



Montana Loon Society 2022 Newsletter

SUMMER SURPRISE Montana Common Loon Pair Hatch Three Goslings

By Kelsey Preslar, Loon Ranger and Wildlife Technician
Kootenai National Forest, Eureka, Montana
Photographs by Local Resident, Bob LeBlanc
(Photos edited for use in this newsletter.)

Tucked away on a private lake in the Crystal Lakes area near Eureka, MT, a curious scene evolved. A resident nesting loon pair successfully hatched chicks.

“There’s three of them!” exclaimed Bob LeBlanc, photographer, loon lover, and property steward of the area. But it wasn’t just the number of chicks that was a surprise. The chicks wore bright yellow downy feathers. They were goslings!



Nesting loon with three goslings on artificial nest platform, Crystal Lakes near Eureka, MT. Photo Bob LeBlanc

On May 6, a loon pair began incubating on their artificial nesting platform. Although the platform was made for them, loon observers know that geese that return earlier in spring than loons, are also fond of this secure nesting habitat. Territorial battles often occur between loons trying to take back their platform from nesting geese. It is assumed that a Canada goose already laid eggs before relinquishing this platform. No evidence of loon eggs being laid exists, so the loons must have started incubating the goose eggs. On June 10,

*Three Canada goose goslings follow their adopted loon parents on Crystal Lakes, MT
Photo Bob LeBlanc*



three eggs hatched, forming the quirky, mismatched family.

The first week of life as a gosling adoptee was similar to that of a loon chick. They rode around on the parents’ backs, though it was a bit more crowded with three onboard opposed to the normal max occupancy of two. They accepted small fish and crayfish from their parents, though not as gracefully as a loon chick would. The parents were quick to sound the alarm at potential threats, showing strong protective affinity for the goslings. When bald eagles, a natural predator of all waterfowl, flew overhead, the loons quickly rushed the goslings to safety, which was often at the nesting platform. The goslings grew rapidly, and in a couple weeks the parents no longer let them catch a free ride.

“Talk about a sinking ship!” described Bob who was able to snap a few photos of the goslings standing up on their parents back.

Gosling standing on loon parent’s back. Crystal Lakes, MT, Photo Bob LeBlanc



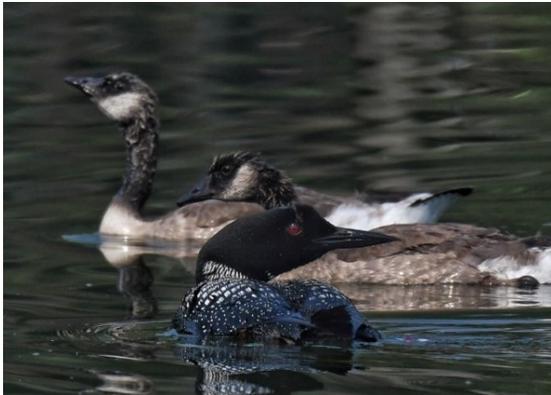
With their growing size, the goslings spent a good portion of their time on solid ground. However, the adoptive parents preferred to keep them on the platform, as opposed to the shoreline. The goslings still accepted aquatic food from their parents, but their natural goose instincts kicked in and they spent a good amount of time grazing on grasses and vegetation. However, in surprising non-gooselike behavior, the goslings dove, going about 4-6 feet laterally, and were able to stay submerged for a few seconds at a time.

Around one month in age, only two goslings remained. The cause of mortality of the third chick is unknown, but bald eagle presence was high that week. Around 7 weeks old, the remaining two
(Story continued on Page 2)

(Summer Surprise, Continued from Page 1...)

goslings were roughly the same size as the loons and fed on fish and crayfish about 75% of the time. The other 25% of the time they spent on the shore eating vegetation with the parents hovering nearby. Several flocks of geese came and went from the lake, but the goslings didn't associate with them.

At this size, the chicks rarely dove, but would dip their head under water like a loon. As the goslings grew, they spent even more time feeding on vegetation and traversing the shoreline. At about 11 weeks the goslings were seen learning how to fly. The loon parents left the lake around the third week in August, and Bob last saw the goslings during the first week of September.



