



Loon Preservation Committee

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

APRIL 1, 2022 - MARCH 31, 2023

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.

My late wife and I began supporting the Loon Preservation Committee more than forty years ago. Together, we successfully rescued a chick with fishing line wrapped around its beak about thirty years ago. For nine years I have been a Trustee of the Loon Preservation Committee (LPC), and now serve as Chair of our energetic Board of Trustees, joining Executive Director Harry Vogel's enduring guidance of the LPC's effective efforts to expand and improve loon population numbers and the entire loon experience in New Hampshire. Among the several state and provincial loon oversight organizations that exist in the United States and Canada, the LPC stands out by virtue of its successful restoration of loon habitat and loon numbers per square mile and per lake within New Hampshire and because of its estimable focus on fundamental loon biological research. The LPC counted a record 345 breeding pairs on 229 lakes in 2022, with an additional unpaired 106 loons also on our lakes. 177 chicks successfully fledged last year. Of equal importance, in 2022 LPC's biologists collected data and samples central to investigating dangerous contaminants (16 eggs were tested), emerging climate-dependent pathogens like avian malaria, and a deeper understanding of loon behavior and biology. One effort that we are pursuing now and for the near future is to test more and more loon eggs from more and more lakes, the resulting data contributing to our growing knowledge of loon life chances and the health of lakes and streams within the state. The LPC Board believes that your organization leads the world in research-based knowledge about the Common Loon (Great Northern Diver outside North America). We intend this year and in future years to double down (with your backing and financial assistance) on our research efforts and to build strongly on the existing investigations of our staff. Indeed, I am pleased to report that the LPC Board and its Executive Director are committed to contribute even more significantly to the global knowledge of common loon behavior and loon avifaunal understanding in the years to come.

Robert I. Rotberg, Chair
Board of Trustees



The first winter rescue of FY23 was in early December on Kezar Lake in Sutton, NH, where a loon was trapped near shore by a thick layer of skim ice. Following rescue, the loon spent the night at Wings of the Dawn for observation, and was banded and released at Odiorne Point in Rye, NH. Pictured: Senior Biologist John Cooley paddles through skim ice to reach the trapped loon. Cooley and Outreach Biologist Caroline Hughes disentangle the captured loon from the gill net.



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE:

Loons by the Numbers in FY23

The Loon Preservation Committee (LPC)'s fiscal year ending March 31st of 2023 (FY23) was one of challenges and records in New Hampshire. LPC continued to build strongly on its proven base of monitoring, management, research, and education to benefit loons over those 12 months. A few examples of note include a record 141 rafts floated, a record 38 loons rescued, and a record 12,472 pieces of lead tackle collected through our Lead Tackle Buyback Program to keep lead out of our lakes and our loons. LPC's in-person education returned in force as Covid finally waned, with a record 144 exhibits and presentations given to teach people about loons and their needs. That work included our continued partnership with the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center to carry out Loon Cruises with an LPC biologist on Squam Lake (part of our expanded outreach made possible by our Squam Lake Loon Initiative) and a return to guided loon paddles to teach people about loons and demonstrate good loon-watching etiquette. These records are all the more impressive when viewed in the context of a number of staff absences due to Covid and injuries (all thankfully overcome) over the course of the fiscal year.

It is satisfying to be able to report that loons responded to our expanded programs with continued gains in their population: a record 345 territorial loon pairs (pairs that are together for at least four weeks over the season, defend their lake or area of water from other loons, and have the potential to breed), a record 236 nesting pairs (pairs that created a nest and laid one or more eggs in that nest), a record 244 chicks hatched, and a record 177 chicks thriving by mid-August and presumed to have fledged from our lakes. The continued recovery of our loon population, despite its ever-increasing challenges, is evidence that our founders' hopes, that loons and people can thrive in each others' company, was well founded. The equal hope that interested and concerned residents and visitors would support those efforts through volunteerism and financial donations turned out to also be well founded; thank you to all of you who have supported LPC through your time, memberships, and other donations. We will continue to honor your dedication to loons and to the Loon Preservation Committee with continued hard work and proven as well as innovative programs to help loons thrive.

Harry Vogel,
Senior Biologist/Executive Director



LPC Trustee Kristen Begor and volunteer Dave Beardsley float a loon nesting raft on Lake Sunapee. Rafts help loons displaced from traditional nesting sites by shoreline development and changing water levels. Almost one in every four loon chicks hatched in New Hampshire in FY23 came from one of the record 141 nesting rafts floated by LPC.

