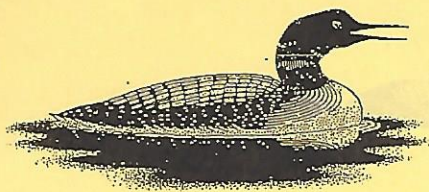


~ Do Your Part to Protect Loons ~

- **Watch loons from at least 200 feet away.** Close encounters can be deadly for swimming and nesting loons. Use binoculars from a safe distance.
- **Use non-lead fishing sinkers and jigs.** Ingesting one sinker or jig will kill a loon.
- **Avoid use of islands before July 15th of each year.** Loons prefer islands for nesting.
- **Protect native vegetation on all shores.** Loons often nest on natural shorelines and use natural materials to build their nests.
- **Conserve electricity.** Mercury emissions contaminate lakes and loon food.
- **Dispose of household garbage at a collection site.** Garbage draws raccoons, foxes, gulls, and eagles, which prey on loon eggs. Trash can ensnare wildlife like loons.
- **Be an ethical angler.** Never fish or cast near loon nests or swimming loons, and properly dispose of extra bait and trash on land.
- **Keep dogs and cats away from loons and nests.** Pets disturb nesting loons and destroy loon eggs.
- **Use only phosphorus-free fertilizers on shorelands, and only if needed.** Fertilizer that runs off into lakes increases aquatic plant growth, making it difficult for loons to swim and find food.
- **Report any unusual loon activity or harassment of loons to your lake's Loon Watcher.** Find out who is the official Loon Watcher on your lake and report your observations to him or her.
- **Monitor water quality or invasive species.** Check with your lake association for ways that you can help.
- **Be a responsible boater.** Never chase loons or run motorboats or personal watercraft over areas where loons have been seen. Loons and loon chicks have died from being hit by boats and propellers.

Practice and teach wildlife stewardship...always!



LOON SURVEY TIPS

Finding Loon Nests

The best time to watch for nesting loons is in May and June. This is when loons will be incubating eggs. Since the eggs must be kept at a constant temperature for 27-31 days in order to hatch, you are most likely to see only one loon out on the lake during these months. Both of the adults share in the incubation duties and will exchange places (i.e., from sitting on eggs to feeding and patrolling) every couple hours.

Careful watching from a distance with binoculars will often reveal the nest location as the loons go to and from the nest. Knowing where the nest is located can be valuable information for protecting loons. Development projects, shoreline modifications, and aquatic vegetation removal can all threaten loon nests. However, projects can often be modified if it is known that they would impact a loon nesting area.

Counting Loon Chicks

The best time to determine the number of loon chicks is during the 1st and 2nd weeks of July. During this time, loon chicks are still small and will stay close to their parents. It is easy to count family groups and numbers of chicks. If you haven't seen any loon chicks by the middle of July, either the nest was unsuccessful or the loons you are watching didn't nest at all.

When the chicks are very small, the family will tend to stay in an area known as the "nursery." Nurseries are most often protected bays with shallow water where the adults can catch many small fish to feed their hungry chicks. If you know which part of your lake is used as the nursery, please indicate it on your drawing or map.

Late Summer Counts

From the end of July through September you may observe "groups" of loons that visit the lake. Loons, especially loners and unsuccessful nesters, will travel to other lakes in groups. Sometimes they will come to a lake, stay an hour or two, and make lots of noise. (I call this a "Loon Party!") Other times loons will travel to bigger lakes and stay for a couple weeks. This second situation is most common on larger lakes towards fall as the loons are getting ready for migration. Counts for nesting loons and chicks should not be done during this time because it's too difficult to sort the nesters from the visitors.