



Montana Loon Society

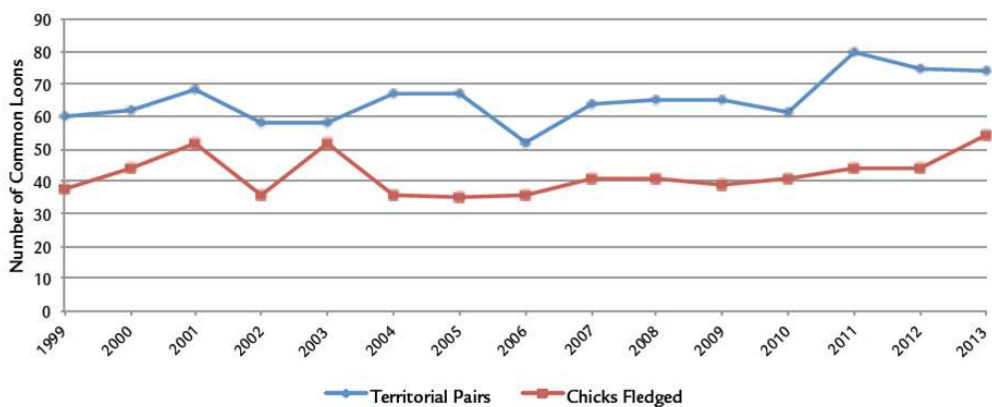
2014 Newsletter

Montana Loon Productivity through the Years

In Montana, common loons are a Species of Concern. This means loons are considered at risk due to declining population trends, threats to their habitats, and/or restricted distribution. In the 1970's, the late P.D. Skaar, creator of *Montana Bird Distribution*, provided the first early information on Montana's loons. In 1982, Dr. Skaar's son, wildlife biologist Don Skaar, started the MT Loon Study, organizing the first set of volunteers to monitor loons. In 1990, Don completed the first state management plan. In 1992, educator/wildlife biologist, Lynn Kelly, completed her master's thesis on nest signage. In 1989, the MT Loon Study transitioned into the MT Loon Society, which received its non-profit status in 1999. Also in 1999, the Common Loon Working Group, a collection of individuals from various federal and state agencies, the Confederate Salish

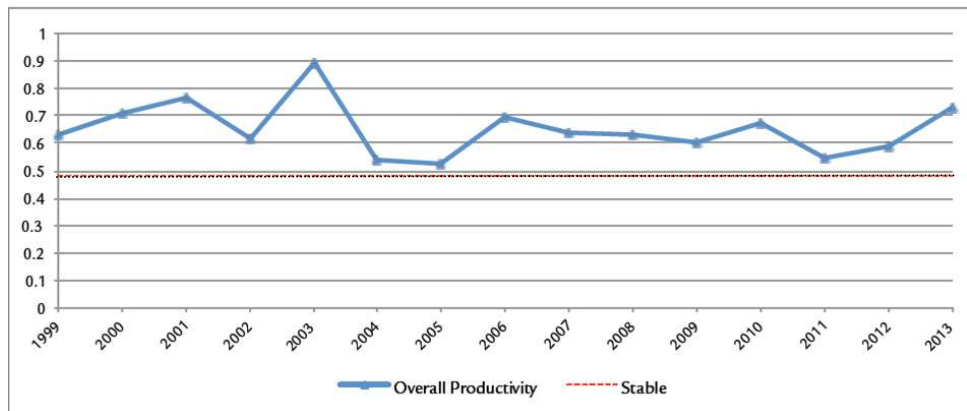
and Kootenai Tribes, and industry, began. In 2009, a new, updated state management plan was completed. (Hammond, C. A. H. 2009. Conservation Plan for the Common Loon in Montana. Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Kalispell, MT. To read go to: <http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/> and click on the picture of the loon.)

