



Loon Preservation Committee

ANNUAL REPORT 2026

APRIL 1, 2025 - MARCH 31, 2026

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.

As I complete my first year as Chair of the Loon Preservation Committee, I find myself reflecting on my introduction to the organization and the remarkable people whose passion and dedication define it.

As a graduate of the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University, I was fortunate to study under one of my most respected mentors, Dr. Mark Pokras, Director of the Wildlife Clinic and Center for Conservation Medicine. Dr. Pokras is widely recognized in the loon science community for his groundbreaking work identifying lead poisoning as the leading cause of mortality in common loons. Together with LPC Executive Director and Senior Biologist Harry Vogel, he played a pivotal role in the passage of New Hampshire's legislation banning the use of small lead fishing sinkers.

At my 25th veterinary school reunion, I was catching up with Dr. Pokras when he suddenly asked, "Wait—you live on Lake Winnepesaukee. Have you met the loonies?" That simple question began my own journey with the Loon Preservation Committee.

What started with performing necropsies on deceased loons and taking radiographs of sick birds to search for ingested lead tackle has evolved into the privilege of serving as Chair of the Board of Trustees. In that role, I have had the opportunity to work alongside an extraordinary team of biologists, educators, and staff, as well as a dedicated Board of Trustees whose members generously contribute their time, expertise, and unwavering commitment to loon conservation. Their passion for protecting New Hampshire's loons is both inspiring and contagious.

Last year marked two important milestones: the Loon Preservation Committee's 50th anniversary and the 25th anniversary of New Hampshire's landmark lead sinker legislation. While lead poisoning remains the leading cause of loon mortality, the LPC's tireless work over the past five decades has made a measurable difference.

One of the most visible indicators of that success is loon productivity. When the Loon Preservation Committee was founded in 1975, only a single loon chick successfully hatched on Lake Winnepesaukee. In 2025, LPC documented 250 chicks on New Hampshire's lakes—a remarkable testament to what dedicated science, conservation, education, and community support can accomplish together.

Brenda M. Stowe DVM

Brenda M. Stowe, DVM
Chair, LPC Board of Trustees



Ray Hennessy Photo



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Executive Director

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Senior Biologist

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Squam Lakes Biologist

Holly M. Heath

Development & Membership

Manager

Caroline M. Hughes

Outreach Biologist

Linda Egli Johnson

Special Assistant/

Newsletter Coordinator

Ashley Keenan

Field Program Coordinator

Kirsten Knell

Loon Center Manager

Betsy McCoy

Director of Development

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Database Technician

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Assistant Loon Center Manager

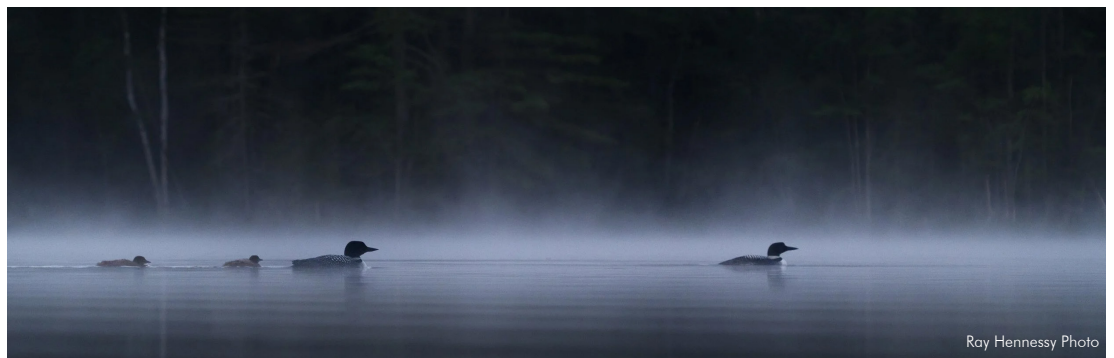
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE:

The Loon Preservation Committee's Fiscal Year Ended March 31st of 2026 (FY26) was our 51st year of working for New Hampshire's loons. LPC was created on a wing and a prayer in 1975 to address the rapid decline of loons and the unnatural silence that had descended on our lakes. We began as a grassroots effort and we remain that today: our budget has grown over the years, but our mission and our conservation philosophy have served loons too well to change.

