



Montana Loon Society 2019 Newsletter

Loon Migration and Montana's Common Loons

Prior to John James Audubon's birth in 1785, not much was known about bird migration. Some people believed birds went underground in winter, hibernating like bears. Some thought waterfowl spent the winter under the ice. Others believed birds turned into other birds in winter. One silly scientist even suggested birds flew to the moon in autumn and returned in spring.

In 1805, Audubon discovered a cave where eastern phoebes returned to nest each spring. He tied silver thread around the legs of three chicks. The next spring two of the chicks returned. All around the world people had been banding birds to show ownership, but when Audubon tied that silver thread around those chicks' legs, he became the first to band American birds for scientific purposes.

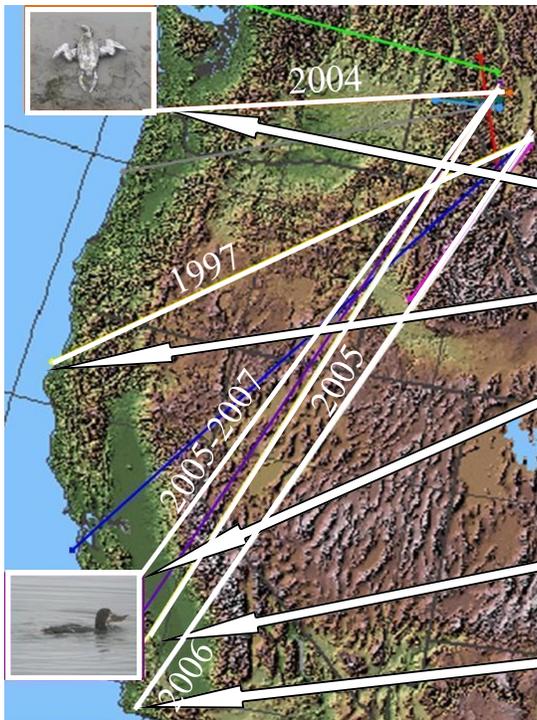
On July 9, 1833, while in Labrador, Canada on a birding expedition, Audubon wrote in his journal, "I have drawn all day at the Loon, a most difficult bird to imitate."

Later, Audubon finished his common loon illus-

*Common Loon,
(Gavia immer)
Audubon, 1833.
Courtesy of the
National Audu-
bon Society.
(Plate 409 In
Audubon's
book, Birds of
American.)*



tration showing two loons. One loon in breeding plumage is standing in a nest. The swimming loon is an adult in winter plumage. It has a red eye, so we know this is an adult loon. A chick hatches with brownish-yellow eyes. After a chick's first migration to the coast in autumn, it mostly stays on its ocean home for two full years. (Chicks have been spotted on inland lakes up and down the coastline, but these inland forays aren't their full migration back to their natal area.) At the start of its third summer, a chick grows adult breeding plumage and its eye turns red. Then it returns to its natal area to find a mate and eventually breed at between five and seven years old. Loons continue their migrations back and forth to the coast for the rest of their 20 to 25 years of life. (*Migration and Montana's Loons: Continued on Page 6*)



Some Montana Past Band Results:

- **2004 Boyd Lake to Long Beach, WA, 650 miles.** Recovered dead chick (pictured)
- **1997 Seeley Lake to Arcata, CA, 760 miles.** Recovered dead adult (not pictured)
- **2005-2007 Stillwater loon observed in Morro Bay, CA, 1000 miles (pictured).** This loon also made news when it returned to Stillwater Lake in 2007 within 5 to 7 days after being observed in Morro Bay.
- **2005 Seeley Lake to Santa Barbara, CA, 920 miles.** Recovered dead loon (not pictured)
- **2006 Dickey Lake to Santa Cruz, CA, 900 miles,** observed. (not pictured)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By MLS President, Lynn Kelly

In keeping with the migration theme of this newsletter, it's impossible to not see evidences of this astounding and mysterious natural phenomenon right now. It is always thrilling when 1000 tundra swans stop at the southeastern corner of Flathead Lake enroute to their breeding grounds in the Arctic. At this writing, my ears are pealed for the bouncing song of the ruby-crowned kinglet. My heart leaps when the first yellow warbler makes its presence known with its "sweet sweet sweet I'm so sweet" song. Finally, I know spring has really advanced when the booming sound of courting night-hawks is heard over the treetops at dusk. Then of course, there is the noticeable increase of RV's on our highways as human snowbirds return.