Crystal Lakes, MT, loon with two Canada goose goslings that it hatched and raised. Photo Bob LeBlanc

“It’s wishful thinking that they flew off. I didn’t witness it, but that is my thought,” Bob said.

When asked if they had heard of this before, the Montana Loon Society sited two recent incidents, one in Alberta, Canada and one in Wisconsin. In Canada, a loon pair raised a gosling, and in Wisconsin, a loon pair hatched a duckling. However, both the gosling and the duckling vanished in mid-summer. Perhaps they joined up with others of their kind, were predated, or perhaps with just one chick, the loon parents had more control over these chicks and didn’t let them go to land to feed, rest and preen like the Crystal Lakes loon pair had, so they grew weak and died.

I’m philosophical about it. No matter our background of loon ranger, scientist, or nature enthusiast, we are all right there with Bob and his wishful thinking that the chicks survived to migrate. Who knows, maybe next year we’ll see a pair of geese with a particular interest in crayfish or a loon pair with a little less malice towards geese. ♦

PRESIDENT’S CORNER

MLS President Lynn Kelly

Greetings Loon Watchers,



We are watching in joy and relief as our feathered friends of spring appear in our yards. Robins, killdeer, towhees, bluebirds, tree swallows, meadow larks, juncos, osprey and of course, LOONS, are lifting my heart because their presence here in Montana represents the continuation of life, intact habitats and hope for another year. In the face of continuing headlines about war and environmental warnings such as unsustainable losses of insect populations, new coral diseases and another outbreak of avian flu, the presence of our spring and summer neighbors brings a much needed antidote against the troubles of the human world.

The other day I stepped out of my chiropractor’s office and noticed that the truck next to me had the MT Loon Society license plate. I was thrilled. I introduced myself to the owners and thanked them for selecting our plate, explaining that all the funds collected were used to put “loon rangers” out on the loon lakes to monitor the welfare of these “tuxedo” birds. I encourage each of you to be watchful, not only for loons, but for loon plates. As you find these folks, thank them for choosing to support the management and monitoring of Montana’s small population of common loons and direct them to our web and Facebook pages for more information about the Montana Loon Society.

This June I will be going on an all-expense paid Alaska cruise (what a God-send!), which is the opportunity to see Pacific, red-throated, and possibly yellow billed loons along the inside passage of North America. Of course I will be on the lookout for puffins, auklets, murrelets, gulls and other coastal species I would never expect to find closer to home. I have never been on a cruise before so I am cautious about Covid and curious about how these huge ships mitigate their presence on our oceans. But I am excited about a new adventure that features hikes in the Tongas Forest of British Columbia and gazing at a wide open ocean with WHALES! Excitement and curiosity are also antidotes to our challenging times. We must face and *(President’s Report Continued on Page 5...)*

2021 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 loon reports contact the Common Loon Working Group at montana-loonworkinggroup@gmail.com

Blackfeet Indian Reservation

Jami Belt, Biologist Citizen Science

Surrounded by open prairie or aspen stands, Blackfeet loon lakes are not like the typical Montana lakes inhabited by loons. Three lakes near the park have had successful nesting in the past, but many more lakes exist that have not been monitored. The Crown of the Continent Research Learning Center coordinates with the Piikani Land Crew to provide data and surveys. However, once again in 2021, to protect the health and safety of the Blackfeet nation, access was limited. It is hoped that we will be able to complete surveys in 2022. So, 2021 chick numbers are unknown at this time.

Blackfoot/Clearwater (Ovando/Seeley Lake)

Torrey Ritter, MT FWP Biologist

The Blackfoot and Clearwater drainages together successfully produced 11 chicks, making it the area's most productive breeding season in recent years. In the Blackfoot, Upsata successfully produced two chicks, and Shoup produced one. One other confirmed loon pair was seen on Doney Reservoir, but no nest or chicks were seen.