With your support we continued to chase that mission in FY26, and it gives me more than a little satisfaction to report that that good work resulted in a good year for loons. By August of 2025, we had tallied a record number of loon chicks hatched from nesting rafts floated by LPC staff and volunteers as well as a record number of chicks hatched from nests protected by LPC "Loon Nesting Area" signs. By December, we had collected a record number of pieces of lead fishing tackle – enough to reach a milestone of over 100,000 pieces of lead kept out of our loons and our lakes since the inception of our first-in-the-nation Lead Tackle Buyback Program. And every year we reach more people to educate them about loons and their challenges and how we can help them survive and thrive. Together, our comprehensive, science-driven, and pragmatic approaches to conservation have reversed the decline of loons in New Hampshire and increased their numbers fourfold.

The dollars graphed in this report speak to fiscal responsibility and earnest efforts of Board and staff to secure resources and use them effectively to help loons, but they don't tell the real story. That story is better reflected by a small but dedicated staff and close to 1,000 volunteers in FY26 who ensured that our loons continued their hard-won recovery despite the increasing challenges they are facing. The dollars play a role too, of course – it costs over 3,600 of them to test a single egg for contaminants, for example. This and all of our dramatically expanded monitoring, re-research, management and education efforts were made possible by funding of one sort or another, including memberships, annual appeal gifts, store sales, and donations to our Loon Recovery Plan, Lead Tackle Buyback Program, and Squam Lake Loon Initiative. That generosity is an important part of LPC's story as well, and I want to sincerely thank all who trusted LPC with their time and effort and funds. I hope you agree that they were put to good use to secure a good future for loons and those of us who love them in New Hampshire.

Harry Vogel
Senior Biologist/Executive Director



Ray Hennessy Photo

Population and Productivity:

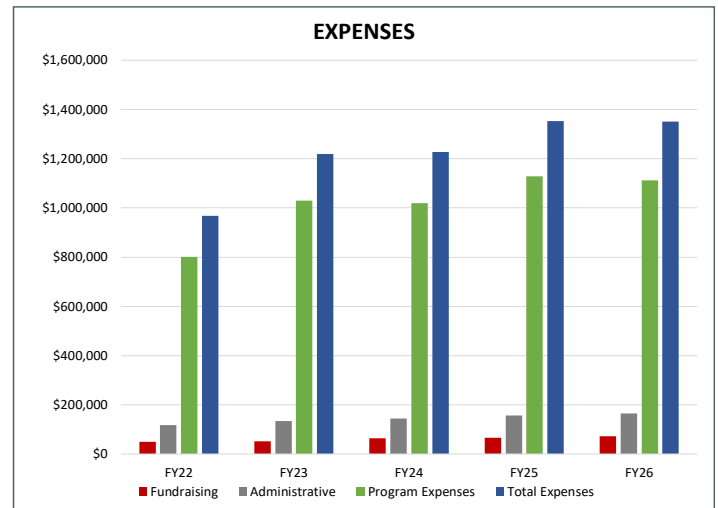
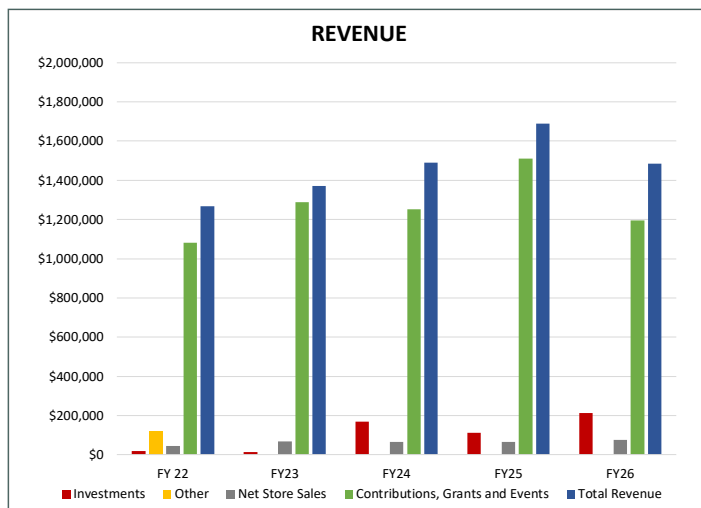
	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>
Territorial Loon Pairs	326	345	345	359	370
Nesting Pairs	229	236	242	236	265
Chicks Hatched	192	244	196	211	250
Chicks Surviving to mid-August	133	177	137	153	194

FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

Loon Preservation Committee: Summary of Activities and Changes in Net Assets

Fiscal Year Ending: March 31

	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
Revenue:					
Contributions, Grants and Events	\$1,082,662	\$1,287,768	\$1,253,062	\$1,509,975	\$1,194,312
Store Sales, Net Cost of Goods	\$45,600	\$69,685	\$66,230	\$65,457	\$75,993
Investments	\$19,344	\$13,395	\$169,863	\$112,484	\$213,345
Other (PPP2, Energy Rebates, etc.)	\$120,681	—	—	—	—
Total Revenue	\$1,268,287	\$1,370,848	\$1,489,155	\$1,687,916	\$1,483,650
Expenses:					
Program Expenses	\$800,597	\$1,029,983	\$1,018,304	\$1,127,623	\$1,112,713
Administrative	\$117,219	\$135,580	\$144,960	\$158,207	\$165,947
Fundraising	\$50,338	\$53,399	\$64,161	\$66,674	\$72,272
Total Expenses	\$968,154	\$1,218,962	\$1,227,425	\$1,352,504	\$1,350,932
Increase in Net Assets:	\$300,133	\$151,886	\$261,730	\$335,412	\$132,718



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.



Ingested lead tackle continues to be the leading known cause of death of adult loons in New Hampshire. LPC's Lead Tackle Buyback Program works to educate the public about this issue and provide incentives for anglers to turn in lead tackle that is now illegal to use or sell in the state. LPC partnered with Scouting America and transfer stations (like this one in Ashland) to reach new audiences and collected a record amount of lead fishing tackle to keep it out of our lakes and loons in 2025.

A Strong Year for Loon Breeding Success

Compared with the past decade, 2025 was a strong year for all three productivity subcomponents for New Hampshire's loons. A greater percentage of loon pairs nested, those pairs produced chicks at a higher rate, and a greater percentage of the chicks that hatched survived and presumably fledged from their lakes. The combined result was 0.52 chicks surviving per territorial pair – the highest productivity we've recorded in the state since 2015. While no single factor alone explains the improvement we saw this year, several likely contributed, including:



Record Raft Usage

Of the 153 rafts floated across the state, a record 75 were used by loons and a record number of chicks (77, or 31% of chicks hatched statewide) came from a raft.



Less Human Recreational Pressure During Nesting

New Hampshire had rain for 13 consecutive weekends in 2025, from late March through mid-June, which may have limited human disturbance at nest sites.



Signs and Rope Lines

Staff and volunteers protected 154 nesting pairs with signs and/or rope lines, and a record number of chicks (137, or 55% of chicks hatched statewide) came from one of those protected nest sites.



Ray Hennessy Photo

Favorable Weather During Chick Rearing

Chick survival was up 5% from the 10-year average. This increase may be partly explained by less rain during the chick-rearing period, providing better water clarity for finding and capturing prey.



Outreach Efforts

LPC gave 127 presentations statewide and educated the public about loons through social media, press releases, and signage at boat launches.



Live Loon Cam

LPC's Loon Cam received over 250,000 views and over 32,000 chat messages from all over the world in 2025, informing an ever-growing audience about loons and LPC's work to protect them.