Migration doesn't just happen! Physiological changes start to occur in our backyard breeders in South America and in Montana's loons out on the Pacific around the winter solstice. The day after that shortest day of the year has maybe a minute more of light and that seemingly insignificant signal starts the process of building fat for the coming spring migration in tandem with a myriad of other chemical changes. As the days grow longer, restlessness increases until suddenly, the race is on for northern breeding territories.

The definition of "critical habitat" usually starts with the requirements for breeding. So, critical nesting habitat for loons in Montana translates minimally to lakes with islands or marshy shorelines near inlets or outlets of streams. The banding efforts undertaken by MLS over the years has established that our loons winter from the central California coast around San Luis Obispo north to Washington state. Within this large area, estuaries and established coastal wildlife refuges appear to be "critical" to a dependable food supply.

Two kinds of critical habitat that can be easily overlooked, especially for our neotropical migrants, like tiny ruby-crowned kinglets and yellow warblers, are staging areas and stop-over sites. These two migration necessities are generally well known for waterbirds like loons and waterfowl (ducks, geese and swans). Just before migration occurs, "staging" happens as groups of loons gather in loosely formed flocks on Flathead Lake and other Montana water bodies in the fall. However, the coastal staging areas for spring are not known.

Once "lift off" has occurred, the birds now



MLS President Lynn Kelly at September, 2018 MLS Annual Meeting in Bigfork, MT .

depend on stop-over sites which are equivalent to "Super 8 and McDonald's" in the human traveler's world. The tundra swans use Flathead Lake to rest and feed before making the next push to the north. Freezeout Lake is a critical stop-over site for water birds and waterfowl on the Rocky Mountain Front, drawing thousands of people to witness the passing of tens of thousands of snow geese heading north. It's pretty breath-taking when 50,000 geese rise up off the water and head out to feed in the surrounding grain fields.

Bottom line? Critical habitat must include breeding, wintering, staging and stop-over sites to ensure that birds can successfully nest and then efficiently migrate between their summer and winter ranges. The quantity and quality of all four of these habitats must be continually monitored in the face of climate change, invasive species and human developments of houses, highways and energy developments.

In the past year there was a massive northern movement of plankton and fish along the Pacific coast. Species normally found along the southern California coastline off San Diego were up by San Francisco. Why did this happen? How might this affect Montana's wintering loons? We have no idea. This is why it's important to notice the news coming from outside the borders of our beautiful state. If you find news of this sort, consider sharing it on the Montana Loon Society Facebook site so that discussions and questions can ensue resulting in increased awareness of issues or potential threats. In the meantime, we say "Welcome Home" to our fine feathered friends and wish them well while they are here. Be sure to take the time to enjoy them for another season! ♦

LOON PINT NIGHT

Homestead Ale Brewery
Eureka, Montana,

Wednesday, May 22, 2019

A dollar of every beer sold will go to the MLS! Silent Auction, Loon Info Loon Merchandise, and Lots of Fun! Hope to see everyone there!

www.habrewing.com



2018 AREA LOON REPORTS

"Area Loon Reports" are written by Common Loon Working Group (CLWG) area coordinators and wildlife biologists (and/or loon rangers) in the U.S. Forest Service, Glacier National Park, MFWP, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT), and Blackfeet Tribe. Many individuals representing these agencies and other groups, including MLS, monitor Montana's loons. Chicks counted on Loon Day in July are assumed to have survived to migrate in the fall. The following summaries are greatly condensed versions of longer reports. To obtain full length versions contact Chris Hammond, chammond@mt.gov 406-752-4582

Blackfeet Indian Reservation

Terry Peterson, Crown of the Continent Research Learning Center

Glacier National Park, in conjunction with a Blackfeet Conservation Corp, monitored ten lakes in this area. Three lakes including Flattop, Dog Gun and Mitten lakes had successful nests attempts that hatched one chick on each of the three lakes. Mitten Lake, on the east side of the mountains, is a prairie lake with cattle grazing in the area and both last year and this year successfully hatched and raised one chick. Nesting was suspected on Babb's beaver pond where sandhill cranes and swans also nest, so they may have caused the nest failure. **This area produced 3 chicks in 2018.**

Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex

BMWC loons and nesting activity info is greatly appreciated. (Loon calls count, too.) To report sightings, contact the nearest Forest Service Ranger Station. **Nesting info is especially needed for Big Salmon Lake, so please contact the Hungry Horse Ranger Station if you have relevant information, including past observations.**

ON FACEBOOK

www.facebook.com

**then search "Montana Loon Society."
Get announcements, see up-to-date photos, post loon stories and photos.**

Blackfoot/Clearwater (Ovando/Seeley Lake) Loon Ranger Keely Benson

In the Blackfoot/Ovando area, three lakes were monitored that have had nesting attempts during previous years. This year two lakes were used for nesting. Upsata was successful, hatching two chicks with one chick that survived.

In the Seeley Lake/Clearwater area nine lakes were monitored with four nesting attempts and all four were successful of hatching chicks. Five chicks hatched and five chicks survived. It is recommended that Clearwater Lake needs the buoys placed before nesting season. Placid Lake has a female loon that was banded as an adult in 1996, which is the very first year that the Montana Loon Society banded any loons. With a mate that is half her age, she is now our "Cougar" loon. Together this pair nested and hatched one chick that survived. **This combined area had 6 chicks.**

Ksanka District (Eureka, Fortine & Murphy Lake Areas) Kelsey Preslar

On the Ksanka Ranger District, 10 breeding lakes were regularly monitored, and an additional 22 lakes on the May and July Loon Days. 11 chicks hatched across 8 lakes, but only 8 were counted on July Loon Day. One chick was reported later, so 9 chicks for the season. Frank Lake had two nest attempts but both failed. Lick Lake lost both chicks: reason unknown. After a second successful season on Black Lake, the private land owner installed two additional platforms on Olga and Crystal lakes, which may open new territories for 2019. Successful nests this season occurred on Black, Bull, Dickey, Loon's Echo, Marl, Carpenter (Tetrault), and Murphy Lake. **Total chicks for this area: 9**



Libby Dam and Lake Koocanusa (Photo: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)

2018 Area Loon Reports Continued...

Flathead Basin #2 (DNRC lakes in North Flathead and North Fork)

Chris Forristal

Nine lakes are monitored in this area. In 2018 there were six nest attempts, with some hatching, but only two chicks survived. Murray Lake attempted for the first time and were still incubating on July survey day. Cyclone Lake was also incubating at July survey day. Little Beaver had a lot of territorial issues throughout the breeding season. Upper Whitefish Lake hasn't nested in last seven years. Boyle Lake is secluded, but the new planned Whitefish legacy trail system will pass the nest. Proposing seasonal closure.

When the road/bike path construction NEPA was written for Spencer Lake there were no loons on lake. CLWG is working with construction timing mitigations to avoid nesting season. The trail system is a little trickier to mitigate. Hope to set restrictions or develop an access area at the north end of the lake away from the nests. **A total of 2 chicks were counted on July Loon Day.**

Flathead River-Forks

Rachel Manley, USFS Wildlife Technician

All six lakes surveyed in 2018 had breeding pairs, with nests in all territories. Of those, five were successful, producing 9 chicks, with 100% survival rate as of July Loon Day. It was a banner year! Stanton Lake, Cedar Creek Reservoir, Tepee Lake and Mud Lake all produced 2 chicks. Spoon Lake produced 1. Halfmoon failed, where an adult died while incubating eggs. This dead adult had no visible trauma and was collected by MT FWP to be sent for necropsy. **9 chicks were counted on July Loon Day.**



Rachel Manley placing new nest platform on Tepee Lake in the North Fork of the Flathead River Basin in 2017. Glacier NP mountains in background. Photo: Chris Hammond

Flathead Indian Reservation

Whisper Camel-Means, CSKT Wildlife Manager

Fifteen water bodies in this area are surveyed for loons, but no known nests. The survey includes mountain lakes, irrigation reservoirs and Flathead Lake. Variations in water levels due to irrigation uses from the reservoirs poses a challenge to nesting loons. In the past, attempts have been ruined due to water level fluctuation. The Flathead Reservation and Flathead Lake are important staging areas for migrating loons with loons regularly seen in spring and fall.