Eight pairs attempted nesting in the Clearwater and 4 (Summit, Rainy, Placid and Marshall) successfully hatched 8 chicks and all survived. Marshall was our surprise. It had the first known established pair to ever nest there and successfully hatched two chicks. Hidden hatched two chicks, but they did not survive. Alva and Clearwater had nest attempts, but failed, and no second nest attempts were observed. Seeley Lake nested, but no chicks were ever observed. Many other lakes are monitored for loon activity in both areas, but they

were either absent of loon activity or did not have loon pairs. Still, the combined area had **11 chicks that survived until the July Loon day.**

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.

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

Chris Forristal, DNRC Wildlife Biologist

Nine lakes are monitored for loons in this area. Pairs were detected on five lakes and nesting attempts likely occurred on three lakes. Cyclone, Little Beaver and Murray contained loon chicks during the July survey. Chicks at Little Beaver and Murray were very young (2-4 weeks) on July Loon Day surveys, but subsequent monitoring suggests that these chicks survived until fledging age. Surveys at Beaver Lake continues to observe territorial clashes and fighting among multiple loons, which may be contributing to the lack of successful breeding in recent years. **Five chicks were counted in this area on July Loon Day.**

Flathead River-Forks

Rachel Manley, USFS Wildlife Technician

On the Hungry Horse-Glacier View district of the Flathead National Forest, loons were monitored on seven lakes including Halfmoon, Lion, Mud (Garnet), Spoon, Stanton, Tepee and Cedar Creek Reservoir. Lion Lake was taken off the monitoring list in 2018 after several years without nesting attempts. This year, however, a pair established a nest, though it failed when water level dropped in preparation for necessary dam repairs. A set of buoys was constructed to protect future nest attempts from the busy day use on Lion Lake, and this lake was added back to the monitoring list. Cedar Creek Reservoir hatched two chicks from their first nest attempt, with both still surviving on July Loon Day. Tepee Lake's pair returned to the nesting platform after using the northwest shore last year. They hatched two chicks, with one still surviving on July Loon Day. Halfmoon Lake's pair established a nest for the

2021 Area Loon Reports Continued...

first time since 2018 when the female was found dead on the nest, but the nest flooded, and they did not attempt to nest again. Spoon Lake's pair is completely new this season and did not attempt to nest at all. In May, the banded female was joined by a new unbanded male, which replaced the banded male of the last several years. By mid-June, the banded female had also been replaced by a new unbanded bird. A thorough search of the shoreline produced no evidence of a dead loon or a failed nest attempt. Mud (Garnet) and Stanton Lakes also had no known nest attempts. In total, four chicks hatched, and **three chicks** survived until July Loon Day.

Flathead Indian Reservation

Whisper Camel-Means, CSKT Wildlife Manager

The Flathead Reservation and Flathead Lake are important staging areas for migrating loons that are regularly seen in spring and fall. In addition, fifteen water bodies in this area are surveyed for loons in early summer, but no territories or nests have been located. 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, nesting attempts have failed due to water level fluctuation.

Glacier National Park

Jami Belt, Biologist Citizen Science

Prior to 2021, no loons had been banded in Glacier, despite its population comprising about 25% of Montana's loon population, so we assisted the state meet banding objectives on core lakes throughout the breeding range in northwest Montana, helping band 22 loons on 17 lakes. While banding attempts were made on three lakes in the park, only one loon was banded on Winona Lake, which is the first loon to be banded in the park. We look forward to receiving band reports from this loon next year.

For 2021, the Glacier NP loon count was the average number of pairs and chicks from 2005-2021, which was a fecundity rate of 0.47. While the fecundity rate would ideally be above 0.48 (the baseline regarded by many loon experts as the minimum to maintain a stable population), this year we saw an increase in our fecundity rate from last year (0.33) where we had fewer chicks but more pairs and single adults. Specifically, in 2021,

we identified 15 resident pairs and **7 chicks on 5 lakes.**

Kalispell West

Jessy Coltrane, MT FWP and Tony Dawson, MLS

Both Lone and Monroe lakes had nesting pairs, but no chicks. Little McGregor, Upper Thompson Lake, East Lobe, Leon, and Rogers had one chick each. On Ashley lake, only two pairs nested, but lost their first nest, and both re-nested, and one nest produced 2 chicks and the other 1 chick, so 8 chicks total for this area.

