



LOON PRESERVATION COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2020



Kittie Wilson Photo



The Loon Preservation Committee

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

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

Covid, Loons, and Community

The Loon Preservation Committee's 45th year of work to recover New Hampshire's loon population will surely be one to remember. The Covid-19 virus has changed every part of that work: our field biologists were trained remotely this year, by Zoom meeting instead of in person; as of this writing The Loon Center remains closed, although we are ready to open, safely, when it's safe to do so (I hope by the time you read this); we are limiting personal contact between our biologists and volunteers, though it pains us because we value the information and help and kindness they give our staff in the field; and we are struggling to limit the financial and mission impacts of cancelling presentations and public events, including our Summer Extravaganza and Loon Festival.

And of course the challenges facing loons have not changed, except perhaps to become exacerbated by Covid-19. New Hampshire fishing license sales are booming, and that means a lot of dusty tackleboxes - still full of old, now illegal lead fishing tackle - are being dug out of garages and their contents put on lines and into the water. Some of those lead sinkers and jigs will end up in our loons this summer, and that oversight will be lethal for those birds. Other people are flooding onto our lakes just to enjoy a distraction from the news and rediscover the simple joys of a life lived close to nature - a wonderful trend, to be sure, but also one that will mean more conflicts between people and the nature they are observing. Social distancing is not just for us - leave some space for the loons as well. Add to this mid-90s temperatures already in May and June, and the increasing prevalence of the loons' own novel pathogen, Avian Malaria (not unrelated to those high temperatures) and it promises to be a tough year for loons as well as for people.

LPC's goals have not changed with this new reality. Our biologists are on the lakes, counting loons, finding and protecting nests, and even providing new nesting places in the form of loon rafts. We are continuing to educate, now relying more on our new and expanded website, other social media, and our Loon Cam, and leaving a little more space between us and those we meet on the lakes. Our expanded Lead Tackle Buyback Program is full steam ahead, recognizing that it will be a challenging year to keep lead out of our loons. Everything is just a little harder and takes a little longer in this new world.

I've seen and been amazed by loons navigating rough ocean swells with ease and grace. There is a lesson there for us: you have to roll with things. We are coming together once again this year, as in years past, to make sure it is a good year for loons - if in slightly different ways than in those other years. And that feels like community, rather than social isolation, to me.

Winter/Spring Rescues and Mortalities Run the Gamut

Loon rescues and recoveries last winter and spring came at a predictable pace compared with the previous five years (see Figure 1), and ran the gamut of causes and outcomes. In mid-November a hunting party in Stark found a juvenile loon where it had crash-landed on a wooded hillside, far from water. After a brief rehabilitation, this loon was released at Odiorne Point in Rye, NH. In December LPC staff responded to iced-in loons on Lake Francis, Merrymeeting, and Pawtuckaway Lakes, but an actual over-the-ice rescue was only necessary on Lovell Lake in Wakefield. There, a juvenile was rescued and re-released on the coast the same day.

Migration and winter molt are a double-whammy in the loon’s annual cycle, and in February members of the public and NH Fish and Game staff rescued two diseased and emaciated adult loons on the coast that did not survive rehabilitation. In March, as New Hampshire entered the pandemic shutdown, a Massachusetts family hunkered down in Holderness discovered the remains of a banded loon along the shoreline of White Oak Pond. This was the breeding male from the pond, who must have perished several months earlier as the ice came in. The skeletal remains won’t tell us much, but we may at least be able to rule out lead poisoning by measuring bone lead levels. The month of May saw one final case from the coast. Exactly a year after rescuing a loon in the salt marsh near his home, Rye resident Bob Valley rescued another loon from the same marsh, this one a banded male from Aziscohos Lake in western Maine that was emaciated and suffering from infection, and

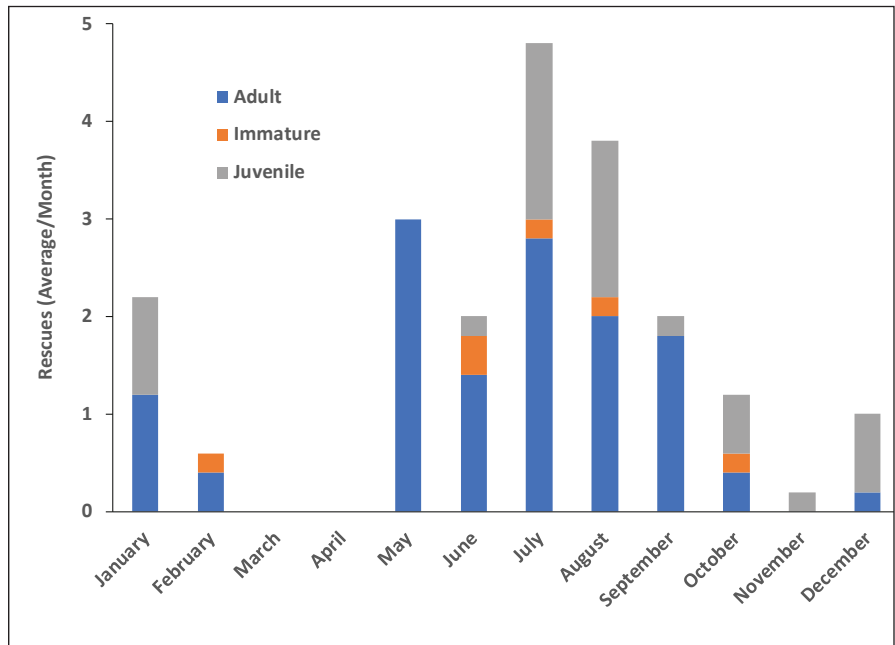


Figure 1. Live loon rescues in New Hampshire per month (average, 2015-2019). Winter/spring 2019-2020 saw one juvenile each in November and December, two adults in March, two adults in May, and three adults and two juveniles (chicks) in June, to date.

unfortunately did not survive.