Glacier National Park

Citizen Science Program Glacier National Park

On Spring Loon Day, many citizen scientists looked for loons on nearly thirty lakes. On the July Loon Day, six chicks were counted. If possible, the park would like to have a local person have a banding permit to find out more about the park's loon population. **6 chicks were counted on July Loon Day.**

Kalispell West

Jacob King, MT FWP Intern

Thirteen lakes were monitored in this area, and 12 nest attempts. Nine chicks hatched and nine survived. Ashley Lake has 4 territories and hatched 2 chicks from 2 territories. Many territorial disputes disrupted the season, but boat traffic generally doesn't disturb nests, except for the territory near the outlet and marshy island. A pair nested and re-nested there but the channel is narrow, and boats quickly and often disturb the nest site. It is noted that the new loon buoys tend to float about the lake, and some general discussion about how to anchor them better. **Total chick count for this area, 9.**

Libby Ranger District

Mandy Rockwell, USFS Wildlife Biologist

Rainbow, Howard, and Loon lakes were checked for loon during both the spring and summer surveys. Loons were reported on both Rainbow and Loon in spring; however, none were present at either lake mid-July. No loons were observed on Howard Lake. The caretakers for Double N Lake and Kessler Lake both reported loon activity. Kessler had a pair occupying the lake, but no chicks hatched. Double N had a single pair that hatched two chicks, but both chicks

2018 Area Loon Reports Continued...

were taken by eagles, so **two chicks hatched this season in this area, but none survived.**

Swan Geographic Area

By Sage Staven/ Mark Ruby

Nine lakes were monitored in this area with 3 nesting attempts. One chick hatched and survived!! 100% chick survival, but only one chick. Loon Lake Kraft Creek attempted, but they abandoned or got predated. Lori Micken helped monitor loons on Pierce Lake. The pair attempted, but was not successful. That lake is a forest service lease area with several new lessees. Lindbergh Lake platform needs more vegetation. Developed recreation is picking up around Van Lake so that could create future issues for that pair. **1 chick was counted on July Loon Day in this area.**



Loons and artificial nest platform on Pierce Lake were monitored by cabin owner and volunteer, Lori Micken. We appreciate our volunteers!

Tally Lake/Stillwater Area

*Heather Welch, USFS Wildlife Technician
And Laura Strong, Coordinator*

This season we had a total of 6 chicks hatch and 5 survived. Monitoring was spread over thirteen lakes, eight of those lakes nested, and five nests were successful. Lakes with surviving chicks are Bootjack, Hanson-Doyle, Lower Stillwater, and Skyles. Blanchard Lake chick was lost while only a couple weeks old.

The most notable events in the area include losing the eagle nest on Lower Stillwater and an adult loon being shot on Bootjack. The Bootjack event is being further investigated by MT FWP. As for the eagle nest on Lower Stillwater, it will

be interesting to see if and where the eagles will re-build next year. Hopefully not near the floating platform! The platform itself needed a little refurbishing with native plants at the end of this season, but next season it will be lush and ready for another family of loons! There is still some continued concern about the impact of the proposed Whitefish Legacy trail along Spencer Lake on Highway 93. **This area had 5 chicks counted on July Loon Day.**

Total 2018 Montana Loon Chicks

50 chicks are reported in this newsletter, which were counted during the 2018 July Loon Day Count, including the 6 chicks in Glacier National Park. Here's an interesting look back at the number of chicks reported in the newsletter.

2017—55 chicks

2016—53 chicks

2015—60 chicks

Thanks to our loon rangers and volunteers our loon numbers continue to hold steady. ♦

Want to be a Loon Volunteer?

Contact the area coordinator in your location of interest. (Contact info on page 11)

If you don't have a specific lake you love, contact the Common Loon Working Group Co-chairs:

Laura Strong: (406) 758-3501

laurastrong@fs.fed.us

Chris Hammond: (406) 751-4582

chammond@mt.gov



Seeley Lake Loon & Fish Festival is back!

