues

To date in 2015 we have collected 13 adult loon mortalities, including 7 that were rescued alive but did not survive, 12 juvenile loon mortalities, and 3 immature loons (1-2 year olds). Although necropsies and confirmation are still pending for some of these cases (see NHVDL sidebar, page 7), preliminary results indicate that at least six of the adult mortalities were caused by lead fishing tackle, two were

caused by monofilament entanglement, and one had injuries consistent with a boat strike. Human-caused adult loon mortalities stand at 69% of the total collected so far this year and are likely to rise before year end. The high rate of human-caused mortalities remains the biggest hurdle for population recovery in New Hampshire and the easiest to fix. Please remember to fish lead free, retrieve fishing line, and give adult and juvenile loons a wide berth on the lakes!



The One That Got A way

Some loons (and loon rescuers) got lucky this year – we were able to successfully rescue and release four adult loons and one chick (and a red-throated loon, to boot). We also tried, and tried again, to

assist several loons that repeatedly got away. On Winnisquam Lake, multiple attempts throughout the month of June confirmed that an entangled loon was still mobile, in spite of a large stick caught in fishing line against its back and tail. Loons on Ossipee and Locke Lake also garnered the concern of locals for several weeks but always stayed farther than a net's length from would-be rescuers. LPC staff made at least three attempts at each lake to find and catch these loons. An impromptu rescue by passersby on Rt 145 in Colebrook of a tangled loon in early September, that had coincidentally been rescued and untangled two years ago on Big Diamond Pond, was not successful, and the loon was euthanized. Successful or not, these loon rescues inevitably require coordination and teamwork for the loon volunteers, field staff, and cooperating agencies like NH Fish and Game. We appreciated all the help and energy devoted to this response this year, by all these different players.

Banded Loons

In 2015 LPC volunteers and field crew resighted a record number of previously banded loons across the state. Of 410 loons that have been banded in the last 23 years, 103 were resighted this year. Although only a few of these loons have survived from the earliest years of the banding project in the mid-1990s, each confirmed return adds critical data to LPC's ongoing estimates of adult loon survival rates and behavior, and the conservation work informed by those estimates. We profiled a 17-year old loon hatched at Grafton Pond and now breeding in southwestern New Hampshire in our summer newsletter, and we mention the

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A Renewed Collaboration:

The 2015 field season featured an expanded role for LPC's ongoing investigation into causes of loon mortality including long-time collaborator, Dr. Mark Pokras, and former LPC Tufts intern, Dr. Inga Sidor. Dr. Sidor, now a senior veterinary pathologist and clinical associate professor at the University of New Hampshire (UNH) and the New Hampshire Diagnostic Laboratory (NHVDL), trained at Tufts with Dr. Pokras, publishing research on loon mortality causes and hematology with Pokras and others. Since then, she has trained in pathology at UConn, followed by a post-doc at Mystic Aquarium working with aquatic and marine mammal species, and now investigates disease mechanisms in both domestic animals and wildlife through her work at UNH. While some causes of mortality (such as the ingestion of lead fishing tackle) are obvious on necropsy, others require more in-depth investigation. This summer, Dr. Pokras and Dr. Sidor collaborated on necropsies in cases where a recent mortality could be recovered quickly, in time to allow histopathology—the microscopic examination of fresh tissue samples—at NHVDL. Samples are preserved, fixed in paraffin, cross-sectioned (to just a few microns thickness!) and mounted on glass slides. Under a microscope, these slides reveal the underlying pathologies of the animal. A fungal infection appears as a forest of hyphae, sporulating in the loon's lungs. A single cell hijacked by developing parasites in the brain tissue may indicate a fatal avian malaria infection. And through these findings we gain insight into important challenges for loons. For example, the impact of novel pathogens that may proliferate under a changing climate, and the subtle and various signs (like fungal infections) of physiological stress that could be associated with human disturbance or natural causes. All of these are visible at the minute scale of the pathologist's microscope. We are excited to have Dr. Sidor's participation in the team of experts working with Dr. Pokras to study loon mortality, and for her part, Dr. Sidor, who grew up spending time on Lake Winnepesaukee, has said she is glad for the opportunity to resume her work with loons.



A parasitic meront (an intracellular cluster of developing malaria organisms) is visible in the wall of a capillary in this cross-section of brain tissue from a loon mortality on Lake Umbagog in June 2015. Prepared and examined by Dr. Sidor at NHVDL.

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success this year of the oldest known loon in the Northeast, the Sweat's Meadow 1993 female, above. Other notable resights include a new male pair member on the south end of Grafton Pond who was banded as a juvenile in 2010 on nearby Pleasant Lake, New London, and the successful return of the male loon at Martin Meadow Pond in Lancaster, after he was rescued and treated for a very mild case of lead poisoning in December, 2014. In 2015, LPC field staff completed 10 nights of capture work, banding 14 loons and recapturing 3 previously banded loons for sampling.

Webcam

With funding from the Loon-Recovery Plan, we streamed a second season of live nest video to our website in June and July, featuring another successful loon hatch. In 2015 the nestcam continued to be a very popular destination on our website and a valuable source of information on nesting behavior, 24/7!

2015 Field Volunteers

A dedicated corps of grassroots volunteer observers once again sustained Loon Preservation Committee field monitoring and outreach in 2015. Along with the tried and true, we welcomed an infusion of new enthusiasm. Newcomers (to us) like Charlie Ash on Kezar Lake, Angela and David Mourer on Northwood (see side bar), Lucinda Boutin (aka Our Lady of Massabesic Lake) on Massabesic, and, collectively, the efforts of the Tin Mountain Birding Society group in the Lakes Region all brought a fresh perspective and great energy to the cause. The Tin Mountain crew were trained by Lakes Region volunteer Dana Duxbury-Fox, and spread out to canvass some of the remote lakes in the White

Here is a slightly edited snapshot of loon watch duties from one of our new recruits this year, Angela Michaud-Mourer. Visit her blog for more: <http://indomitableangela.blogspot.com/>. Thank you, Angela!

ONE LOON SHORT OF A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN:



The loons' calls have been the background music to some of the happiest times of my life. So, it seemed to be a natural for me to volunteer for the Loon Preservation Committee...that sounds good, right? Watch loons, all summer? I'm in. Good grief, am I in.

Well, it turns out being a Loon Watcher isn't just about watching loons...Put that together with my natural ability to go all in on everything I do, and you end up where I am right now, One Loon Short of a Nervous Breakdown.

A Loon Watcher...counts loons, watches for nesting pairs, watches nests, finds failed nests, retrieves parts of nests, retrieves parts of eggs [with express permission from LPC staff, ed.], identifies loons on the lake by bobbing in her boat in the hot sun, peering through binoculars for hours on end trying to catch the colors of the bands on a loon leg, and sometimes takes calls for emergencies involving a loon. She fends off dopes who do not know that a momma loon is screaming its brains out at them because it doesn't want them any closer than 100 feet.