Ksanka Ranger District (Eureka, Fortine & Murphy Lake Areas)

Kelsey Preslar, USFS Wildlife Technician

The Ksanka Ranger District monitors USFS, DNRC, and private lakes in the Eureka, Fortine & Murphy Lake Area. This year, 30 total lakes were monitored on the May and July Loon Days, with 10 of those breeding lakes monitored more regularly throughout the season. There were 9 breeding pairs, in which 10 nesting attempts were made. Four pairs hatched 6 chicks with a 100% survival rate by our July Loon Day Survey. Successful nesting occurred on Dickey (2 chicks), Marl (2), Murphy (1), and Loon's Echo (1). Breeding pairs on Bull, Carpenter/Tetrault, Frank, and Lick lakes had nest attempts but ultimately failed to hatch chicks. In addition, a pair on Crystal Lakes falls into a fun gray area of chick success as the loons incubated an abandoned goose nest on their platform and on June 10th hatched 3 gosling chicks! As of our July Loon Day survey 2 goslings were alive and still being fed the occasional small trout or crayfish by their parents! **Total number of fledged (loon) chicks for this area: 6**

Libby Ranger District

Ed Morgan, USFS Wildlife Biologist

Due to Covid-19 restrictions and lack of personnel, this area had limited coverage in 2021. Neither Loon Lake nor Rainbow Lake produced chicks. In fact, only one single adult loon was observed on Loon Lake and none on Rainbow. Two private lakes, Double-N Lake and Kessler Pond, had nests and hatched two chicks each. But, the four chicks were preyed upon by bald eagles in early June and none of the chicks survived. The adult pairs vacated both lakes shortly after the chicks disappeared. We are looking forward to 2022 as we will have a fulltime wildlife technician (the first one since 2014!) and we hope to regularly monitor all lakes in

2021 Area Loon Reports Continued...

May and July, **but for last year (2021), no chicks survived.**

Swan Geographic Area

Mark Ruby, USFS Wildlife Biologist

Nine lakes were monitored in this area for nesting loon pairs. Three pairs on Van, Peck and Pierce unsuccessfully nested. One pair on Shay Lake did not have any observable nest attempts. Our successful nest attempts included Holland with 1 chick, Loon Lake (Ferndale) with 2 chicks, and Loon Lake (Kraft Creek) with 2 chicks. So this year's total chicks included **5 chicks that survived until July Loon Day.**

Tally Lake/Stillwater Area

Jessica Swanson, CLWG Area Coordinator

During the 2021 breeding season, our returning wildlife technician, Aubrey Sullivan, was able to monitor 15 lakes. Ten lakes had breeding territories which hatched three chicks. Two of these chicks survived to the July survey day. Unfortunately, three nests failed for unknown reasons. An increase in boat and other water recreation traffic on many lakes in this area could be a cause for some of the nest failures. We will continue to monitor the situation, but **in 2021, 2 chicks survived until July Loon Day.**

Three Rivers Ranger District/Troy

Sean Hill, USFS Biologist

Coverage of these lakes was once again basic, as we continued another year with Covid-19. Alford had 2 chicks. Kilbrennan and Ninneman had one chick each, **so 4 chicks were counted in this area.**

Total 2021 Montana Loon Chicks

50 chicks are reported in this newsletter that were counted during the 2021 July Loon Day Count, including 7 chicks in Glacier National Park. Here's an interesting look back at the number of chicks reported in the newsletter. Thanks to our loon rangers and volunteers our loon numbers continue to hold steady. ♦

2021—52 chicks 2019—50 chicks
2020—75 chicks 2018—55 chicks

President's Report Continued from Page 2...

acknowledge these circumstances while continuing to put one foot in front of the other; so the last suggested antidote to depression and anxiety is the old adage, **THINK GLOBALLY and ACT LOCALLY.** Our efforts to make a difference for our local population of loons helps them and us navigate the troubled waters of today and into the future. So, be well, have a loon-filled summer and Thank You for your continued efforts and monetary support of the Montana Loon Society. ♦

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 are interested in, contact the Common Loon Working Group Chair

Jami Belt (406) 888-7986
glac_citizen_science@nps.gov

Check out the new Montana Loon Society Website!
Same Address—New Site!
<https://montanaloons.org/>



To help Montana's Loons, purchase the Montana Loon Society License Plate for your Montana Vehicles or Trailers





Board Member Highlight
 MLS Vice President
 Christie Ferruzzi

Christie Ferruzzi was born and raised in Wyoming (3rd generation). She moved with her husband Ed to their land in the Salish Mountains of NW Montana near Trego in 1977 and raised their children there. Christie worked in Silviculture for the Forest Service at Murphy Lake Ranger Station for 25 years and retired in 2013.