Montana continues to support the largest breeding population of common loons in the western continental United States with a 10-year average summer count of 216 individuals. This population consists of an average of 62 territorial pairs, 52 non-breeding "single" adults, and 41 chicks. Since surveys began in the late 1980's, the population has remained remarkably stable. Chick production in Montana appears to be above average with between 0.66 and 0.70 chicks fledged per territorial pair. The graphs below show this steady rate. (Graphs by Chis Hammond, MT FWP.)



← The number of territorial loon pairs has increased in Montana by 23% since 2000 (top line) and the number of chicks fledged (bottom line) has ranged between 35 in 2005 with a high of 54 in 2013.

In addition, national models indicate that 0.48 fledged young per territory (overall) is needed for a sustainable population. At no time in the past 15 years did Montana drop below the sustainable population level. Learn more at <http://www.briloon.org/looncenter/restore> ♦



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By MLS President, Lynn Kelly

I love snow and winter but must admit that I'm glad to see the daffodils budding and the spring constellations popping up over the Mission Mountains, assuring us that spring really is here... whether it feels like it or not. I keep reminding myself and others that very soon we will be complaining about how hot it is. With blustery spring comes softball which my adopted family is totally into. So it was that, at the first game there were runners on the bases that are normally referred to as "ducks on the pond" which the batter is supposed to "bring in". Standing at the top of the bleachers, I yelled out "there's 2 loons on the lake" to which a former student and father of the batter adds, "and one in the stands". A big laugh was had by all. Yes, loons are being represented at the Polson High School softball games.

I'm sure you have discovered in this newsletter that some really cool things have occurred this past year in the Montana loon world. Last summer, our 2013 volunteer of the year, Barbara Summer spotted a banded loon in Glacier National Park, which was an amazing feat. Finding banded birds are critical to figuring out how these birds move in the landscape, so consider spending some time perusing the loons you see this season and check for bands...maybe you will win some money. In addition, with lots of help from loon folk, Alva Lake in the Clearwater drainage is now a "no-wake" lake and we encourage you to enjoy this large lake that will be much quieter, safer and easier to fish and watch loons. However, the quest of protecting lakes continues as we consider how best to help the good people of Troy protect Alvord Lake and the excellent loon nesting habitat it supports. Stay tuned for that one!

We are thrilled with the excellent reproductive year we had in 2013. Many factors are involved in determining a "good year" from a "bad" one, but the bottom line is that without the efforts

Another way to help is donate part of your tax return to the "Non-game Check-off" found at the end of each year's tax form. It may be too late this year, but this money supports loons, too.



MLS President, Lynn Kelly in December of 2012 with Denver Holt, of the Owl Research Institute, looking for Snowy Owls near Polson.

of all the agency and industry biologists, loon rangers and citizen scientists of Glacier National Park, we wouldn't have the loon population that Montana can boast of today. Your MLS membership fees and the purchase of our beautiful license plate featuring "the loons of the Swan Valley" by Monty Dolack helps fund the essential work of loon management in Montana. We are all part of the "loon team" charged with the work of making sure there are "2 loons on the lake". So, let's get back out there this summer and continue the effort needed to maintain our healthy loon population and while you are at it, don't forget to enjoy our loons and their lakes. ♦

2013 MLS Annual Board Meeting

The 2013 Montana Loon Society Board of Directors meeting was held on Thursday, September 19 in Bigfork at the Ranger Station. Seven of nine board members were present. The Board heard a proposal to support a local community group's interest in purchasing land on Alvord Lake near Troy for a community forest and to keep the lake safe for loons. The Board also discussed sending a representative to the **2014 LoonWatch Symposium** at the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute at Northland College in Ashland, WI. ♦

2013 MLS Annual Membership Meeting

The 2013 MLS Membership Meeting was held on Thursday, September 19 in Bigfork at the Ranger Station. Eleven people were present. Loon Reports recorded that in **2013, 54 chicks survived until July Loon Day**, with 8 of these in Glacier National Park. Nationally, 48% of a chick to nest ratio is considered a healthy loon population. In 2013 Montana had about 75 nests which makes the 2013 chick/nest ratio a little over 70%. Election of Officers included Board Members Tony Dawson and Mark Ruby. Chuck Schwartz retired leaving the MLS Region 6 seat vacant. Thank you, Chuck, for your service. ♦