Through her binoculars, she will see that the parents are instinctively allowing the chick to venture away from them as it learns to dive and feed on its own, and when she sees this, she will look to the sky for the eagles, look to the lake for the boats, and pray that the baby's instinct to dive has kicked in, even at such a young age.

A loon watcher also gets to have fascinating conversations on docks, decks, in boats, with residents of the lake. She gets more fresh air than half the people her age, she laughs and smiles and tans and sleeps well at night. People on the lake call her "the loon lady" and that's an honor to her. People on the lake know her red mahogany boat, and know that they are always welcome to bob next to her on the lake for a good chat. She makes friends, she finds helpers, and she writes newsletters that people actually read and enjoy. She receives the support of people who were once strangers. This loon watcher knows that behind every successful woman there is a man rolling his eyes, paddling a kayak, driving a boat, and cheering her on. She knows that her first season as a loon watcher would have been impossible without that man named Dave standing beside and behind her. And, somewhere in there, a few other cheerleaders show up on the scene to keep her going. And, so she does. And, every evening when the sun goes down, she once again is serenaded by the loons who have brought so much joy to her life, for so long.

Mountains—hiking in to Sawyer Pond or mountain biking up the closed road to Mountain Pond, as well as regular stops at more accessible lakes in the Mount Washington Valley. Many thanks to Rick Steber, Bill Petry, Tim Keith, Johanna Vienneau, and staff at the Tin Mountain Nature Center for galvanizing this effort.

We are pleased to report that over 800 field volunteers contributed over 5000 hours to loon watching, loon chick patrols, posting signs, and other tasks in 2015. These totals included over 500 loon watchers who were active throughout the season—a new high. Many of these volunteers shared stories and accomplishments from the season at three regional potlucks in mid-August. Thanks to the Enfield Shaker Museum and the Franklin Pierce Lake Association's Manahan Pavilion for hosting. If you haven't been able to make it to one, please come next season!

July Census

The July 18th census day dawned....well, not bright and clear. Undeterred by the fog and drizzle, 457 participants, including more than 45 new observers, took to the lakes from 8-9 am, to cover 121 lakes, about a third of the lakes that LPC monitors. One of our youngest participants came from Camp Deerwood on Squam Lake, while other folks have been taking part for over a decade. In fact, one observer has been doing the census since the late 1970s! This year's tally recorded 404 adult loons, 74 chicks, and 3 immatures (1-2 year olds). This represents over half of the adult loon population that LPC monitored during the whole field season, and at least one-third of the young. Census results are intended to compliment LPC field staff surveys and are incorporated

into LPC's season-long monitoring effort.

The most novel census location this year was tiny Wachipauka Pond, tucked along the Appalachian Trail in the shadow of Mt. Moosilauke, where observers recorded a pair of loons and a young chick! This pair has been noted by a few hikers in the last few years, but the census brought the first recorded instance of successful breeding on the pond in LPC's monitoring history. LPC's field biologist, Maya Rapaport, also made the trek this season and discovered the loon chick. A good hike for anyone looking for adventure during the census next year!

The census remains an extremely well-organized snapshot on 15 of New Hampshire's bigger lakes, where this coordination turned out over 200 people, almost half of all the census participants. We also saw new or renewed interest on Canobie Lake, Clarksville Pond, Cobbetts



Piermont residents rescued a stranded loon from the shoulder of Rt. 25C in mid-August. It was released on Lee's Pond in Moultonborough after an x-ray and blood test gave it a clean bill of health.

Pond, Cooks Pond, Hunts Pond, Onway Lake, and Pearl Lake. Thanks to all who coordinated and counted for your time and energy, data and stories. Save the date for the 2016 census on Saturday, July 16, from 8-9 am!

~John H. Cooley, Jr.

The many research, management and educational efforts described here were funded in large part through LPC's Loon Recovery Plan (LRP). To learn more about the LRP, please contact Harry Vogel at The Loon Center, 603-476-5666 or hvogel@loon.org.

Spotlight on a Lake: Mendums Pond, Barrington

Because of the long history of loon research and mercury (Hg) monitoring, the Seacoast Region provides an excellent opportunity to evaluate environmental policies that target Hg reduction.

~Biodiversity Research Institute Report, 2013

Camps and cottages crowd the shorelines of some lakes on New Hampshire's densely populated Seacoast. This is less true for Mendums Pond in Barrington, where the absence of public boat access, a large forestry parcel on the southeast shore, and several big islands covered in towering pines keep the human presence on the pond to the margins. Nesting on one of the half-dozen islands that dot the pond, Mendums' loons have been successful, fledging chicks in over half of our 40 years of monitoring, well above the state-wide average. They are watched over carefully by a small network of dedicated volunteers, who provide lake access for LPC field surveys.

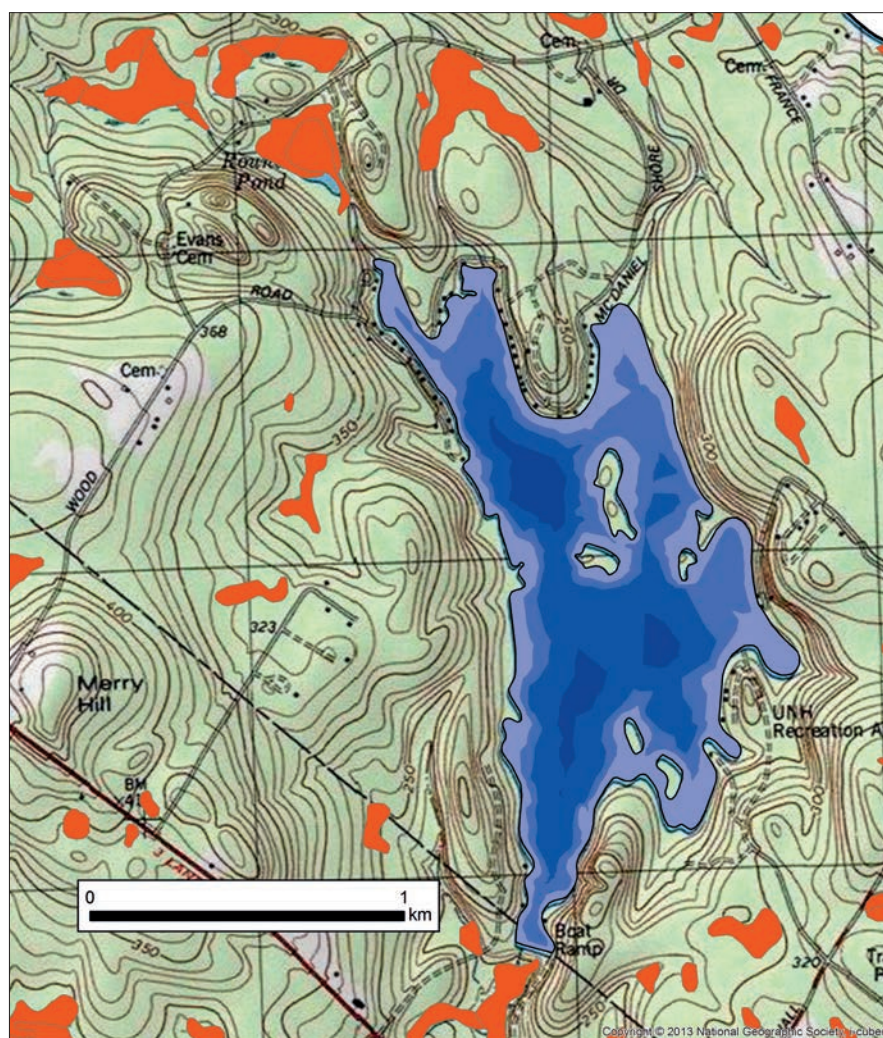
But in spite of the tranquil setting, Mendums Pond has problems. Loons here have some of the highest mercury levels in North America, and the pond is a top priority for nighttime capture work. To track this problem, LPC and Biodiversity Research Institute banding crews have made repeated visits to the pond in the last 15 years, and my own familiarity with its coves and islands comes from several of these nighttime outings—I know them well, but only as shadowy outlines in the beam of the banding spotlight. Mendums, and neighboring Seacoast lakes, occupy a biological mercury hotspot. This part of the state is at the unfortunate conflu-