Christie near her home in Trego, MT.

In the mid-1980's, Christie met Lynn Kelly at the south shore beach of Dickey Lake where Lynn was monitoring the lake for the Common Loon. As an avid bird watcher, this immediately captured Christie's attention. In 1988, Lynn put Don Skaar in touch with Christie to do volunteer work, collecting loon observation data on 15 lakes in the Tobacco Valley/Stryker area of NW Montana and public information data primarily at the boat launches of Dickey and Murphy Lakes, and placing sign buoys around nesting areas. This led to becoming a board member of the Montana Loon Society (MLS) for the Tobacco Valley/Stryker Area and working on cost share programs with the biologists Guenter Heinz and Lynn Johnson at Murphy Lake R.S. Christie continued to monitor area loon lakes and she and the area biologists participated in setting out loon nesting platforms, sign buoys, public education and the May and June Loon Counts. Christie served as the Murphy Lake Area Coordinator for the Common Loon Working Group (CLWG) from 1999—2013.

Christie continues to serve as Vice President of the Montana Loon Society (2003 to present). She continues to work with the Common Loon Working Group in her role as MLS Vice President and observe area loons, participating in the May and July Loon Counts. ♦

To Help Montana's Loons
Purchase the Montana Loon Society

**License
 Your
 Vehicle!**



**Plate For
 Montana**

2021 MLS AWARDS
Conservation Award
Jack and Rachel Potter

This year's Conservation Award goes to Jack and Rachel Potter, who, along with other cabin owners on Tepee Lake in the North Fork of the Flathead River, successfully petitioned MTFWP to limit lake watercraft to manually operated watercraft only.

Tepee Lake is a 43 acre, 20 feet deep lake at its deepest, with no perennial surface inlet or outlet. It sits in the Tepee Lake Complex, which is rated by the MT Dept. of Environmental Quality as a Wetland of Outstanding Significance due to its great diversity of wetland plant communities.

Historic data of common loons on the lake is unknown, but common loons and nesting success have been documented since the 1950's. It is known that it has produced 23 loon chicks in the past thirty years. People on the lakeshore and wildlife (even bears) sometimes disturbed the nest, so twelve years ago, cabin owners requested and were granted by MTFWP an artificial nesting platform be installed, which helped nesting success.

The petition stated that although there is currently no motorized use on the lake, nor any history of it, with the increase of people to Glacier National Park and new settlement in the North Fork Valley, it will only be a matter of time before a new neighbor or visitor brings a motorboat or jet-ski to the lake. The petitioners hope the new manually powered watercraft status will preserve the peace, quiet, and rustic character of the area before a conflict develops.

Montana Loon Society President Lynn Kelly stated, "We applaud the efforts of Jack and Rachel for their foresight in preserving Tepee Lake, limiting it to manually operated watercraft, and the loons on the lake appreciate it, too." ♦



Loon Ranger, Rachel Manley helped place a new artificial nest platform on Tepee Lake in the North Fork of the Flathead River Valley in 2017. In the background, Glacier National Park's peaks are obscured by wild-fire smoke.

MLS Partner of the Year
Smith Wells



Smith Wells navigating the Yellowstone River

This year's Partner of the Year was awarded to Smith Wells, MT FWP GIS Natural Resource Analyst in Helena for her work on integrating MT loon data with Glacier National Park data. Smith Wells was the tech force who moved the Common Loon Working Group to one statewide database! She has also been instrumental as we transitioned to Survey 123 as our tool for May and

July surveys and other observations.