Cases later in the spring reflected the loon-on-loon and fishing tackle ingestion and entanglement that are primary problems on freshwater lakes. For example, on Merrymeeting Lake in early May a badly tangled loon was rescued, treated, and released. A month later, a second loon on Merrymeeting, the breeding male, lost his territory and nest in what lake residents described as an epic loon fight. After a few days with rehabilitator

Maria Colby he was released on an unoccupied lake nearby. NH Fish and Game’s Powder Mill Hatchery served as an impromptu loon Emergency Room/triage
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Veterinary staff at Capital Area Veterinary Emergency Services (CAVES) work to remove a fish hook from a loon rescued on Merrymeeting Lake in May.



CAVES veterinarian, Dr. Allison Darby, releases an adult loon with LPC biologist, John Cooley, on Merrymeeting (above) in May, and a second adult loon from Merrymeeting Lake with LPC Seacoast field biologist, Olivia Fortuna, on nearby Brindle Pond (below) in early June.

location for both Merrymeeting rescues, and we thank the staff for their help.

Two other June rescues were less fortunate. A male loon breeding for the last 13 years on Massabesic Lake died shortly after rescue, debilitated by infection from an ingested fishing hook. Non-lead tackle can usually pass through the loon without harm, breaking down in the same way that fish bones do, but in this case the hook caused problems. LPC staff and volunteers also rescued a nesting female loon on Bow Lake in early June with a badly broken wing, requiring euthanasia. A broken wing is an unusual injury in loons and there was little evidence of other trauma, leaving the cause uncertain.

Also in the first half of June, two male loons, both in the midst of nesting attempts, were recovered as mortalities from Lower Suncook Lake in Barnstead and

Rapid River, on Lake Umbagog. Examination of the Umbagog loon is pending, but the Lower Suncook loon died from internal injuries likely sustained in a territorial fight. Cases at this time of year have always reflected the fall-out from territorial contests. Over the winter we turned up a newsletter article in The Loon Center archives from the mid-1980s on loon territorial aggression that covered several recent cases at the time, but could just as well have been written about the loon-on-loon mortalities and injuries we saw this spring.

By June, rescue cases began to include loon chicks, as well as adults. On Pawtuckaway Lake, where a kayaker discovered a lost one- or two-day old loon chick, LPC's Seacoast field biologist, Olivia Fortuna, located the parents and reunited the family, and a few hours after being rescued the chick was safely fed and riding on

a parent loon's back.

In total, at the time of this writing, nine loons have been rescued and six have been recovered as mortalities in 2020. Three of the nine rescues have been successfully released, and one rescued loon chick remains with a rehabilitator. While every rescue case faces these long odds – roughly a one-in-three chance of successful release – we know from the survival and return of rescued loons from previous years that the effort is a worthwhile part of LPC's mission to recover a healthy population of breeding loons throughout New Hampshire. We are also heartened by the fact that, although necropsy and analysis are still pending for a few cases, in a busy spring of rescues and mortalities there have been no indications of lead poisoning at the time of this writing. With most of the 2020 season still to come, we already owe many thanks to the dedicated network of rehabilitators and veterinarians who handle and treat injured loons in New Hampshire, especially, in recent cases, the staff at Capital Area Veterinary Emergency Services (CAVES) and Wings of the Dawn/Maria Colby.

~John H. Cooley



Shot Through the Heart

"Shot through the heart/and you're to blame/darlin', you give love a bad name." ~Bon Jovi

Loons, not love, got the bad rap in a new twist on the eagle-loon dramas that are more and more common on New England lakes. Recent press featured the story of a bold loon who was the culprit in the death of an adult bald eagle found last July on Highland Lake in Bridgton, Maine. Discovered by local naturalist and photographer, Nat Woodruff, and collected by Maine game warden, Neal Sykes, the dead eagle was necropsied at a federal laboratory over the winter in consultation with loon expert Dr. Mark Pokras, and the examination revealed a fatal injury to

Bow Lake (NH) of a different adult eagle circling above a loon, to illustrate the loon-eagle dynamic. In fact, this Bow Lake eagle was found dead near its nest this spring, killed by another eagle. As we follow these apex pred-

tors we get an ever-closer view of their not-so-tranquil co-existence. For both loons and eagles, it's live by the sword, die by the sword...

~John H. Cooley



An encounter between a loon and an eagle on Bow Lake, NH (Jon Winslow photo); the deceased Highland Lake, ME, eagle prior to recovery and being examined by Maine game warden, Neal Sykes (Nat Woodruff photos).



the heart that matched the same stabbing puncture wound familiar in loon territorial battles. Confirmation also came from a dead loon chick found near the eagle, with talon injuries: a defending loon parent had killed the marauding eagle. Maine state biologist, Danielle D'Auria, arranged the necropsy and chronicled the results in a blog post this spring that was picked up by news sources around the world. These chronicles used an image from



LPC Uses Natural Avian Guards to Protect Loon Cam Loons

Those who have kept up with LPC's Loon Cams over the years will remember the shock we all received last summer when, before it even had the chance to leave the nest, the chick hatched on Loon Cam 1 was snatched by a bald eagle. For years, LPC has paid attention to New Hampshire's burgeoning bald eagle population and considered its impacts on our loons – last summer, LPC Senior Biologist, John Cooley, even collaborated with New Hampshire Audubon to publish a paper in the *Wilson Journal of Ornithology* about loon nesting success in relation to the location of bald eagle nests. That research discovered a small impact of nearby nesting eagles on loon breeding success – but the greatest threats to nesting loons remain those that are directly or indirectly related to humans.