ence of regional weather patterns that deposit mercury from emissions sources in Massachusetts and beyond, as well as an emission plume from Merrimack Station, a coal-burning power plant in Bow, NH. Mercury from these sources is deposited in the watershed and drains into the pond. Wetlands in the Mendums Pond watershed, and a relatively high organic matter content in the water column of the pond itself, both promote the conversion of mercury into methylmercury—the biologically available form that accumulates in the aquatic food

web (see map below). This further increases the pond's share of mercury.

Since 2000, loons captured on Mendums Pond have typically registered mercury risk assessment levels of "extremely high," or greater than 4 parts per million (ppm) blood mercury concentrations, well above the threshold of 3 ppm where studies have found observable behavioral and reproductive effects. Given this high exposure, it's likely that the historical breeding success recorded at Mendums Pond is only a sha-

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Mendums Pond and associated wetlands (in orange).



Loon Preservation Committee

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

APRIL 1, 2014 - MARCH 31, 2015

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.

This year the Loon Preservation Committee (LPC) is celebrating 40 years of work "...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." During all these years we have learned a great deal about loon biology, and in the process we have compiled the world's most comprehensive, longest-running database on the Common Loon (*Gavia immer*) in the world. This database provides our staff the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of the various management techniques LPC employs and allows us to adjust what we do in the following seasons. While we have made great progress in the last 40 years, we have a long way to go. As we look to the future we see new challenges on the horizon even as we gain more knowledge along the way.

Our fiscal year, which ended on March 31 (FY2015), was financially a good year for LPC. Our audited financials show LPC's revenue exceeded expenses for a net surplus of \$67,691 which has largely been applied to work which will be completed in FY2016. The accompanying tabulations and charts provide more details on LPC's finances.

We are looking forward to publishing our 40 Year Report in the fall outlining the current status of the Common Loon in New Hampshire and the history of LPC's efforts to manage and grow the loon population. In the coming year our trustees along with staff will be updating our Strategic Plan. Beginning this fall, we will be considering what we have accomplished in the three years since our last formal update and where we need to go in the future. We are also looking forward to the implementation next June of the lead legislation passed by the New Hampshire Legislature last year.

In closing I would like to thank all of our volunteers, members, staff, and donors for making our successes possible. I also want to thank our trustees and committee members for their support of me as Chair as well as their financial support for LPC and their hard work throughout the year.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Baker".

Ron Baker
Trustee Chair



JOHN ROCKWOOD

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*Volunteer/Outreach
Coordinator*
Chris Conrod
Staff Biologist
John H. Cooley, Jr.,
Senior Biologist
Kellee A. Duckworth,
Center Manager
Tiffany J. Grade
*Squam Lake Project
Biologist*
Holly M. Heath,
*Membership/Center
Assistant*
Linda Egli Johnson,
*Special Assistant/
Newsletter
Coordinator*
Lin L. O'Bara,
*Development
Coordinator*
Joan M. Plevich,
Database Technician
Bette Ruyffelaert
Summer Shop Assistant

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 Fiscal Year 2015 (ending March 31st of 2015), the fifth year of the Loon Recovery Plan's implementation, LPC added a 40th 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 87 loon nesting rafts, and loons nesting on those rafts hatched close to one of every five chicks hatched in the state. LPC floated "Loon Nesting Area" signs at a record 114 loon territories, and loons protected by these measures produced over half of the loon chicks hatched in New Hampshire. We also researched new and increasing threats to our loons, and gave 129 exhibits/presentations – more than twice as many as before the implementation of the Loon Recovery Plan – to teach people about loons and their needs.

The result of those unprecedented efforts was a record number of chicks on our lakes – nearly 90% of them hatched from pairs that benefitted directly from LPC's management. The 154 chicks surviving in August and presumed to have fledged from New Hampshire lakes represent a breeding success of 53 surviving chicks per 100 loon pairs, a rate that is 18% higher than before the dramatically increased management and outreach funded through the Loon Recovery Plan.

As promising as those statistics seem, we will be challenged to maintain that success rate in the face of increasing threats to our loon population – and LPC staff also collected nine adult loons that perished as a direct result of human activities. Ingested lead fishing tackle was a confirmed cause of death of four loons, with two additional loons found with lethal lead levels that were probably associated with lead tackle. LPC's data and focused outreach to legislators resulted in a major victory for loons with the passage of legislation (Senate Bill 89) in 2013 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. LPC continued to work in FY15 to encourage early adoption of the new jig standard through a range of new outreach and education initiatives.

The support of its many volunteers, members and friends allowed LPC to significantly expand its work in response to the growing challenges facing loons in FY2015. With your continued support, I am confident that we can achieve our ultimate goal of a recovered and viable loon population in New Hampshire.