Smith took on merging the Glacier National Park database in with the rest of the agencies and tribes which was no easy feat. She worked hand in hand with agency biologists to understand the needs of the survey, how to make sure everyone had access to it, and help us learn how to get the data back when we needed it to make land management decisions. Laura Strong, past CLWG Co-chair said, "Smith is such a pleasure to work with and shows her expertise at every turn. We're so thankful to FWP for letting her work with us on this project--we couldn't have done it without her." Jami Belt, present CLWG Co-chair said, "Thank you, Smith, for your dedication and patience! You are a deserving recipient of this Partner of the Year AWARD! We appreciate you. On behalf of the entire Common Loon Working Group, Thank you."♦

MLS Volunteer of the Year
Daniel and Virginia Poleschook

This year's MLS Volunteer of the Year was awarded to Daniel and Virginia Poleschook for their generous donation of their spectacular loon photos for use on our new website.

Not many miles away in Washington state, Daniel and Ginger have helped conduct conservation efforts on a small population of common loons in the northeast corner of the state near Loon Lake. In addition, they have also done work on the western side of the state on the Pacific coast and near Puget Sound.

The 78 common loon images in 15 categories that they shared with us are a small representation of the over one-million of the species that they have acquired since they started their work in 1996. With over 90 hard drives filled with their loon and other waterbird images, (and a large spreadsheet to provide information on each image!) their gift to the Montana Loon Society made it possible for our new loon web site to be one of the best in the state, and maybe even the nation.

MLS President Lynn Kelly said, "We appreciate their love of loons, their dedication to promoting information about common loons, and their years of work for loon conservation. We are honored by their gift to us and to Montana's loons." ♦



One of the many stunning Poleschook photos that they shared with MLS. Photo Credit: Daniel Poleschook, Jr. and Virginia R. Poleschook, www.loonconservation.org

MLS Educational Loon Trunks Available In Four Places Around the State

- ♦ MT FWP Region 2 Office
3201 Spurgin Road, Missoula, MT 59804
(406) 542-5551, torrey.ritter@mt.gov
- ♦ Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
Natural Resource Department
301 Main St., Polson, MT 59860
(406) 883-2888, germainew@cstkt.org
- ♦ Rexford Ranger District
949 US Highway 93 N.
Eureka, MT 59917 406-296-7104
lmjohnson@usda.gov

- ♦ Tally Lake Ranger Station
650 Wolf Pack Way, Kalispell, MT 59901
(406) 758-3544 ajacobs@usda.gov



**Check out a loon trunk near you.
Great for classrooms or homeschool!**



Montana Common Loon Working Group Spring 2022 Update

By Jami Belt, CLWG Co-Chair

Laura Strong has taken a new position and has relinquished her duties as the CLWG Co-Chair. We give her a big thanks for all the work she did as co-chair. Cas Waters and Jessica Swanson will help carry the group through the end of the year.

On April 28, a CLWG Area Coordinator meeting with Smith Wells, MT FWP GIS Natural Resource Analyst, was held to learn more about Survey123. Space was limited to ten people, but others attended virtually.

All of our Loon Rangers are new this year, so a Loon Survey Training will be held on May 7 at Blanchard Lake in the Kalispell area. Use of Survey123 will be the focus of the training, as well as public loon education training.

Spring (May) Loon Survey: May 14

Summer (July) Loon Survey: July 16

(Please be on the lookout for bands, too.)

Annual CLWG Summer Meeting: July 19-20

(Location to be announced.)

Loon Banding sessions: June 23-30 & July 22-28. Area Coordinators will be contacted in May to identify active territories, as well as potential chicks for banding. If you would like to join us, let us know and send contact information to:

- ◆ montanaloonworkinggroup@gmail.com
- ◆ Jami Belt (406) 888-7986
glac_citizen_science@nps.gov
- ◆ Cas Waters: Cas.Waters@usda.gov
- ◆ Jessica Swanson: Jessica.Swanson@usda.gov

Or contact the area coordinator in your area:
<https://montanaloons.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CLWG-Area-Coordinator-List-with-Map-1.pdf>

Survey forms can be found and printed at:
<https://montanaloons.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Montana-Loon-Survey-Form-1.pdf>