LPC was created to help loons cope with unnatural threats posed by humans; however, in the presence of human-caused threats, natural threats such as the increasing eagle population is one more thing putting pressure on our already stressed loon population. The struggle between loons and eagles is an age-old battle. While loons can often hold their own against an eagle when they are in the water, a loon sitting on a nest is at a distinct disadvantage. On land, loons have very limited mobility, which means they are less able to fend off an eagle attempting to predate their eggs or newly-hatched chicks. To help loons nest successfully and reach the water with their chicks, where they have a fighting chance to protect them, we have, for many years, modified our nest rafts by adding a cover made of rigid lobster trap mesh covered



The first loon nest protected with a natural avian guard in Washington state. (Photo courtesy of Daniel Poleschook, Jr. and Virginia Poleschook)

with camouflage. The covers help to conceal loon nests from avian predators and provide a physical barrier to prevent eagles from landing on nests. The predation of the chick off of the natural nest at the Loon Cam site last year made us wonder if we could protect loons on natural nests from eagles as well.

Before the Loon Cam loon pair began nesting this year, we reached out to our friends and colleagues doing work on behalf of loons in Washington State, Daniel Poleschook, Jr. and Virginia R. Poleschook. Daniel and Virginia are well acquainted with the threat that eagles pose to loons – their study area in Washington is home to over 1,300 nesting pairs of eagles and just 14 loon pairs! According to Dan, the rapid increase in Washington's eagle population – from 100 nesting pairs in 2005 to 1,334 nesting pairs in 2015 – made it difficult for the local loon population to adapt quickly enough to prevent unprecedented losses of eggs and

young due to eagle predation. Since 2006, Daniel and Virginia have used Natural Avian Guards (NAGs) to protect Washington loons and their nests from eagle predation. NAGs are simple in construction – they consist of a series of small dead trees installed around the perimeter of the loon nest. The trees are placed far enough apart that the adult loons can easily get on and off of the nest, but close enough together to block an eagle's wingspan, preventing them from landing on the nest. The guards stick up several vertical feet above the nest so that eagles cannot swoop down low and predate incubating adult loons.

Dan and Virginia outlined several advantages to using NAGs. The materials used to make them are naturally abundant and low cost, and once they are installed, NAGs require no seasonal maintenance. NAGs also have an impressive success rate – since 2005, they have been used at 55 nest

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Lead Tackle Buyback Program Forges Ahead in 2020

LPC is excited to continue our partnership with New Hampshire Fish and Game and several tackle shops throughout the state to conduct a third year of our Lead Tackle Buyback Program. The program is geared towards reducing the number of adult loon mortalities from lead poisoning that New Hampshire’s loon population experiences each year. Lead poisoning resulting from the ingestion of lead fishing tackle is the largest documented cause of adult loon mortality in New Hampshire, accounting for 42% of documented loon deaths since 1989 (see Figure 1).

The sale and freshwater use of lead fishing sinkers and jigs weighing one ounce or less (the size range recovered from dead loons) has been banned since 2016. Since then, the annual rate of lead tackle mortalities has decreased; however, these mortalities are still occurring at rates high enough to impact our loon population. In 2019, seven adult loons in New Hampshire were confirmed to have died from lead poisoning from ingested fishing tackle. This is likely an underestimate of the true number of lead mortalities last year, since many dead loons are never found, and others that are found have ingested lead objects that were probably tackle but were too eroded to positively identify.

The Lead Tackle Buyback program presented by LPC and New Hampshire Fish

and Game offers anglers the opportunity to safely dispose of their now illegal lead fishing tackle and provides a financial incentive to do so. Buyback participants can exchange one ounce or more of illegal lead fishing tackle at participating tackle shops for a \$10 voucher, which they can use at that shop to purchase loon-safe, non-lead tackle or other fishing supplies. The program was piloted in 2018 with two participating retailers, and its outstanding success prompted an expansion to nine participating retailers in 2019 and a further expansion of the program this year.

Since it began in 2018, the Lead Tackle Buyback program has resulted in the collection of over 14,800 individual lead sinkers and lead-headed jigs. Had they remained in circulation, any one

of these pieces of tackle had the potential to kill a loon. This year the program will include new retailers, online retailers, and expansion into the ice fishing season. We are also working with municipal transfer stations and Maria Colby, a wildlife rehabilitator at Wings of the Dawn Wildlife Rehabilitation, to install lead tackle collection bins at municipal transfer stations throughout New Hampshire to make it easier for those who want to dispose of their illegal lead fishing tackle but do not want a voucher. For more information about the program, including a list of participating retailers and municipal transfer stations with collection bins, please visit LPC’s Loon Safe Website (www.loonsafe.org).