Sincerely,



Harry Vogel
Senior Biologist/
Executive Director

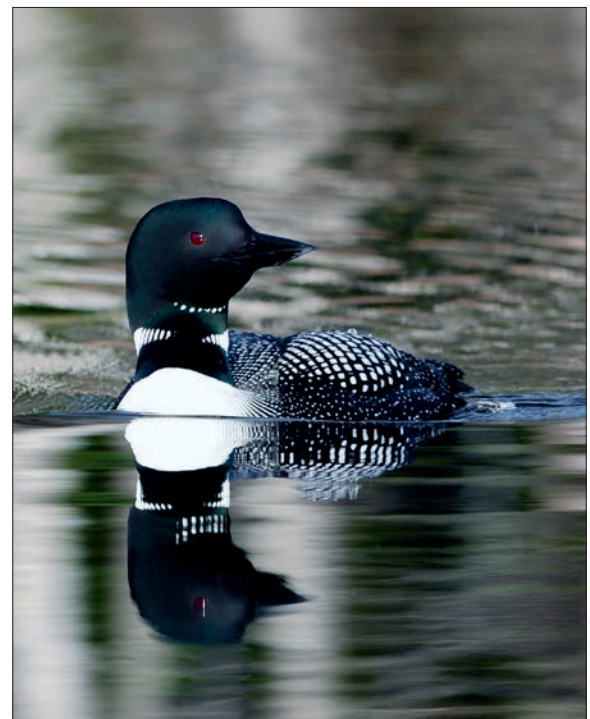
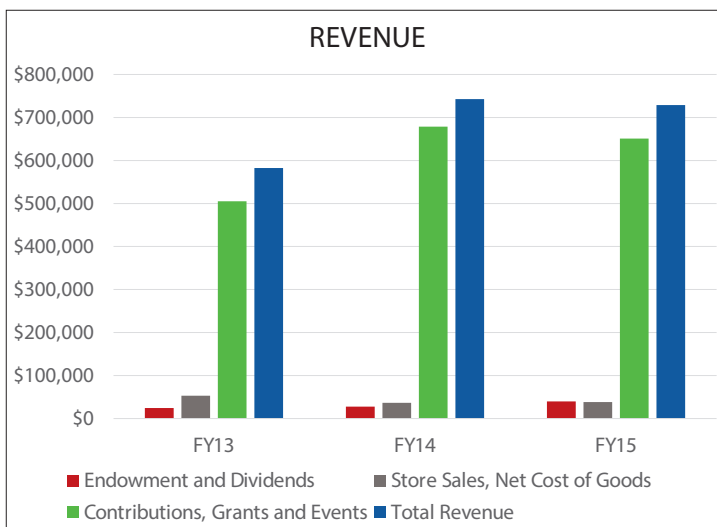
Staff Biologist Chris Conrod floats a loon nesting raft on Squam, one of 87 rafts floated by LPC staff and volunteers in the state in FY2015.



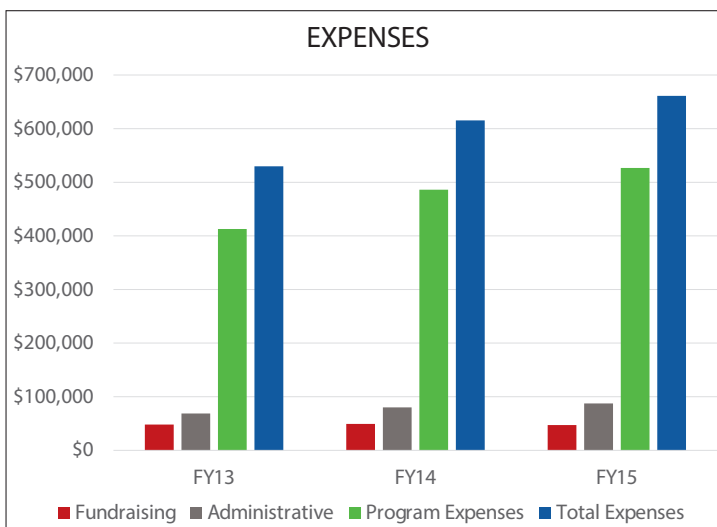
FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

Loon Preservation Committee: Summary of Activities and Changes in Net Assets
Fiscal Year Ending: March 31

	FY13	FY14	FY15
Revenue:			
Contributions, Grants and Events	\$505,241	\$678,699	\$651,074
Store Sales, Net Cost of Goods	\$53,134	\$36,439	\$38,231
Endowment and Dividends	\$24,234	\$27,701	\$39,616
Total Revenue	\$582,609	\$742,839	\$728,921
Expenses:			
Program Expenses	\$412,922	\$486,187	\$526,666
Administrative	\$68,774	\$80,002	\$87,403
Fundraising	\$48,030	\$49,211	\$47,161
Total Expenses	\$529,726	\$615,400	\$661,230
Increase in Net Assets:	\$52,883	\$127,439	\$67,691



KITTE WILSON



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.

LPC AT WORK

The Loon Preservation Committee's field program was well equipped thanks to the generous support of donors to the Loon Recovery Plan. A new field truck, web camera and heavy-duty buoy markers were among the many critical field purchases made in FY2015.



Senior Biologist/Executive Director Harry Vogel stands alongside a new field truck made possible through the generosity of a Loon Recovery Plan donor.



With funding from the Loon Recovery Plan, LPC was able to install a live web camera, streaming video of an active loon nest to the Internet.

Heavy-duty "CAUTION: LOON CHICKS" buoy markers, funded by the Loon Recovery Plan, protect loons and their chicks from busy lake traffic.



4



LPC field staff surveyed 366 lakes and just over 500 occupied or suitable loon territories, conducting over 3,000 individual surveys or visits in FY2015.

Population and Productivity:

	FY13	FY14	FY15
Territorial Loon Pairs	280	284	289
Nesting Pairs	188	180	208
Chicks Hatched	170	157	203
Chicks Surviving to mid-August	134	119	154

The goals of the 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.

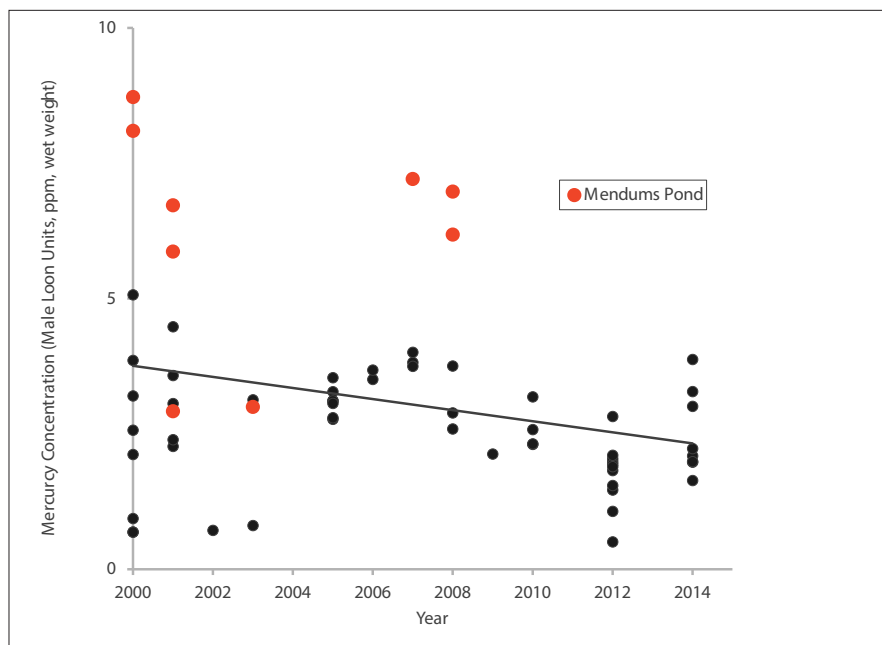
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dow of the true upper limit of potential success there, in the absence of mercury contamination.