2013 AREA LOON REPORTS

Area Loon Reports are composed each year by various people around the state. Some are loon rangers hired as summer college interns, while others are U.S. Forest Service or MT FWP employees. All report to the Common Loon Working Group (CLWG), a collection of individuals from various agencies, the Confederate Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and industry, who along with MLS, monitor Montana's loons, place signs and platforms and provide public education during loon season, mid-May to mid-July each year. Chicks counted on Loon Day in July are assumed to have survived and migrated in fall. The following summaries are greatly condensed versions of longer reports. To obtain full length versions contact Chris Hammond, 406-752-4582, chammond@mt.gov

Blackfoot/Clearwater (Ovando/Seeley Lake)

Loon Ranger Michael Strickland

The 2013 Blackfoot/Clearwater loon season covered 22 lakes. Nesting pairs were found on 9 territories and represent 94.73% of all adult loons observed in the area. Of the breeding pairs, 8 nests hatched for an 88.89% nesting success rate. The Clearwater contained 6 breeding pairs that produced 9 chicks; 6 survived to the July Loon Day for 66.67% survivability. (1 chick each on Seeley and Rainey, 2 each on Placid and Summit, Alva's nest failed and Clearwater hatched 2 chicks, but lost both.) The Blackfoot had 3 breeding pairs that produced 4 chicks; 3 survived to the July Loon Day for 75% survivability. (Upsata and Doney Reservoir each had a chick and Shoup had 2 chicks.) **In all, 9 chicks in this area survived until July Loon Day.**

Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex

Reports of loons and nesting activity from the BMWC are greatly appreciated. (Loon calls can be reported, too.) To report loon sightings, contact the nearest Forest Service Ranger Station. **Nesting information is especially needed for Big Salmon Lake, so please inform Angela Daenzer, at Hungry Horse Ranger Station, if you have relevant information, including past observations.**

Eureka Area

Christie Ferruzzi

Carpenter, Moran and Sophie Lakes, and the Lake Kocanusa Reservoir in the Eureka area were monitored for loons in 2013. The only nesting was by the loon pair on Carpenter Lake that nested on the small island about 50 yards from the public boat launch. Their first and second nesting attempts were directly across from the boat launch. The third attempt was on the back side of the island, but was also unsuccessful. These lakes are subject to fairly regular human disturbance and fluctuating water levels.

Twelve adults were counted during the July Loon Count: two on Carpenter, none on Moran or Sophie Lakes, and ten on Lake Kocanusa (3 pairs and 4 singles). Lake Kocanusa Reservoir is surveyed by boat and is about 41+ miles long from the dam to the Canadian border.

Flathead River Forks

Loon Monitor: Terence McClelland, Biological Technician, Hungry Horse Ranger Station

Submitted by Angela Daenzer, Wildlife Biologist

Of the ten lakes actively monitored this season, eight are currently considered breeding lakes (Bailey and Handkerchief Lakes are likely used for varying levels of foraging). Adults were observed on 7 lakes, with nesting attempts observed for 5 lakes with **4 chicks surviving**. This is the lowest recorded number of observed nesting attempts and successful pairs in recent years. District efforts focused on annual spring and summer loon day surveys, public education, land owner interface, confirmation of nesting status, and confirmation of nest success during the season. Competition on Tepee Lake may account for nest failure, but rising water during spring likely ac-

Show your support for loons and the Montana Loon Society by purchasing the MLS specialty Montana license plate at a county courthouse near you.



Flathead River Forks continued...



*2013 Halfmoon
Lake Territorial
Pair
Angela Daenzer Photo*

for some of this year's other failures. Loons were regularly seen and heard flying over the Ranger Station parking lot throughout the season, though probable associated foraging and territory lakes have not been determined.