~Caroline Hughes

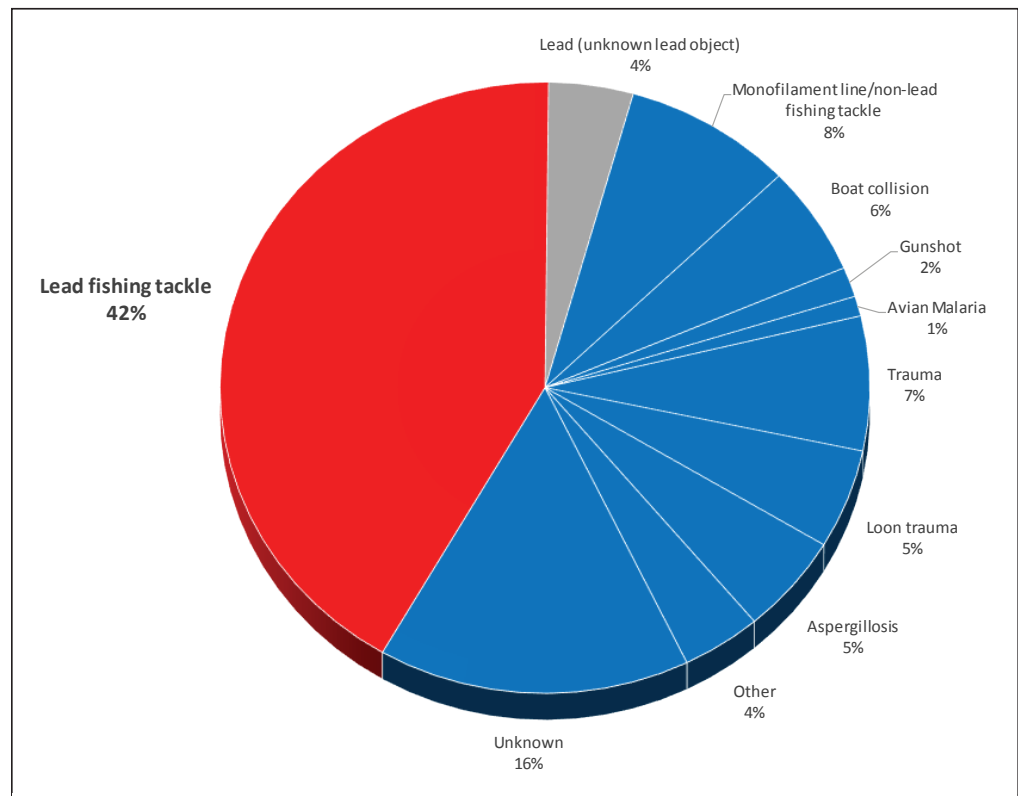


Figure 1: Lead fishing tackle is the primary known cause of adult loon mortalities in New Hampshire, 1989-2019.

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attempts across 6 loon territories in Washington, and have had a 98% success rate at preventing eagle predation of eggs.

Encouraged by Dan and Virginia's positive experience with NAGs, we decided to pilot this management strategy in New Hampshire at our Loon Cam site. We installed a series of alder saplings around the loon nest site early in the season, before the loons began nesting. Fortunately for us, the Loon Cam loons are true creatures of habit, and they nested exactly where we thought they would. At press time, they had laid two eggs in their nest, guarded by our NAG. We are excited to evaluate the performance of the natural avian guard at this nest site, and if all goes well, we look forward to incorporating this new (to us) conservation strategy into our management practices. We hope to once again have two Loon Cams this summer. If you'd like an intimate look at the life of a nesting loon, you can tune in to our Loon Cams at www.loon.org/looncam.

~Caroline Hughes

Breaking Webcam NEWS!

As this newsletter goes to press, Loon Cam 1 hatched two chicks, the first on June 14 and the second on June 15, but not without some intruding loon drama! Loon Cam 2 is now live. That nest has two eggs, with an anticipated hatch date of July 11th.

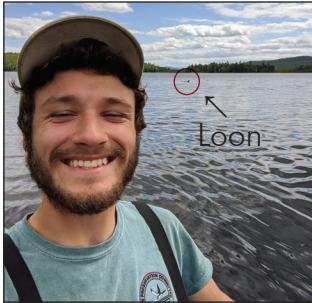
The dramatic increases in LPC's monitoring, research, management, and education to recover loons have been funded by donations to LPC's Loon Recovery Plan. For more information about the Loon Recovery Plan, or to make a donation, please contact Harry Vogel, Senior Biologist/Executive Director at 603-476-5666 or hvogel@loon.org.



The Loon Center will continue to serve as a participating retail location for our 2020 Lead Tackle Buyback program. Drop off one ounce or more of illegal lead fishing tackle (lead sinkers and lead-headed jigs weighing one ounce or less) and receive a \$10 voucher that can be used in The Loon's Feather Gift Shop! Lead poisoning from ingested lead fishing tackle is the largest cause of documented adult loon mortality in New Hampshire, and it is entirely preventable. Turn in your lead tackle and you might just save a loon's life!

2020 FIELD STAFF SELFIES!

LAKES REGION



JAMES LONGO

James earned a B.S. in Wildlife Science from SUNY Syracuse. He was the resident bird intern at Tin Mountain Conservation Center this past year. He also volunteered for LPC, conducting loon surveys on Whitton Pond last summer as a citizen scientist.

SEACOAST



OLIVIA FORTUNA

Olivia is a 2019 graduate of UNH with a B.S. in Wildlife and Conservation Biology. She has conducted field work with the UNH Moose Ecology Lab, both counting ticks collected in the field to quantify winter tick abundance, and tracking moose using radio telemetry.

MONADNOCK



GRIFFIN ARCHAMBAULT

Griffin is a recent graduate of UMaine with a B.S. in Wildlife Ecology. Work experience includes Camera Trapping Research Technician and Spruce Grouse Research Technician, both for the Maine Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Conservation Biology.

SUNAPEE



PHIL KEEFE

After completing his career with the United States Navy as a Master-at-arms, Phil has shifted his focus to protecting New Hampshire's wildlife and lands. A self-described outdoorsman, he aspires to put his extensive skills and passion toward a career in conservation.