The silver lining to the mercury story at Mendums is that a cleaner future is likely. The benefit of recent policy initiatives to reduce regional mercury emissions (based in part on data collected by LPC and BRI), including the installation in 2012 of smokestack “scrubbers” (technically, a wet-flue gas desulphurization system) at Merrimack Station, may soon be evident in lower mercury burdens in Mendums loons. Indeed, sampling from Seacoast lakes suggests that mercury levels in loons in this region are already trending downward as other regional emissions sources have been eliminated (see graph). More data from LPC’s continued mercury sampling on these lakes in the future will be vital to confirm this early trend.

A final note: if you hope to visit Mendums Pond and don’t want to wait a year or two, go soon. Repairs have already begun on the pond’s 19th-century stonework dam and will require a dramatic drawdown this fall, as much as 20-30 vertical feet. Loons and human visitors arriving next spring will find the pond reduced to half its usual area—the deeper central basin. The project is expected to be complete and the pond refilled after dam repairs are complete; hopefully by spring 2017.

~John H. Cooley, Jr.



Trends in loon mercury exposure on Seacoast New Hampshire lakes, 2000-2014, measured from loon blood samples. Data courtesy of Biodiversity Research Institute, Loon Preservation Committee and US Fish & Wildlife Service.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to all those listed below who were crucial to our work protecting loons in New Hampshire this year.

Summer Field Staff: Isabel Brintnall, Chris Conrod, Emlyn Crocker, Gary Janco, Raymond Lewis, Maya Rappaport, Tyler Remick, and Liza Wright-Fairbanks

Housing: Camp Graylag, Friends of Mead Base Conservation Center, Grafton Pond Association/Risley Family, and the Von Mertens of Peterborough

LPC intern Tori Raschke O'Toole, Tufts University DVM Candidate 2018; volunteers Emily Fiorentino, Shana Lund, Guy Pease and Bill Petry; photographers and loon watchers (too many to name) who aided in our work

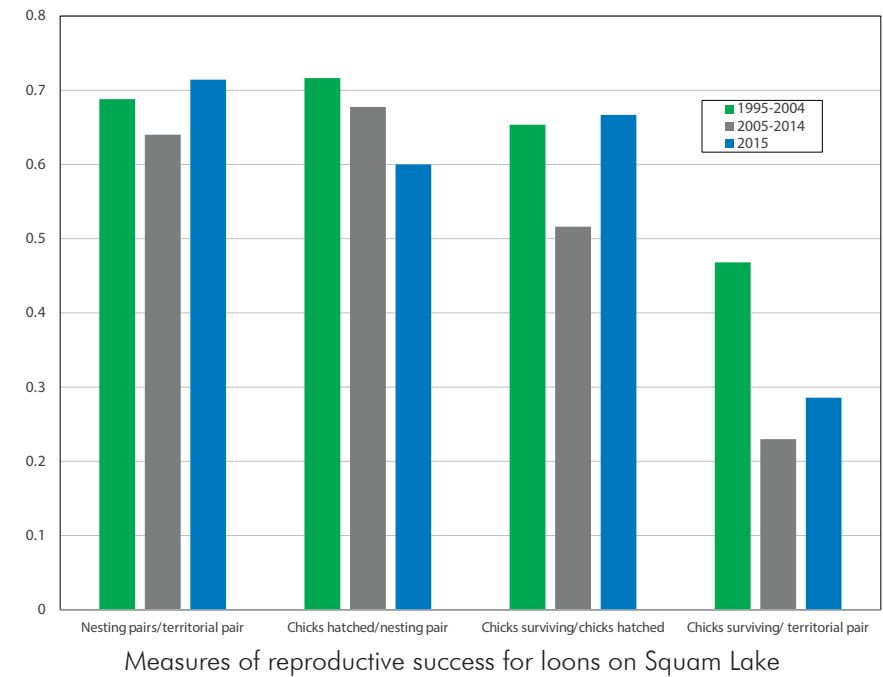
Veterinarians and Rehabilitators: Arbor Veterinary Services, Avian Haven, Concord Area Veterinary Emergency Service, Elaine Connors Center for Wildlife, Interlakes Animal Hospital, Littleton Area Veterinary Emergency Services, Meadow Pond Animal Hospital, St. Francis Bird Hospital, Tufts University Cummings School Wildlife Clinic, Weare Animal Hospital, Wings of Dawn, and the York Center for Wildlife

Collaborators: Balch Lake Marina, Biodiversity Research Institute, UNH Center for Freshwater Biology, Lake Sunapee Protective Association, Manchester Water Authority, NH Audubon, NH Veterinary Diagnostics Laboratory at UNH, NH DES Dam Bureau, NH Fish and Game, NH Marine Patrol, Mark Pokras, DVM, Public Works Departments in Concord and Keene, Squam Boat Livery, Squam Lakes Association, Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and US Forest Service

Squam Lake Loon Initiative Update: Of Loon Chicks and Mud Pies

Loon chicks are charming at any age, but a particularly delightful stage is when they are 4-6 weeks old and they are in the stage I like to call their “floating mud pie” stage—their bodies have both elongated and widened, their heads are still comically small for the size of their bodies, and they are covered in light brown down. In short, they look like floating mud pies! Squam Lake had four “floating mud pies” this year—the highest number since 2011. What was particularly exciting on Squam this year was that 10 of the 14 pairs on the lake nested, the highest number since 2010!

This is all very positive news, but Squam remains well below healthy levels of loon productivity. A look at measures of reproductive success on Squam from the pre-decline period of 1995-2004 compared with 2015 shows that Squam’s rate of chicks hatched per nesting pair remains very low—in fact, this year was lower than the most recent post-decline period of 2005-2014 (see graph). While Squam’s 10 nesting pairs in 2015 was excellent news, the fact that 7 of those pairs had failed nests was extremely disappointing. Many things contributed to those failed nests this year, from storms to disturbances from other loons (think the “social chaos” we have been seeing on



the lake in recent years) to human disturbance, while two of the nests had eggs that simply never hatched. (In fact, one nest had the dubious distinction of setting a new state record for a loon pair that determinedly sat on the eggs for 89 days before giving up. Normal incubation length is 28 days.) This poor hatching rate contributed to Squam’s still-low overall rate of 0.29 chicks surviving per territorial pair—well below the 0.48 rate needed to maintain a stable population.

Despite these reasons for concern, I am cautiously optimistic about the outlook for Squam’s

loon population following the 2015 season. The substantial increases in 2015 in nesting pairs per territorial pair and chicks surviving per chicks hatched—and even the slight increase in chicks surviving per territorial pair—compared with the previous ten years is a step in the right direction. Squam’s loons still have a ways to go to recover a healthy loon population, but I am hopeful they are on the way and, with the help of LPC’s research and management on the lake, we will have more “floating mud pies” in the future.