Seeley Lake, Montana, Community Hall

May 25 and 26 of Memorial Weekend

Saturday: 10:00 - 5:00, Sunday: 11:00 - 4:00

Montana Loon Society Loon Walk

9:00 a.m. Sunday starting at the Ranger Station.

Common Loon Working Group Loon Talk

1:00 on Sunday at Community Hall.

More details at www.alpineartisans.org

(Migration and Montana's Loons: Page 1 continued)

However, in Montana for a long time, people did not know where Montana's common loons spent the winter. In 1996, the Montana Loon Society (MLS), with the help of Biodiversity Research Institute in Maine, banded the first loons in Montana to learn where our birds went in winter, and to learn where they returned to in spring. Although MLS could not (and still can't) band every unbanded bird every summer on every lake, we have supported the ongoing banding work completed by the Common Loon Working Group, which began in 1999. The chart on the front page of this newsletter is not all the information gathered over the years, but it shows some interesting banding results and provides an overview. It is now evident that Montana's loons winter on the Pacific Coast from Canada to central California. (We do not know the cause of death for the loons that were found dead.)

So, why did Audubon's illustrate his common loons in both winter and summer plumage? Audubon later wrote that he drew the bird in winter plumage from a mounted specimen that had been shot several years before. From this it is evident, that by 1833, people understood that loons migrate and that when they do, they change colors from their black and white summer plumage to the dull gray of the winter plumage. (Information from *Original Water-Color Paintings by John James Audubon for The Birds of America*, American Heritage Publishing, 1966.)

While we love our Montana loons, we know they are "snowbirds" that spend half of their lives away from us. We appreciate our loon friends that keep track of our loons while they are on their winter home. ♦



"Help Protect Marine Wildlife" Sign in Pacific City, Oregon asks people to stay 500 feet away from marine wildlife.

For more information about Montana's loons and banding program visit Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks:
<http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/commonLoon/>

BOARD MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

MLS Region 6 Board Member

Paul Rumelhart



MLS Region 6 Board Member Paul Rumelhart of Libby, MT

After graduating from Gonzaga University in 1966, Board Member Paul Rumelhart was employed by an international oil company and worked in strategic planning, as well as finance and administration. He moved to Libby, Montana from Seattle in 1978. Upon leaving the corporate world he purchased a small petroleum dealership in Libby serving the local mining and wood products industries.

In 1983, he was given the opportunity to purchase an undeveloped lot on Crystal Lake, part of the Thompson Chain of Lakes in Lincoln County. Soon after, his family decided to build a log summit home on the property. Ninety-two bug-killed dead standing lodge pole logs were delivered to the building site. Each log had to have the bark removed with a draw knife before the builder could use them. While peeling the logs next to the shore, the flight and iconic sounds of the loons were witnessed. It was soon learned that the loons used Crystal Lake as a feeding stop on their way back and forth from Horseshoe Lake to one of the Thompson Lakes.

With an eye toward retirement in 2013, Paul joined the Montana Loon Society and became a board member. He takes part in the annual loon count covering Loon, Horseshoe and Crystal Lakes. He and his wife Sally live in the log home and enjoy the frequent visits from 14 grandchildren, as well as 5 great-grandchildren. Montana's loons are becoming an enjoyable part of their expanding family's life as well. ♦



To help Montana's loons, please purchase the Montana Loon Society License Plate for your Montana vehicle.

2018 MLS AWARDS

Partner of the Year: Rachel Manley

2018 MLS Partner of the Year Rachel Manley helps place an artificial nest platform on Teepee Lake west of Glacier NP in 2017.



The 2018 Partner of the Year Award was presented to Rachel Manley, Wildlife Technician for Glacier View, Hungry Horse, and Spotted Bear Ranger Districts for her many years of work in the Flathead. Rachel has worked hard to develop relationships with landowners around Halfmoon and Spoon lakes to provide education about loons. Her effort on Spoon Lake has especially paid off. Many VRBO rentals exist on that lake and she ensured all have information available and has worked with the landowners to make sure they emphasized the importance of giving nesting loons space. She also started deploying floating signs around the nesting area, and in 2017 she partnered with Chris Hammond at MTFWP to make improvements on the floating platform at Teepee Lake to provide nesting habitat. Flathead National Forest Wildlife Biologist, Laura Strong, said, "These conservation efforts are vital to the continued success of common loons in Northwestern Montana."