NORTH COUNTRY



MARGARET JENSEN

Margaret is a recent graduate of St. Lawrence University with a B.S. in Conservation Biology. She spent last summer as a Research Fellow for the St. Lawrence University Biology Department, carrying out a citizen science research project for songbird conservation.

WINNIPESAUKEE



ALYSSA NEUHAUS

Alyssa is currently enrolled in a Biology Accelerated Master's Program at UVM. Her studies include conducting loon research, comparing blood mercury levels and the presence of malaria between Common Loons and Saltmarsh Sparrows.

SUMMER INTERN



SARAH GROSVENOR

Sarah is a graduate of UVM with a M.A.T. in Science and Language Arts, Middle Level Teaching, and a B.S. in Wildlife Biology. She works for the UNH Cooperative Extension as a Science Literacy Field Specialist and will assist LPC part-time with loon surveys.

SUMMER INTERN



ISABEL BRINTNALL

Isabel holds a master's degree with an emphasis on lake recreation and loons from Antioch New England. We are delighted to welcome her back for a seventh season covering lakes near Concord, as well as a few of her favorite lakes in the Sunapee region.

LPC's SQUAM LAKE region is monitored by Tiffany Grade, LPC's full-time Squam Lakes Project Biologist.

MORE SELFIES...

SUMMER INTERN



ELAINA BADDERS

Elaina continues her studies at UNH in Wildlife Biology and Conservation. She will assist with loon surveys part-time in the Monadnock Region. She attended a necropsy (postmortem examination) training at Tufts this spring and is interested in veterinary pathology.

CONSERVATION INTERN



EMILY ZUBIETA

Emily is a veterinary student at the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University. She earned a B.S. in Conservation Biology from U-M. Prior to vet school she worked as a Level 3 Veterinary Assistant at the Emergency Veterinary Hospital in Ann Arbor.




If you see less of our field biologists in person this summer due to the pandemic, we are still out there! Monadnock field biologist, Griffin Archambault, has the perfect socially-distant housing—a mountaintop cabin in Stoddard provided through the Harris Center for Conservation Education.


See a Loon in Trouble?
Please call 603-476-5666
www.loon.org




For help after hours please call
NH Fish & Game
603-271-3361



ANNUAL LOON CENSUS
SATURDAY, JULY 18, 2020
8AM - 9AM



**CENSUS FORM ENCLOSED
(SEE PAGE 23)**

Thank you to our donors: April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020 (\$100 and above)

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Remembering Loons Now — and Forever

The greatest reward for leaving a gift to the Loon Preservation Committee (LPC) through your estate planning is the knowledge that you are helping to ensure that the haunting call of the loon will echo across New Hampshire's waters for generations to come. If you would like to receive a copy of our LOON LEGACY SOCIETY brochure, please call or email Lin O'Bara (603-476-5666/lobara@loon.org). We hope you will consider joining this special circle of friends!

LPC's Research Results in New Fish Consumption Guidelines

Loon Preservation Committee staff often talk about how loons are indicator species of the health of the aquatic environment, but that may seem somewhat abstract and removed from our normal enjoyment of New Hampshire's lakes. However, the potential implications of that idea were clearly brought home in late March when New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services issued new fish consumption guidelines for the Squam Lakes based on elevated levels of PCBs found in fish. How do loons connect to this announcement?

Since 2007, LPC has been conducting research into contaminant levels in unhatched loon eggs from failed nests on Squam Lake and throughout the state. This research began as part of LPC's Squam Lake Loon Initiative to investigate the many factors that led to the decline in Squam's loon population and its poor breeding success. But it has since expanded, as LPC now regularly tests unhatched loon eggs from failed nests throughout the state. In fact, LPC's research is the only systematic testing in the state for contaminants in a species high up on the food web, like loons.

And, of course, it is these species high on the food web that are the good indicators of the health of a lake ecosystem. They ultimately reflect any problems lower in the food web—or any harmful inputs into the surrounding ecosystem, such as chemical contaminants. The types of contaminants LPC is testing are those that bioaccumulate and biomagnify as they go up the food web. In biomagnification, contaminants bind to sediments and are absorbed by bacteria, which in turn are consumed by plankton. An aquatic

insect or other invertebrate may then eat many of those plankton, in the process absorbing the contaminants they had consumed. And so on up the food chain—with each step, the level of contaminants in an organism is “magnified” as it consumes many of the contaminant-carrying organisms in the level below it. With loons at the top of the aquatic food web, contaminants have already gone through many levels of biomagnification by the time a loon eats a fish, so the loon is receiving a concentrated level of contaminants in the fish. In addition, contaminants can bioaccumulate in a long-lived species like loons, building up over the years in their body tissues. Loons' status as a long-lived species, their position at the top of aquatic food webs, and the fact that loons are feeding exclusively in aquatic habitats make them sensitive indicators of contaminants in a lake ecosystem.

LPC tests loon eggs for six classes of contaminants, including PCBs. All of these contaminants are contributing to the body burden carried by Squam's loons and loons throughout the state. We have found elevated levels of PCBs in some of the loon eggs we have tested from Squam, including from one particular female who has the dubious honor of being the loon with the most contaminated eggs we have tested to date in New Hampshire. We have tested two eggs in separate years from this female, and the bulk of the contaminant profile of these eggs is made up of PCBs. But she is certainly not the only loon like this—we have other eggs from Squam, as well as elsewhere in the state, with PCB levels that are well above background levels.

The loons have shown that there is a PCB problem on Squam.