Which brings us to another type of mud pie—I have spent much of the fall collecting sediment samples from tributaries flowing into Squam Lake as part of LPC’s ongoing effort to identify sources of contaminants found in Squam loon eggs, including flame retardants, stain repellants, PCB’s, insecticides (DDT and chlordane), and industrial byproducts (dioxins/furans). Testing of crayfish

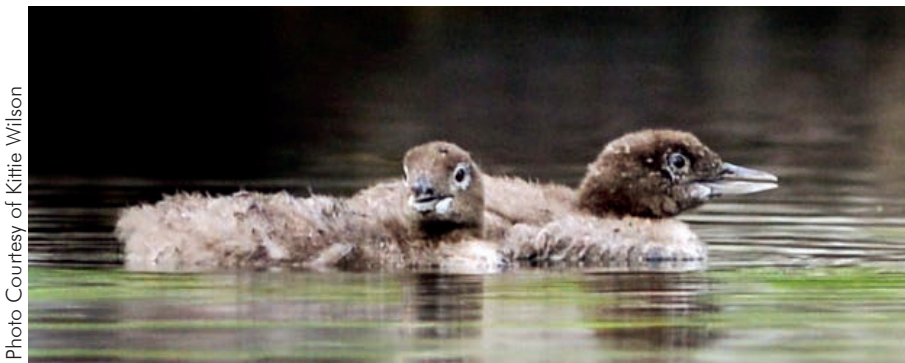


Photo Courtesy of Kirtie Wilson

sampled from tributaries flowing into Squaw Cove and Sandwich Bay (collected in collaboration with researchers at Plymouth State University) identified Thompson Brook and the outflow from Kusumpe Pond as likely sources of some of these contaminants. Attempts at crayfish sampling higher in the tributaries last fall failed to provide further information on locations of high-contaminant areas due to the lack of crayfish in these locations. It is possible that this is related to contaminated locations, as crayfish (like loons) are sensitive indicators of environmental quality. However, the habitat may also have been unsuitable in some way. In any case, LPC needed a substitute for crayfish, and we settled on sediments.

Thompson Brook and the outflow from Kusumpe Pond were of particular interest, considering the contaminated crayfish we had collected from these sites. We collected sediment samples up the length of these tributaries in hopes of being able to identify where along the tributary the point sources may be. We also sampled other tributaries flowing into Sandwich Bay for which we lacked any contaminant data. Patterns of loon occupancy and productivity and contaminant levels on the lake indicated a likely source in this northeastern sector of the lake, so we collected sediments from these other tributaries with the hope of ruling them out as possible sources of contaminants. Finally, we collected sediments from the tributaries flowing into Moultonborough Bay and Dog Cove. These coves have had high levels of contaminants in loon eggs, so these tributaries may be additional sources of contaminants into the lake.

I have spent many hours this fall crouching over streams col-



Tiffany Grade (center) admires the new Squam Lake field boat purchased with help from long-time LPC supporters Sally and Tom Daigneault of Squam Boat Livery (pictured). The boat it replaces was as old as Tiffany! (Any guesses?)

lecting mud pie after mud pie after mud pie, in hopes that the results of the tests on these mud pies will help LPC understand the sources of contaminants in Squam Lake and lead to many more "floating mud pies" on the lake in years to come!

~Tiffany Grade

LPC is extremely grateful to the landowners who generously allowed us to take samples from the tributaries flowing through their properties on and around Squam Lake and shared their knowledge of local stream conditions with us. Thank you very much!



Photo Courtesy of Kittle Wilson

Dana Duxbury-Fox Receives 2015 Spirit of the Loon Award

The Spirit of the Loon Award is presented at LPC's Annual Meeting to an individual who exemplifies outstanding volunteer service to loons and the Loon Preservation Committee. This year's very deserving recipient was Dana Duxbury-Fox.

Dana has been a member of LPC since 1998 and a long-time loon watcher on Lower Beech Pond in Tuftonboro, where she has summered since childhood. In the past five years Dana has galvanized LPC's efforts to better coordinate water level management on nesting loon lakes, working with first Joe Kabat and then John Cooley from LPC, NH Department of Environmental Services and NH Fish & Game staff to educate dam operators.

Since 2011 Dana has helped train seasonal LPC field staff to work with volunteers to carry out LPC's monitoring and management. This training built on

her involvement at Lower Beech Pond, where she has helped to float nest signs and rafts, provided boat access for field surveys, and sustained a succession of field biologists with fine meals.

Dana and her husband Bob have presented talks on Lakes Region birds for LPC's Summer Nature Talk series, and several talks from global birdwatching adventures for the Lakes Region Audubon Chapter. Her work with the Nuttall Ornithological Society has helped connect LPC research and conservation efforts to this source of funding for



Dana Duxbury-Fox receives the Spirit of the Loon Award from Harry Vogel.

LPC's Squam Lake Loon Initiative and Loon Recovery Plan.

We were happy to recognize Dana for her many contributions to loons and LPC with the Spirit of the Loon Award!

~Harry Vogel

2015 LPC Annual Meeting

LPC members, volunteers and friends filled The Loon Center on August 20th to attend LPC's Annual Meeting and to hear the preliminary results for the 2015 season. The evening began with the traditional pot luck dinner to thank volunteers for their hard work. It is always nice to see friends from different parts of the state gathered at The Loon Center eager to share their loon stories.

Ron Baker, LPC Chair, opened the meeting by asking Board members in attendance to stand so that volunteers, members and friends could become more familiar with their faces. Ron also took time to thank his fellow Board members, staff and volunteers for

all their hard work and financial support over the past year.

Governance Committee Chair, Chip Broadhurst, introduced the new Trustee nominees; Thomas Deans from Center Conway, NH and Anne Montgomery who divides her time between Sunapee, NH and New York, NY. Both Tom and Annie have been involved with loon-related and environmental issues for many years. Five incumbent Trustees were also nominated for additional terms. The full slate of nominees was unanimously approved. A lovely framed photograph was presented to retiring Trustees in attendance: Jacquie Colburn, Ralph Kirshner and Keith Nelson.

Special thanks were also extended to retiring Trustees Sheila Kabat, Jane Rice and Peter Sorlien who were unable to attend and will receive their awards at a later date. A complete list of current Trustees can be found on page 2.

Bill Crangle, outgoing Chair of the Finance and Facilities Committee, reported that LPC's financial house is in good order. He gave credit to Harry for his conservative approach to spending and thanked staff and his fellow Board members for their hard work in attaining this goal.

In new business, Ron provided background on the Governance Committee and the process it underwent to determine proposed

changes to the bylaws. The changes were unanimously approved. After the business portion of the evening, visitors enjoyed a program of photographs presented by John Rockwood and the 2015 State of the Loon report presented by Harry Vogel, Senior Biologist/ Executive Director. Turn to the LPC Afield section of this Newsletter for a complete report.