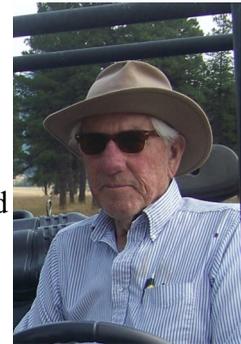
MLS Volunteer of the Year: Anne Dahl

2018 MLS Volunteer of the Year Anne Dahl for her years of helping loons in the Mission Mountain Wilderness near Condon, Montana.

The 2018 Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Anne Dahl of Condon, MT for all her work counting loons in the Mission Mountain Wilderness, Swan Ranger District. For many years, Anne has hiked to Lindbergh (a four mile hike) and Crystal Lake (a three mile hike) for both the May and July surveys to count loons. Thanks to her dedication we have many years of data on loons are these lakes. Forest Service Wildlife Biologist Mark Ruby on the Swan Ranger District said, "Anne Dahl has been an enduring presence for loons in the Swan Valley. Sun, rain, snow or ice, Anne has been steadfast in her monitoring and reporting of loons, especially on the difficult to reach lakes of Lindbergh and Crystal."

MLS 2018 Conservation Award Ralph Burchenal (1931-2018)

2018 Award was bestowed posthumously on Ralph Burchenal (1931-2018), shown here at his ranch in 2013.



The 2018 Conservation Award was bestowed posthumously on Ralph Burchenal (1931-2018) for all he did for Montana's loons through his generous support for the society, and his dedicated care of the nesting loons on Shoup Lake situated on his ranch in Ovando (Blackfoot River drainage). Last fall, a memorial service was held for him in his home state, Ohio, but another is being planned for him in the Ovando area this summer. It is then that we will present this award to his wife, Toone. MLS President Lynn Kelly said, "We will miss this kind, generous man who loved all things Montana, and Montana's loons." ♦

MLS Educational Loon Trunks Available In Four Places Around the State

- ♦ Montana Natural History Center
120 Hickory Street, Missoula, MT 59801
(406) 327-0405, info@TheNatureCenter.org
- ♦ Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
Natural Resource Department
301 Main St., Polson, MT 59860
(406) 883-2888, germainew@cskt.org
- ♦ Rexford Ranger District
949 US Highway 93 N.
Eureka, MT 59917 406-296-7104
lmjohnson@fs.fed.us
- ♦ Tally Lake Ranger Station
650 Wolf Pack Way, Kalispell, MT 59901
(406) 758-3544 ajacobs@fs.fed.us



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you.
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classrooms or
homeschool!**



Montana Common Loon Working Group **Spring 2019 Update**

By Laura Strong and
Chris Hammond, CLWG Co-Chairs

On behalf of the Common Loon Working Group, we send our heart-felt thanks to the Montana Loon Society for everything they do to protect habitat for loons in Montana. The Working Group has been focused on getting area coordinators filled to organize the May and July surveys that give us the population metrics we use to make management decisions. What a great team we all make when we work across agencies, organizations, and lands! Thanks for all!

DATES TO REMEMBER:

Spring Loon Survey date: May 18, 2019

Summer Loon Survey date: July 13, 2019
...Or as close to those Saturdays as possible.

Summer CLWG Meeting: July 30-31. Location: Many Glacier on the eastern side of Glacier National Park

If anyone would like to be a loon volunteer contact the area coordinator of your location of interest or contact Laura or Chris if you don't have a specific lake you love.

- ◆ Laura Strong (406) 758-3501
laurastrong@fs.fed.us
- ◆ Chris Hammond (406) 751-4582
chammond@mt.gov



Stay back,
when you
see these
signs on
your lake!



At their September 2018 Annual Meeting, MLS Board Members and CLWG Co-chairs review the 2018 Breeding season and discuss 2019's needs.