After seeing the contaminant levels in Squam loon eggs, LPC set out to identify potential sources of the contaminants in Squam Lake, and PCBs were one of the contaminants we were looking for. To narrow in on potential areas of contamination, we partnered with Plymouth State University to sample crayfish from the lake and from tributaries flowing into the lake. In one of these tributaries, PCB levels in the crayfish were 35 times higher than the crayfish from the other tributaries we tested. When LPC tested sediment from that tributary, we found PCB levels that were 2,900 times higher than the background level we found at other sites we tested. The exact source of these contaminants is unknown, but it is likely the result of spraying oil contaminated with waste PCBs on dirt roads that occurred in the 1960s-early 1970s.

As a follow-up to LPC's data on PCB levels in loon eggs, crayfish, and sediments in the Squam watershed, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NH DES) launched a study of contaminant levels in fish from Squam Lake. The goals were to investigate another level on the food web between the contaminated sediments LPC found and the loons and to explore potential human health risks to people eating fish from Squam Lake. The logic was simple and based on loons as indicator species: loons are primarily fish eaters and PCBs are known to biomagnify through the food web, so loons are likely getting the contaminants from the fish they eat. It is known that the nutrients (and, thus, contaminants) deposited in eggs come



The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NH DES) has issued new fish consumption guidelines for Squam Lake based on a recent study of contaminant levels in fish on Squam. Loons, primarily fish eaters and high on the food web, are likely getting contaminants from the fish they eat on Squam.

from freshwater sources rather than the ocean. Thus, there was a potential risk to humans eating fish from Squam as well.

NH DES sampled yellow perch and smallmouth bass on Squam in the fall of 2018 and the results came through this past spring, indicating elevated levels of PCBs in fish on Squam. NH DES issued a fish consumption guideline for the Squam Lakes that is considerably more restrictive than the

standard mercury guidelines in place throughout the state. The new guidelines for the Squam Lakes recommend limiting consumption to: for adults and children >7 years old, 1 meal per month of yellow perch and 1 meal every 4 months of smallmouth bass and other fish; for women of child-bearing age, 1 meal every 2 months of yellow perch and 1 meal every 6 months of smallmouth bass and other fish; and for

children <7 years old, 1 meal every 3 months of yellow perch and 1 meal per year of smallmouth bass and other fish. Details of the new guidelines can be found at: <https://www.des.nh.gov/media/pr/2020/20200330-squam-lake-fish.htm>.

It was the decline of loons on Squam that led LPC to test unhatched loon eggs from failed nests. From there, it was a straight line to contaminants in crayfish, sediments, and now fish, with implications for human health. LPC will continue to test unhatched loon eggs from failed nests on Squam and around the state to monitor contaminant levels. After all, loons are the ultimate measure of the success of any efforts to mitigate the contaminant problem on Squam, and they point out other areas in the state that may be affected by similar issues. Loons as sensitive indicators of the health of an aquatic ecosystem...never has that been more true.

~Tiffany Grade

LPC thanks the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services for their investigation into contaminant levels in fish on Squam Lake.



“Loons’ status as a long-lived species, their position at the top of aquatic food webs, and the fact that loons are feeding exclusively in aquatic habitats make them sensitive indicators of contaminants in a lake ecosystem.

~Tiffany Grade

LPC Welcomes Susan Goodwin to the Board of Trustees

The Loon Preservation Committee is pleased to welcome Susan Goodwin of Wolfeboro and Lake Wentworth to the LPC Board of Trustees (BOT).

Susan is quite active with lake policy and conservation in the state, serving on the Boards of the Wentworth Watershed Association (where she chairs the programs committee) and NH LAKES. She also chairs the Wolfeboro Milfoil Control Committee and coordinates the Lake Host program on Lake Wentworth/Crescent Lake. And, to mix things up, she serves on the Board of the Lakes Region Curling Association!

In her previous life, she taught chemistry at The Kent School in Kent, Connecticut, and, before that, worked at Sloan Kettering Institute of Cancer Research in NYC.

Susan's vast experience with New Hampshire's lake communities will no doubt enhance LPC's work to preserve loons and their habitats in the state. We are delighted to have her join the BOT.

~Harry Vogel

Loon.org gets a Makeover!

Over the winter, LPC staff undertook the colossal task of completely overhauling our website. During the website redesign, we had three major goals: 1) to provide the public with up-to-date, scientifically backed, interesting information about common loons and our work to protect them in New Hampshire; 2) to provide high-quality photos and videos that illustrate key aspects of loon biology and behavior; and 3) to add features that allow members of the public to more easily contribute meaningfully to our work.

We believe that we have achieved these goals, and we hope that website visitors agree! The new site features extensive information about loon biology, details the work that we do on behalf of loons and the reasoning behind it, and includes new features, including a form that allows members of the public to more easily report loons in distress. We began our website redesign long before Covid-19 became a reality. In a time where this virus is making it difficult to perform our normal outreach activities in person, it is more important than ever to have a way of reaching and educating people virtually. We are very proud of our new website and hope that you find it informative!

~Caroline Hughes

WWW.LOON.ORG



LPC 2020 Benefit Raffle

Donation: \$5 ticket or 3/\$10
Drawing: December 5, 2020 @ 2pm
at The Loon Center

**Prizes: Kayak, Loon Quilt, Framed Loon Painting,
& Loon Stained-Glass Snowshoe**

You need not be present to win!

2020 marks LPC's 45th year!

Tickets for our 2020 Benefit Raffle can be acquired by mail by contacting Holly Heath at hheath@loon.org. As you can see, we have a great lineup of prizes this year and all proceeds benefit New Hampshire's loons!