NEW TRUSTEES

Tom Deans of Conway Lake has served in numerous volunteer capacities with LPC and various local, state, regional and national organizations dedicated to environmental conservation, including the Conway Lake Conservation Association. A graduate of the University of Maine, he is Senior Vice President of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and

President of its Northern New Hampshire Foundation. Tom is an author, speaker and the recipient of many forms of recognition for his service to the community and to the environment.

Annie Montgomery has served in numerous capacities with the Lake Sunapee Protective Association being particularly active in its loon related activities. A graduate of St Lawrence University, Annie received a Master's Degree in Education in Human Relations and Counseling from Plymouth State University which led to her present practice as a psychotherapist with specialties in family counseling and development. Her interests span a broad spectrum from loons to their environment.

~Holly Heath

Many thanks to our veteran summer volunteer, Sheila Robusto, who graces us with her smile and eagerness each week. Sheila does it all from waiting on customers to pricing, re-stocking, dusting and sweeping the gift shop, and taking out the trash!

Guy Pease was a godsend helping keep The Loon Center grounds mowed, weed-whacked and raked! He was our resident handyman who gladly took on any project in the queue.

Also new this summer were Hannah Pinheiro and Connie Mako who helped out in the gift shop, and Ian Fulcher who stepped in just as summer was winding down and helped us through leaf peeping season!

*I can no other answer make, but, thanks, and thanks.
~William Shakespeare*



Celebrate LOONS this holiday!



These whimsical loon holiday cards will be the envy of all who receive them! Each box contains 15 cards/15 envelopes of the same image. Cards measure 5x7 and are printed on recycled paper with soy and vegetable-based inks. American made from start to finish! \$16.95 per box plus shipping.

Inside Greeting:

- A. Wishing you peace and joy in the coming year.
- B. Wishing You Peace and Joy
- C. Peace and Joy

Call 603-476-5666 to order, or visit www.loon.org to make an on-line purchase and browse our wonderful selection of holiday cards & gifts. You can also visit The Loon's Feather Gift Shop at The Loon Center, Thursday - Saturday, 9am - 5pm.



LOON PRESERVATION COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Three Cheers for Forty Years: A Summer of Celebration for LPC!

JUNE 28: ANNUAL SUMMER LUNCHEON & AUCTION

2015 marks the Loon Preservation Committee's 40th anniversary and we celebrated in style at this year's Annual Summer Luncheon & Auction at Church Landing in Meredith!

The mood was festive as many guests sported optional black and white dress. The dining room was also decked in a black, white and red theme, including table linens and celebratory balloons. There was an excited buzz in the air as nearly 200 loon enthusiasts gathered to join LPC in celebrating its 40th milestone!

Guests enjoyed cocktails while previewing the 65 unique silent auction items. LPC's field biologists mingled with the crowd and answered questions specific to their lake and loons. A lovely buffet lunch was served followed by a smorgasbord of delectable desserts and coffee.

Willem Lange, author and host of NHPTV's "Windows to the Wild," entertained guests with his quick wit and local lore. His humorous anecdotes contributed much laughter to the festivities. Special thanks to Sandy and Louise McGinnes for sponsoring Willem's appearance.

Many thanks to Liz Gable for Chairing the Luncheon Committee, and her invaluable team: Amy Lindamood, Deb Poitras and Renee Speltz. Their collective hard work made this year's luncheon a banner success grossing over \$28,000!

And last, but by no means least, a heartfelt thanks to the individuals and businesses that contributed so generously to our silent auction: AJ's Bait and Tackle, Andrew's Auto Body, Bayswater Book Company, Tom

and Suzy Beach, Bella Beads, Nancy Bernard, Marilyn Bodwell, Chip and Janine Broadhurst, Penny Burke, Butternuts, Cape Shore Products, Cascade Spa, Dion's Plant Place, E.M. Heath, Inc., John Fiske Jr., Fratello's, Bette Frazier, Bob and Liz Gabel, Gunstock Mountain Resort, Hannaford's, Hart's Turkey Farm Restaurant, Home Comfort Unique Furnishings, Innisfree Bookshop, Inns at Mill Falls, Joal Tree Farm, Keepsake Quilting, Keith Kidder, Barbara Lauterbach, Lemon Grass Restaurant, Janet Levetin, Amy Lindamood and Richard Jenny, Lydia's Cafe, Lyon's Den, Magic Foods Restaurant Group, Meadow Pond Animal Hospital, Mill Street Meat Market, NH Orthopaedic Center, Keith and Karin Nelson, New Hampshire Boat Museum, New Hampshire Music Festival, Oglethorpe Fine Arts & Crafts, Dr. Mark Painter, Pampered Pet B & B, Park Place Salon, Patrick's Pub and Eatery, Pine Cone Café, Kevin and Deb Poitras, Brian and Reinette Reilly, Mary Rice, Rose Woodyard Designs, Jean Selman, Squam Brewing, Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, T-Bones and Cactus Jack's, The Bay Restaurant, The Common Man, The Country Carriage, Charley and Ilona Train, Village Kitchen, Walter's Basin, Waukegan Golf Club Inc., John and Kittie Wilson, Winnepesaukee Playhouse, Winnie Paw Station, and Winnepesaukee Chocolates.



Willem Lange, author and host of NHPTV's "Windows to the Wild" was guest speaker at the Annual Luncheon & Auction.

JULY 10: YAKKING FOR LOONS

Once again the sun shone brightly on the colorful flotilla of kayaks heading out to Green's Basin on Lake Winnepesaukee for the 4th annual "Yakking for Loons" kayak-a-thon benefitting New Hampshire's loons. For many, this was their 4th year in a row supporting this fun-filled event. Each year the group has grown, putting us over 50 participants this year!

Paddlers were escorted by LPC Executive Director/Senior Biologist, Harry Vogel, and LPC Senior Biologist, John Cooley, to answer questions and point out local loon habitat and behavior. Adult and loon chicks were observed, as well as a territorial dispute between loons. Other wildlife sightings were enjoyed along the route.

A delicious lunch prepared and donated by Curt's Caterers awaited participants upon their return, giving them a chance to relax and chat with their fellow kayakers at scenic Lee's Mill Landing. The event raised \$4,100 in all including registrations,



"Yakking for Loons" Co-Chairs Joanne Chesley and Linda Allen (left) are joined by our top "yakking" fundraiser, Curt Chesley, and daughter Amy Chesley of Curt's Caterers.

Thank you
"Yakking for Loons"
Sponsors!



Curt's
Caterers, LLC

pledges, and prime sponsors. Our top fundraiser, Curt Chesley, was presented with an LL Bean Adventure Duffle sporting LPC's 40th anniversary logo.