2021 MLS ANNUAL MEETINGS



2021 Montana Loon Society Annual Board Meeting

The 2021 Montana Loon Society Socially Distanced Board of Directors meeting was held in the morning of October 3 at Lone Pine State Park in Kalispell. Seven of 8 board members were present. The Treasurer phoned in. Along with the regular Secretary and Treasurer's Report, the Board reviewed license plate status and our new website. ◆

2021 Montana Loon Society Annual Membership Meeting

The 2021 MLS Membership Meeting was held in the afternoon of Wednesday, October 3. Seven of 8 board members were present. Guests included CLWG Co-chairs, Laura Strong, who discussed the 2021 Loon Season and the 2021 funding request. Election of Officers included President Lynn Kelly, and Treasurer Don Skaar (both 2 year positions). Board members serve for three years, so this year no board members were up for re-election. Presently, Board member positions for both Region 5 (Glacier National Park and North of the Flathead Valley) and 6 (Libby area) are vacant until replacements can be found. If you would like to attend either of these annual meetings contact the Montana Loon Society at <https://montanaloons.org/> or email montanaloonsociety@charter.net for more details. ◆

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 2021 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 Jami Belt of Glacier National Park, glac_citizen_science@nps.gov (406.888.7986)

The most useful band reports are the ones that come in to Jami 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 the CLWG. See the reverse side for information about how to observe and report loon bands. Winners will be announced at the Montana Common Loon Working Group Summer meeting in July.

(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.

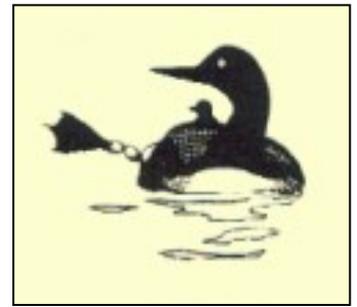
How to Read a Common Loon Band in Montana

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).



Tip 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 Jami Belt **ASAP** with all new banded loon sightings, even if you couldn't read the bands -- Jami Belt (406) 888-7986 glac_citizen_science@nps.gov

For details about observing loons and their bands, see Appendix C of the Montana Loon:
<https://fwp.mt.gov/conservation/wildlife-management/common-loon>

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

Web Sites of Interest

- ◆ **Montana Loon Society**
[What is Montana Loons Society? - Montana Loons](#)
- ◆ **Montana Loon Society on Facebook**(20+)
[Montana Loon Society | Facebook](#)
- ◆ **ABC Species Profile by Lynn Kelly**
<http://www.montanaloons.org/ABC%20loon%20article.pdf>
- MT FWP Common Loon Conservation Plan**
<https://fwp.mt.gov/conservation/wildlife-management/common-loon>
- ◆ **MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks Common Loon Field Guide**[Common Loon - Montana Field Guide \(mt.gov\)](#)
- ◆ **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
- ◆ **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	mdruby@fs.fed.us
Kootenai/ Tobacco/ Stillwater	Kristina Kind- berg	406.889.5077
Thompson/ West Kalispell	Tony Dawson	406.253.6111
Glacier Park	Vacant	
Libby/Troy	Vacant	

Mark Your 2021 Calendar

- ◆ May 14 —Spring Loon Day Count/Survey
- ◆ June 16 —Summer Loon Day Count/Survey
- ◆ July 19-20—CLWG Summer Meeting. Location to be announced.
- ◆ September or Early October—MLS Annual Board and Membership Meetings, date and location pending.

Help Montana's Loons

Sign up for a membership today.

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Email (optional, but nice to have): _____

(Membership is Tax-Deductible)

Now you can

DONATE ONLINE using PayPal

From our web site

<https://montanaloons.org/>

or

clip and mail this form and membership or donation to:

Montana Loon Society

P.O. Box 2386

Missoula, MT 59806



MONTANA LOON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 2386
Missoula, MT 59806

406.926.2131

montanaloonsociety@charter.net

<https://montanaloons.org/>

To:

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TO READ THIS NEWSLETTER ONLINE go to

<https://montanaloons.org/>
and click on "Our Team."

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.