Most-Ever Field Observers for 2020 Birdathon/Bloomathon

The Tamworth Area Birdathon/Bloomathon is the longest-continuously-running birdathon in New Hampshire. It was a record year — the most ever field observers, all scurrying around, mostly solo, in this time of Covid-19.

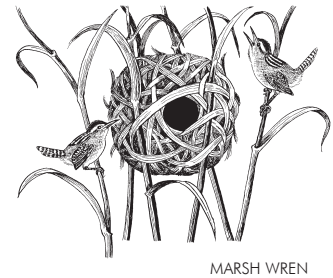
This year's "Bird" team included: Ned Beecher, Hillary Behr, Chip Bollinger, Lucy Gatchell, Tiffany Grade, Dexter Harding, Lynne Hart, Ken Klapper, Susan Lee, Fay Melendy, Charlie Nims, Jane Rice, Bob Ridgely, Joe Scott, Win Shafer, and Tony Vazzano; and the "Bloom" team: Chris

Clyne, Ingrid Albee, Lucy Gatchell, John Cooley, Jane Rice, Tony Vazanno, Susan Lee, and Fay Melendy.

One day collective observations on May 15, 2020, totaled 119 birds and 69 blooms. Data will be shared with eBird as part of a massive citizen science project to increase our knowledge of North American birds.

If you would like a detailed listing of birds and blooms, please call or email Holly Heath at 603-476-5666/hheath@loon.org. You can support the event by sending a check to LPC or using the

drop-down on the "Donate" tab on www.loon.org. Your gift will help loons and provide funding for the Lakes Region Chapter of NH Audubon's free winter talks held at The Loon Center.



MARSH WREN

"For my own part, I wish the bald eagle had not been chosen the representative of our country. He is a bird of bad moral character. He does not get his living honestly."

~ Benjamin Franklin

(Not necessarily endorsed by LPC!) ☺



Northern Nodding Trillium and Fringed Polygala were among the blooms counted during the Birdathon/Bloomathon.



Jon Winslow Photo

It's not just loons that have a beef with eagles. It appears this Eastern Kingbird (and Benjamin Franklin!) does as well! Bald Eagle was among the many bird species counted during the Birdathon/Bloomathon.

The Loon's Feather Gift Shop

Selling "all things LOON" and MORE!!!

As this newsletter goes to press, we anticipate re-opening The Loon Center to visitors on July 1st while following strict Covid-19 guidelines to ensure the safety of our visitors, staff, and volunteers. In addition, we are offering curbside pickup for those who prefer more social distancing. And our online store remains open for mail orders. We greatly appreciate your support during these trying times!

Loon Center Visitors:

For your safety and ours, we ask that you please follow the guidelines outlined below.

- Please ring the doorbell for entry.
- Face masks are required for the duration of your visit.
- Please maintain a six-foot distance from others.
- Number of visitors in the building will be limited to six.
- Loon Center restrooms are closed. A portable toilet is available at the trail head.
- If you have any Covid-19 symptoms or have been in contact with someone with Covid-19, we ask that you please visit another day based on CDC guidelines.

Curbside Pickup:

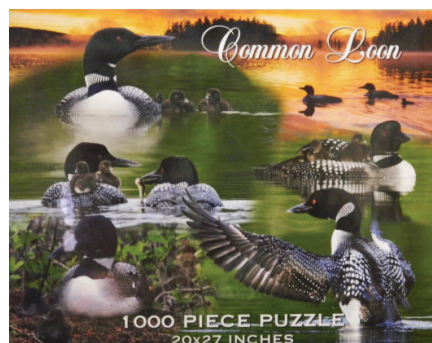
In order to safely and efficiently process your orders, we ask that you please keep in mind the following.

- Orders must be placed via our online store at loon.org/shop.
- Select "Local Pickup" in your cart when you place your order.
- Pickup times are Wednesday and Saturday from 1pm-5pm or by appointment.
- To request a pickup time outside of the normal hours, please make note of your request in the "Order Notes" section during checkout. A staff member will confirm your time.
- Please allow 24 hours for order processing.
- When you arrive to pick up your order, please call The Loon Center at 603-476-5666 and say you are there to pick up your order. A member of the shop staff will bring it out to your car.

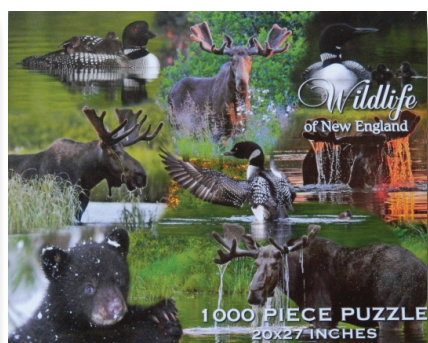
ONLINE TEASER!

As we all do our best to practice social distancing, we're looking for more FUN activities to do at home as a family. A PUZZLE is the quintessential summer activity, and we have some GREAT ones to choose from!

All puzzles are \$17.95 each, plus \$8.95 shipping and handling.



Common Loons
1000 pieces; 20x27 inches



Wildlife of New England
1000 pieces; 20x27 inches



Kids' New Hampshire
"Live Free or Die"
100 pieces; 24x36 inches

SUMMER BULLETIN BOARD

Remote Summer Nature Talks via YouTube: Thursdays at 7:00pm, July 9 - August 20

Please see page 22 of this newsletter for a full description of this summer's lineup, as well as directions on how to access the talks and submit questions on YouTube.