Glacier National Park

Submitted by Jami Belt

The Common Loon Citizen Science Program trained 48 new citizen scientists in 2013, with a total of 112 citizen scientists that conducted 238 surveys on 45 lakes. Completion of at least 3 surveys occurred on all Priority 1, 2, and 3 lakes. (These lakes are historical nesting sites or sites occupied by a pair during the last 4 years.) In all, the citizen scientists contributed 3,003 hours to the loon survey effort in the park.

During Loon Days (the time surrounding the MLS July Loon Day) there were 20 observers contributing 264 hours to survey all of the 45 lakes. They counted 34 adult loons (10 of which were pairs) and 8 chicks, 7 from 5 broods in the North Fork and 1 from a brood in the Lake McDonald drainage. One of these broods on Quartz Lake represents the first record of nesting on that lake since monitoring began in 1988.

Throughout the course of the season 47 resident adults and the **8 chicks were observed**. The adults comprised 17 pairs and 13 singles. Unsuccessful nesting areas included one in the Many Glacier area and two in the North Fork. A banded loon was reported on Bowman Lake, our first record of a banded loon ever in Glacier National Park. The band returns indicated that the adult male loon was banded at Teepee Lake in the Whitefish Range outside of the park and had lost its territory at that lake. Taylor Hanson, a student in University of Montana wildlife biology program joined us for a student intern for the summer and did an excellent job coordinating volun-

teers and conducting field surveys.

If you would like to be a part of Glacier National Park Citizen Scientist Common Loon Program contact Jami Belt, Glacier National Park Citizen Science at (406) 888-7986. Glac_citizen_science@nps.gov

Kalispell West

Submitted by Gael Bissell

Of the 13 territorial loon pairs located west of Kalispell, we documented 11 nesting attempts with only six successful in producing at least one chick surviving to loon day. Kalispell West had an overall nesting success/territorial pair of 46%. The following territories produced 11 chicks with **7 chicks surviving** through July Loon Day: Ashley East (1), Island Lake (2), Little McGregor (1), Lone Lake (1), and Monroe (2). Upper Thompson's middle lobe pair's nest failed for unknown reasons; the east Upper Thompson was occupied by only the banded female who stayed on territory but did not pair with a male. Lower Thompson nest failed; one egg was found kicked off the nest which could have occurred due to human/loon/eagle intrusion. A new nesting territory on Horseshoe Lake, initiated in 2011, failed after about two weeks due to intense recreational pressure on one of the nicest weekends in mid-June in spite of education/outreach and floating signs. Rogers Lake pair attempted to nest but the nest was flooded by waves and they did not re-nest. Ashley Causeway successfully hatched two chicks but based on observations an intruding pair may have killed both chicks soon after hatching. The Ashley Dam pair failed possibly due to black bear activity in the nest site area.

Murphy Lake Area

Submitted by Christie Ferruzzi

There are 11 territorial pairs in the Murphy Lake Area and in the spring of 2013, loons pairs nested on 8 lakes. Of the eight nesting pairs, only 4 pairs successfully hatched 7 chicks. The Dickey Lake pair hatched 2 chicks, but lost one within the first 2 weeks. Two chicks each hatched on both Frank and Lick Lakes. One chick hatched in July from a re-nest on Bull Lake. Nesting platforms were used by loon pairs on Dickey, Lick and Bull Lakes. **A total of 6 chicks were observed on the July**

2013 Area Loon Reports Continued...

Loon Day Count.

The Marl Lake pair was most likely on a re-nest July 19, but no chick was reported to have hatched from this nest. The nesting platform was used for the first time on Martin Lake since its placement on the lake about 3 years ago. The platform was moved closer to their preferred natural nest site, but was tucked back along the shoreline. The natural nest is located directly across and about 50 yards from the main access to the lake and is usually subject to human disturbance during good weather. Nests were lost on both Martin and Murphy lakes. Costich Lake, a small lake on the Glen Lake Ditch irrigation route had its first recorded nest in 2012, but it was lost due to fluctuating water levels. The loon pair on Costich made no known attempts to nest in 2013. The only lake where loons were banded in our area in 2013 was Frank Lake where one adult female was banded.