2018 Montana Loon Society Annual Board Meeting

The 2018 Montana Loon Society Board of Directors meeting was held in the morning of Sunday, September 23 at the Bigfork Ranger Station. Seven of ten board members and two guests attended. Along with the regular Secretary and Treasurer's Report, the Board completed a 18-Year General Fund Review. They also discussed new developments in invasive species and boat check stations. ◆

2018 Montana Loon Society Annual Membership Meeting

The 2018 MLS Membership Meeting was held in the afternoon of Sunday, September 23 at the Bigfork Ranger Station. Seven of the ten board members and two regular members along with CLWG Co-Chairs Chris Hammond and Laura Strong attended. Chris and Laura discussed the 2018 loon season and their 2019 funding request, which is to be decided at their winter meeting. Election of Officers included Vice-President Christie Ferruzzi, and Secretary Donna Love (both 2 year positions). No Election of Board Members was needed this year as all Board members serve a three year term and 2018 was the odd year out. ◆

REMEMBER
The Non-Game Check-off
at the end of each year's tax form supports loons, too, so be sure to donate part of your tax return to the Non-Game Check-off.



REWARD



FOR OBSERVATIONS OF MONTANA'S BANDED & UNBANDED LOONS!

The Montana Loon Society is offering cash prizes for 2019 observations of unique banded loons or confirmed unbanded breeding loons!

Two \$100 awards will be decided by a random drawing from all individuals who submitted at least one observation. To encourage early observations, one drawing will occur in mid-June and the other in mid-July. Send band observations to Chris Hammond of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (chammond@mt.gov or 406-751-4582). The most useful band reports are the ones that come in to Chris as soon as possible, so send them in as you see them, even if you are not 100% sure of your observation. Qualified observations will be determined and counted solely by Chris. See the reverse side for information about how to observe and report loon bands. Winners will be announced at the summer meeting of the Montana Common Loon Working Group on July 30-31, 2019. *Federal and State government employees are not eligible for the cash reward if they observe loons as part of their job.*

This contest is generously funded by the Montana Loon Society.
Loons are very sensitive. Please enjoy them at a distance.

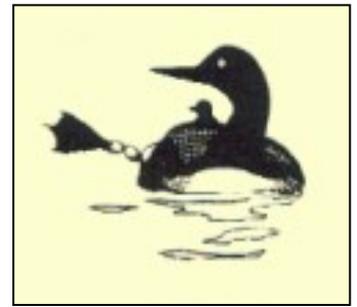
How to Read a Common Loon Band in Montana

To determine population characteristics of common loons and better understand their behavior, we need everyone to look for color band combinations beginning as soon as ice out this year on both breeding and foraging lakes. During the early part of the season, many pairs will tolerate visits by offspring or other loons. This is one of our best chances of seeing and documenting the young birds we banded in previous years return to Montana.

If you spot common loons this spring, summer, or fall, and have a spotting scope handy, take a few minutes to check them for the presence of color leg band combinations. You can usually see a band, if one is present, within 10 minutes, but it could take up to an hour. If you see a band and your scope is not adequate or your time is limited, report this to Chris Hammond immediately. He can possibly provide a high power quality scope or send someone out to that lake to get the band combinations.

When you observe loons, you may catch them raising a leg out of the water to stretch or scratch. This is most common when a loon is loafing or preening.

If the loon is banded, each leg will have a band; sometimes two on each. Some bands have stripes or dots. For the right and left leg, record the color of the bands along with whether any stripe or dot is present on the band, and if so the color of the stripe or dot. Be sure to figure out correctly which color band is closest to the body and which is closest to the foot (not always intuitive when the bird is facing you and moving around).



Tidbits to help with accurate band recording:

- ◆ Band colors: blue, red, white, orange, yellow, green, silver, pink
- ◆ Silver on right leg means banded as an adult.
- ◆ Silver on left leg means banded as juvenile.
- ◆ Blue, green, and red bands have a white base, so etched markings on those bands show as white. Orange, white, and yellow bands have a black base so etched markings on those bands show as black.