Special thanks go to our prime sponsors, Irving Oil and Curt's Caterers, for their generous and ongoing support. We also wish to thank our Co-Chairs, Linda Allen and Joanne Chesley, for their commitment and tireless effort on behalf of this event; and Wild Meadow Canoe and Kayaks for discount rentals and prizes. Lastly, thanks to spotters Ralph Rannacher, John Allen, Elaine Chesley and Warren Reynolds for keeping our paddlers safe!

Mark your calendar for July 8th for next year's "Yakking for Loons." This is a wicked fun event you don't want to miss!

JULY 18: LOON FESTIVAL

The 38th Annual Loon Festival was another success story, thanks to the hard work of staff, volunteers, and board members, as well as the Meredith Rotary Club, the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center and the NH Lakes

Association. And let us not forget our wonderful entertainers—Mo, Caitlyn Dowell, Paul Tierney, and The Carolyn Ramsay Duo Band!

The Meredith Rotary prepared over 360 hotdogs for guests this year, along with chips, drinks and ice cream. This marked the 16th year the Rotary Club has generously provided a cookout for

Festival patrons. In addition to Rotary we have Ben & Jerry's of Meredith to thank for the ice cream, and Hannaford of Meredith and CG Roxane's of Moultonborough for the refreshing water.

The Squam Lakes Natural Science Center provided both the

continued on page 22



Meredith Rotary Club Volunteers: Jim McFarlin, Dick Gerken, Ted Fodero, Jim Wiedman, Carl Johnson, Dean Gulezian, Ray Moritz, Tom Fairbrother, Mike Pelczar, Don Trudeau, Donna Ulbricht, Betsey Donovan, Vern Goddard. Not present for photo Tim Bergquist.

continued from page 21

Discovery Table and live animals which were enjoyed by all. The NH Lakes Association was also on hand with an informative display about invasive plants and animals.

Mo was back by popular demand with his amazing balloon sculptures and lively banter, as was our faithful face painter, Caitlyn Dowell. Young guests also enjoyed some loon lore by storyteller Paul Tierney, and loon-themed arts and crafts. The dunk tank had its usual line of kids eager to dunk a biologist by accurately answering loon trivia questions.

When not taking a turn in the dunk tank, biologists gave educational slide shows on loons and answered questions for eager loon enthusiasts. Throughout the day guests were entertained by the awesome music of the Carol Ramsay Duo Band that floated on the air from the screen porch for all to enjoy!

Many thanks to our Loon Festival Sponsors whose generous support helped to underwrite the costs of hosting this worthwhile family event!

Thomas & Suzanne Beach
Mr. & Mrs. Frederick Bigony
Boulia-Gorrell Lumber Co.
Clark & Gloria Chandler
Mr. & Mrs. Robert H. Clark, Jr.
Allan & Judy Fulkerson
Liz & Tom Kelsey
Jordan & Phyllis Prouty

Vicky Brox
In Memory of
Chuck Brox

The Sorlien Family
In Memory of
Kenneth Sorlien



Back Row: Jeff Marts, Jen Marts, Rick Van de Poll, Ralph Kirshner, John Eisner, Mark Longley; Front Row: Lisa Davy, Wendy Van de Poll, Katie Hollier, Carol Zink, Tiffany Grade.

Many thanks to the following volunteers for making this year's Festival a great success: Ron and Nan Baker, Tim Bergquist, Bob and Susan Connolly, Betsey Donovan, Audrey Eisenhauer, Tom Fairbrother, Ted Fodero, Carol Foley, Dick Gerken, Vern Goddard, Dean Gulezian, Dan and Beverly Heyduck, Pat James, Carl Johnson, Emily Kallgren, Connie Mako, Dom and Irene Marocco, Ray Moritz, Jim McFarlin, Mike Pelczar, Gretchen Ray, Sheila Robusto, Mike Ruyffe-lear, Peter Sorlien, Marlene and Eric Taussig, Paul Tierney, Don Trudeau, Donna Ulbricht and Jim Wiedman.

AUGUST 13: THE SWIM

This year marked the 9th SWIM led by Wendy Van de Poll to focus attention on Squam's loons and LPC's work to recover them.

On August 13th Wendy was joined by fellow swimmers Lisa Davy, John Eisner, Mark Longley, Jen Marts, Rick Van de Poll and Carol Zink for the impressive relay across the 7-mile length of Squam Lake. Spotters Katie

Hollier and Jeff Marts paddled alongside the swimmers offering support, while Ralph Kirshner captained the pontoon boat. At press time over \$11,000 in gifts and pledges have been raised from more than 70 donors—a fitting tribute to the tremendous feat of this dedicated team of Swimmers!

Donations to 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. This fall, we will be testing sediments in an effort to narrow in on potential sources of contaminants into Squam Lake. Donations 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.

Supporting the SWIM also helps fund LPC's management and outreach to recover Squam's

loon population. This year, LPC floated eight loon nesting rafts and put protective signs and float-lines around all ten 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 (so far) of 42 educational presentations on and around Squam Lake.

It's not too late to support these intrepid swimmers and Squam's loons by sending a check to LPC or donating online at www.loon.org (click on the "Donate to LPC" button on the home page and choose "The Swim"). Together we can help assure a bright future for loons on Squam Lake!

AUGUST 17: CARL JOHNSON MEMORIAL TOURNAMENT

On Monday, August 17th, the Loon Preservation Com-

mittee held its 5th Annual "Carl Johnson Memorial Golf Tournament" at Ridgewood Country Club in Moultonborough. Senator Johnson was a champion of many worthy causes, including the environment and loons, and an active member of the Loon Preservation Committee Board from 1998 until his passing in 2010.

The day dawned warm and bright as forty-six golfers prepared for an 8:00 a.m. shotgun start. Lunch and awards followed at The Overlook Tavern. First, second and third place team prizes were awarded as well as longest drive and closest to pin. An exclusive raffle with over 20 prizes was held at the clubhouse following the tournament. Taking first place, for a second year running, was Jim Murray, Craig Markert and John Forsberg of Golden View Health Care Center.

Our sincere thanks to our Prime Sponsors: Advanced Land Surveying Consultants, Mill Falls

at the Lake, Overhead Door Options, and Stewart's Ambulance Service for their generous support; and to Paugus Bay Marina for sponsoring the \$10,000 hole-in-one top prize.

We are also grateful to the 22 hole sponsors (listed below) that supported this event, and to Saltmarsh Insurance Agency for sponsoring the signs. Thanks to Kittie and John Wilson for donating generously to the raffle, Moulton Farm for the beautiful flower arrangement, Liz and Bob Gabel for their help with registration, Jordan Prouty for selling Mulligans, Bill Griffin for spotting at the hole-in-one, and Anthony Avrutine for helping with the putting contest. Lastly we wish to thank Matt Hibbert and the staff at Ridgewood Country Club for their professional assistance.

All proceeds from the tournament benefit the Loon Preservation Committee and its work to protect New Hampshire's loons.

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