Annual Loon Census: Saturday, July 18, 8am - 9am

Our one-hour, state-wide count of loons on New Hampshire lakes and ponds is a go for this year! Please see census form on page 23 for instructions. Contact volunteers@loon.org with questions.

LPC Annual Meeting: Thursday, August 20, 6:30pm

The Annual Meeting will take place at 6:30pm via Zoom. Please use the following link for access to the meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82448830429>. The meeting will be immediately followed by the End of Season Report (the last of the Summer Nature Talks) broadcast on YouTube ([youtube.com/looncenter](https://www.youtube.com/looncenter)) at 7:00pm. We hope you can join us!

We were saddened to cancel our much anticipated Summer Extravaganza this year, as well as the Annual Loon Festival and Carl Johnson Memorial Golf Tournament, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We will miss the camaraderie with members, volunteers, and friends that these events engender. But we are hopeful that circumstances will be different next year, and we look forward to resuming these events with great gusto! In the meanwhile, please stay connected through our many social-media outlets: Facebook (@Loon Preservation Committee), twitter (@lpc_NH), instagram (@loonpreservationcommittee), and YouTube (@Loon Preservation Committee).



Distance shopping on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)? Pick the Loon Preservation Committee from Amazon's list of participating charities, and they will donate a portion of the purchase price to LPC!

*“Happy trails to you,
until we meet again.
Happy trails to you,
keep smilin' until then...”*

~Roy Rogers

We apologize if you receive your newsletter after some of the dates for Nature Talks and the Loon Census have passed. Mail delivery is tracking more slowly due to the pandemic. Please check our website for updates regarding our Covid-19 responses. We thank you for your patience during these extraordinary times and look forward to working with you as we continue our work protecting New Hampshire's loons!

Summer 2020 Nature Talk Series

—via YouTube—

Please access our nature talks online at youtube.com/looncenter. Streams will be posted 10-15 minutes before the 7pm talk start time. The stream chat will be open for questions related to the talk. Please log into your YouTube account if you would like to ask a question during the talk. For additional information, please email info@loon.org or call 603-476-5666.

July 9 Rick Libby—A New Hampshire Wildlife Safari

Rick Libby has spent over forty years photographing wildlife around New England. His philosophy is simple – respect the wildlife in their natural settings and capture them as if no humans were there. Join him on a journey through the wilds of New England and meet the wildlife that call these areas home.

July 16 Mark Pokras, Tufts University—Common Loons: Past, Present, and Future

Today we consider that common loons (*Gavia immer*) embody everything in nature that is wild, free, mysterious and beautiful. But people did not always feel this way about loons. In this presentation Dr. Pokras will discuss the history of human/loon interactions, scientific research, the origins of the modern loon conservation movement, what's going on today, and challenges for the future.

July 23 Angie Wilson Krysiak—Amazing Amphibians (Live Frogs)

How much do you know about the incredible world of amphibians? Angie Wilson Krysiak of NH Audubon will introduce us to the fascinating life cycles of New Hampshire's native frogs, as well as how to identify them by sight and sound. Find out how you can help with citizen science on amphibian migration nights, and meet some live frogs up close.

July 30 Bill Gassman—Loon Nest Cam: Through the Lens

The Loon Preservation Committee Live Loon Nest Cam is now in its seventh season. It has come a long way in that time and now has seen viewers from all fifty states and 201 countries. Bill Gassman, LPC's volunteer Loon Cam Operator and Guru, has been a large part of this success. Join him for some behind the scenes information about how the camera works and the logistics of getting it up and running, as well as some fascinating footage!

August 6 Chris Martin—Peregrine Falcon Recovery in New Hampshire

This program reviews decades of effort to restore Peregrine Falcons in New Hampshire and describes management and partnerships that have helped these aerial predators. Chris Martin has been a raptor biologist for NH Audubon for more than 28 years. His work focuses on recovery of the state's endangered and threatened raptors in close collaboration with NH Fish & Game. He recruits, trains, and supervises an enthusiastic corps of NH Audubon volunteer field observers who monitor these species all across the state.

August 13 Iain MacLeod—Canaries in the Coalmine: Bird Population Declines in New Hampshire

A recent paper published in the journal *Science* highlighted a 29% net loss in bird populations in North America since 1970. Iain MacLeod, Executive Director of the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, will discuss population trends in New Hampshire that show a similar decline. Many familiar songbirds are vanishing – towhees, thrashers, wood thrushes, white-throated sparrows while others like raven, wild turkey and pileated woodpecker are increasing. What is behind these population changes, and are there ways to mitigate or reverse the trend?

August 20 John Rockwood & Harry Vogel—End of Season Report

Wildlife photographer, John Rockwood, will share photos and video of local loon families from two southern New Hampshire lakes, from arrival through August. LPC Senior Biologist/Executive Director, Harry Vogel, will present trends in New Hampshire's loon population and preliminary statistics on how loons fared in New Hampshire this year.



New Hampshire Loon Census
Saturday, 18 July 2020
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM

Lake: _____ Town: _____

Observer(s): _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____

Total number of people in party: _____

Observations:

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

Please note any bald eagle sightings during this hour & the loons' response (i.e. vocalizations):

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

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

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

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

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

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

Please return this form to the LPC: PO Box 604, Moultonborough, NH 03254,
or you can fax it 603-476-5497 or email it to volunteers@loon.org.

If you were part of a coordinated census effort on a larger lake, please send this form to your coordinator so they can send the forms in all together.

Loon Preservation Committee
PO Box 604
Moultonborough, NH 03254

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The Loon Preservation Committee
gratefully acknowledges
Squam Boat Livery
for underwriting this publication.