Bands are **always** recorded in order as: 1. Left leg closest to body, 2. Left leg closest to foot, 3. Right leg closest to body, 4. Right leg closest to foot. This is what the band data part of the loon observation form looks like:

Left Leg (closest to body) (closest to foot)
(LL) _____ / _____

Right Leg (closest to body) (closest to foot)
(RL) _____ / _____

Contact Chris Hammond **ASAP** with all new banded loon sightings, even if you couldn't read the bands -- chammond@mt.gov, 406-751-4582.

For details about observing loons and their bands, see Appendix C of the Montana Loon Plan - <http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/>

See Appendix D of the plan for background on banding loons in Montana.

Web Sites of Interest

- ◆ **Montana Loon Society**
www.montanaloons.org
- ◆ **Montana Loon Society on Facebook**
www.facebook.com (Search for "Montana Loon Society").
- ◆ **ABC Species Profile by Lynn Kelly**
<http://www.montanaloons.org/ABC%20loon%20article.pdf>
- ◆ **MT FWP Common Loon Conservation Plan** <http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/commonLoon/>
- ◆ **MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks Common Loon Field Guide**
http://fieldguide.mt.gov/detail_ABNBA01030.aspx
- ◆ **Glacier Park Citizens Science Loon Count**
http://www.nps.gov/glac/naturescience/ccrlc-citizen-science_loons.htm
- ◆ **Loons and Lead Poisoning**
<http://www.tufts.edu/vet/loons/>
- ◆ **Flathead Watershed Source Book—Loons**
http://www.flatheadwatershed.org/docs/wpPDF/Popout_Jacobs.pdf
- ◆ **Montana Outdoors: Crazy About Loons**
<http://fwp.mt.gov/mtoutdoors/HTML/articles/2011/loons.htm>
- ◆ **CBS News Clip:** <http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/saving-loons-from-a-shrinking-range/>

Officers

President	Lynn Kelly	406.883.5797
Vice President	Christie Ferruzzi	406.882.4856
Secretary	Donna Love	montanaloonsociety@charter.net
Treasurer	Don Skaar	406.442.3254

Board of Directors

Blackfoot/ Clearwater	George Leighton	406.251.3925
Swan River Valley	Mark Ruby	mnruby@fs.fed.us
Kootenai/ Tobacco/ Stillwater	Kristina Kindberg	406.889.5077
Thompson/ West Kalispell	Tony Dawson	406.253.6111
Glacier Park	Steve Gniadek	406.892.7406
Libby/Troy	Paul Rumelhart	rumelhart.paul@icloud.com

Mark Your 2019 Calendar

- ◆ May 11—Loon Ranger Training (in Kalispell)
- ◆ May 18—Spring Loon Day Count/Survey
- ◆ May 12—Forestry EXPO in Columbia Falls
- ◆ June 7-9—MT Audubon Society, Glasgow
- ◆ July 13—Summer Loon Day Count/Survey
- ◆ July 30-31—CLWG Summer Meeting. Location: Many Glacier, Glacier National Park
- ◆ September 22—MLS Annual Board and Membership Meetings, location pending

Help Montana's Loons

Sign up for a membership today.

Name: _____

Single Loon (Individual)	\$15.00
Breeding Pair (Family)	\$25.00
Loon Chick (Student)	\$10.00
Territorial Pair (Sustaining)	\$150.00
Raft of Loons (Organization)	\$300.00
Loon Lake (Life Member)	\$800.00

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Email (optional): _____

(Membership is Tax-Deductible)

Now you can

DONATE ONLINE using PayPal

From our web site

www.montanaloons.org

or

mail this form and membership or donation to:

Montana Loon Society

P.O. Box 2386

Missoula, MT 59806

montanaloonsociety@charter.net



MONTANA LOON SOCIETY

P.O. 2386
Missoula, MT 59806

406.926.2131
montanaloonsociety@charter.net
www.montanaloons.org

To:

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The Montana Loon Society's Purpose is to:

- ◆ Monitor common loons in Montana
- ◆ Increase public knowledge about Montana's loons
- ◆ Protect and enhance critical loon habitat
- ◆ Identify management or research needs and obtain funds for same
- ◆ Facilitate cooperation between agencies, lakeshore owners and the general public to accomplish these goals