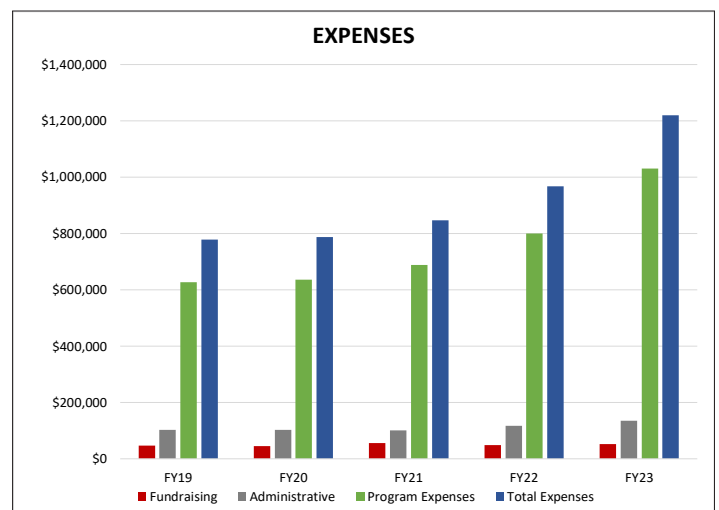
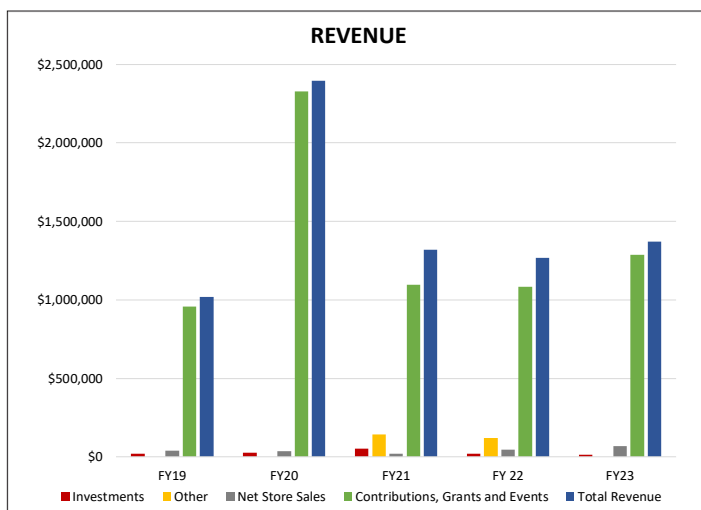
Population and Productivity:

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Territorial Loon Pairs	309	313	321	326	345
Nesting Pairs	226	221	216	229	236
Chicks Hatched	224	193	203	192	244
Chicks Surviving to mid-August	157	148	156	133	177

FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

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

	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
Revenue:					
Contributions, Grants and Events	\$959,380	\$2,328,325*	\$1,098,165*	\$1,082,662	\$1,287,768
Store Sales, Net Cost of Goods	\$38,894	\$37,952	\$22,385	\$45,600	\$69,685
Investments	\$19,657	\$28,768	\$54,487	\$19,344	\$13,395
Other (PPP1, Energy Rebates, etc.)	—	—	\$144,066	\$120,681	—
Total Revenue	\$1,017,931	\$2,395,045	\$1,319,103	\$1,268,287	\$1,370,848
<i>*Includes gifts received during the capital campaign</i>					
Expenses:					
Program Expenses	\$627,733	\$636,374	\$688,111	\$800,597	\$1,029,983
Administrative	\$103,132	\$104,337	\$108,672	\$117,219	\$135,580
Fundraising	\$48,182	\$46,166	\$49,390	\$50,338	\$53,399
Total Expenses	\$779,047	\$786,877	\$846,173	\$968,154	\$1,218,962
Increase in Net Assets:	\$238,884	\$1,608,168	\$472,930	\$300,133	\$151,886



LPC's financial records are audited by Rowley & Associates of Concord, NH. Copies of the audit and the IRS 990 return are available on our website: www.loon.org.



LPC's Loon Webcam was viewed over 276,000 times and delighted and educated viewers from all over the world in FY23. News of loons and LPC's work to support them reached thousands more through our website (loon.org), e-Newsletter, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Zoom presentations.