Flathead Basin #2, (DNRC Lakes in North Flathead and North Fork)

Submitted by Chris Forristal

In this area, a total of nine lakes were surveyed during the 2013 season. Of these lakes, two had confirmed nesting attempts and two other lakes had pairs but no apparent nesting. Pairs were recorded at Beaver Lake and Upper Whitefish Lake, however nesting activity was not observed. Loons at Boyle Lake and Cyclone Lake successfully nested and **produced 2 single chicks** that likely fledged. Single loons were occasionally present at Murray Lake, however these could be individuals foraging from Beaver or Spencer Lakes.

Libby/Troy Area

Submitted by Lynn Johnson

Six loon pairs were observed in this area through the summer, with Slee, Alvord, Kilbrennan and Rene lakes in the Troy area hatching **4 chicks** (one each) that survived until July Loon Day. In the Libby area, Kessler and Double N lakes unsuccessfully attempted to nest.

Swan Lake Area

Submitted by Mark Ruby

The Swan Area had 5 nesting attempts by loon pairs in 2013. Of these attempts, 3 pairs were suc-

cessful in producing chicks. Loons nested on Loon Lake (Ferndale), Van Lake, Loon Lake (Kraft Creek), Crystal Lake, and Pierce Lake. Nests on Van Lake and Loon Lake (Kraft Creek) failed. Reasons for nest failure are unknown. Successful nesting attempts **produced 5 chicks within the Swan**. The loon pairs on Loon Lake (Ferndale) and Pierce Lake both produced 2 chicks and 1 chick was hatched on Crystal Lake. Chick survival on Crystal Lake is unknown, located in the Mission Mountains Wilderness and is only surveyed twice a season. No nesting was detected at Crystal in May, however one loon chick was observed with an adult pair in July. Not including Crystal, chick survival for the Swan Area was 100%.

2013 loon nesting included two nesting attempts undocumented in recent history: Crystal Lake hasn't nested in the past 10 years, Van Lake in the past 5 years. This exciting new nesting activity adds to an observed trend in the Swan Valley over the past several years. When considering the past decade, four new nesting attempts have been documented on lakes within the Swan Area over the past 4 years.

Tally Lake/Stillwater Area

Wildlife Intern, Meredith Stewart

Submitted by Laura Holmquist

The Tally Lake/Stillwater Area had a 54% overall nesting success rate and 67% chick survival rate in the 2013 season. **Six chicks survived until July Loon Day**. The chicks on Dog, Finger, Lost Coon, Upper Stillwater, and Skyles lakes. Blanchard hatched two chicks, both of which died. Bootjack, Lower Stillwater, and Spencer lakes all nested but did not produce chicks. Beaver Lake was the only lake with a mating pair that did not nest. Thanks to our wildlife intern, Meredith Stewart, for her many hours observing loon activity and educating the visiting public about responsible recreation around loons on all of these lakes.

Total Montana Chicks in 2013

Along with the 10 area reports in this newsletter that reported 51 chicks, 3 additional chicks in the Blackfeet Area east of Glacier National Park survived until July Loon Day, and the Salish/Kootenai Area had one nest that failed, leaving a **2013 chick total of 54**, which is the highest number of chicks since 1999 when the CLWG began. ♦

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION



2013 MLS Partner of the Year, Laura Holmquist receiving Partner of the Year Award from MLS President, Lynn Kelly

2013 MLS Partner of the Year

Laura Holmquist, Forest Service Wildlife Biologist, received the 2013 MLS Partner of the Year Award for her work developing educational programs about lead toxicity and common loons. In 2013, Laura created and designed two display boards discussing lead toxicity. The boards discuss the effects of lead toxicity to common loons and other waterfowl and give examples of safe alternatives. The presentation boards have a portable design so they may be set up at boat shows, county fairs, and other public venues to help raise awareness about the dangers of lead to common loons. Board member, Mark Ruby said, “I have had the privilege of working with Laura for several years and am consistently impressed by her ability to balance her large workload and still find time to accomplish extra projects for loon conservation.”