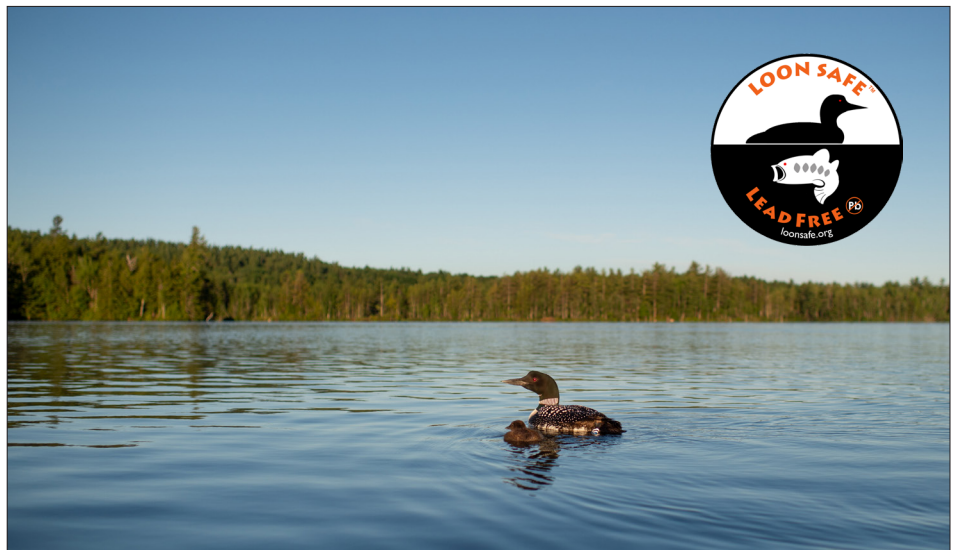
Lead Tackle Buyback Program—five years strong!

In 2022, the Lead Tackle Buyback Program, a joint project of the Loon Preservation Committee, New Hampshire Fish & Game, and tackle retailers throughout the state, entered its fifth year!

- The 2022 Lead Tackle Buyback Program proved to be our biggest year yet. We collected a record 12,472 individual pieces of lead tackle, weighing a record total of 115.6 pounds!
- Lead sinkers and lead-headed jigs weighing one ounce or less have been illegal to sell and to use in freshwater in New Hampshire since 2016.
- Lead poisoning resulting from the ingestion of lead fishing tackle is the number one cause of documented adult loon mortality in New Hampshire, accounting for 39% of loon deaths from 1989-2021.
- To date, the Lead Tackle Buyback Program has removed over 45,000 pieces of illegal lead tackle from circulation and use in New Hampshire, any one of which had the potential to kill a loon if ingested.
- Patrons who dropped off one ounce or more of lead tackle at participating retail locations received a \$10 voucher to be used to purchase replacement tackle or other supplies.
- Participants were entered in the “Collect to Protect Contest” with a chance to win \$100 and \$50 prizes respectively for turning in the largest and second-largest amounts of illegal lead tackle at each participating shop.
- The Lead Tackle Buyback Program partnered with the Lakes Region Planning Commission and lake associations to increase access to responsible lead disposal locations throughout the state.
- LPC ran advertisements on social media, in statewide and local newspapers, and on radio stations to spread the word about the Lead Tackle Buyback Program.
- LPC’s Lead Tackle Buyback Program has served as a model for the development of similar programs in other New England states, including Maine, New York, and Vermont.

Participating retailers in FY23:

LL Cote, Errol
Newfound Sales & Trading, Bristol
Ossipee’s Bait & Tackle, Effingham
Pawtuckaway Trading Post, Raymond
Pinnacle Sports, West Lebanon
Rocky’s Ace Hardware, New London
Squam Boat Livery, Holderness
The Loon Center, Moultonborough
The Tackle Shack, Meredith
The Tackle Shack, Newbury



Lead fishing tackle is the leading cause of adult loon mortality in New Hampshire. Loons can ingest lead fishing tackle from a line or attached to a fish. Use only non-lead fishing tackle to protect loons and other wildlife—it’s the law! And please dispose of fishing line and tackle properly to prevent entanglement and potential injury or death to loons. For more information on LPC’s lead poisoning reduction initiative visit loonsafe.org.