One of the lead toxicity boards developed by Laura Holmquist in 2013 on display at Seeley Lake Ranger Station, Lolo National Forest

2013 MLS Volunteer of the Year

Barbara Summer joined Glacier National Park’s Common Loon Citizen Science Program in 2006. She has been a dedicated volunteer every year since, contributing over 100 hours of her time each year. Living south of Bigfork, she has driven probably thousands of miles back and forth to Glacier to accomplish this volunteer effort. When

2013 MLS Volunteer of the Year, Barbara Summer receiving Volunteer of the Year Award from MLS President, Lynn Kelly



she started, observing and recording data on wildlife was a new interest, but it lit a bright candle in her and she worked very hard and quickly excelled. She always goes the extra mile (literally and figuratively), getting out there at first light, spending several hours beyond the required one-hour survey to understand what is going on in the loon territory. She has spend hours searching for and successfully finding nests on some of Glacier’s largest lakes, like Kintla Lake, where we have not historically had any nest locations documented. Due to her intensive effort, Barbara is the first person to observe a banded loon in Glacier National Park, again, a huge feat. Barbara’s passion as a volunteer also shows through in her attention to detail, always making sure she completed surveys correctly. She also expanded to volunteer for Glacier High Country Citizen’s Science program, Harlequin duck research, and HawkWatch program in Glacier. She has also assisted with the Youth Exploring Science program to engage high school student in citizen science. Jami Belt of Glacier National Park said, “Barbara is a treasure to us, an amazing field naturalist and a great ally for Glacier’s Loons. Lisa Bates, also of Glacier, added, “I can’t think of anyone more deserving of this award. Her passion, dedication and conservation ethic speak volumes about who Barbara is as a person.” ♦

LOONS (and Society) IN THE NEWS

MLS President, Lynn Kelly, Receives Flathead Audubon Society 2013 Outstanding Conservation Achievement Award

Flathead Audubon Society presented MLS President, Lynn Kelly, with their Outstanding Conservation Achievement Award at their September 9, 2013 meeting in Kalispell. With this recognition, Flathead Audubon said, "We salute Montana's Loon Lady for her research on the Common Loon; her many years of dedication to monitoring, and protecting Montana's loons; her many hours and miles of personal work towards these ends; her wide-spread public education efforts; and her creative and industrious approach to developing a network of volunteers and professionals to carry this work forward." Our congratulations and thanks go out to Lynn!
Read More: www.flatheadaudubon.org ♦

Clearwater Chain of Lakes MTFWP Management Plan Adopted

In 2012 and 2013, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks reviewed boater use on the Clearwater Chain of Lakes in the Seeley Lake area. The proposed changes were adopted on May 9, 2013, which included designating 300 acre **Alva Lake** a "no-wake" lake. This small lake is completely surrounded by Forest Service land with two Forest Service campgrounds and boat launch. It has no private land or docks on the lakeshore. Motorboats and other motorized craft are allowed on the lake, but wakes are not allowed from any watercraft at any time. Read More: http://fwp.mt.gov/news/publicNotices/armRules/pn_0147.html ♦

TO FOLLOW THE MONTANA LOON SOCIETY ON FACEBOOK GO TO: www.facebook.com then search "Montana Loon Society." Get announcements, see up-to-date photos, and post your own loon stories and photos!

BOARD MEMBER HIGHLIGHT



George Leighton became a MLS member in the early 90s and a Board Member in 1999. He worked for the Forest Service for 36 years and retired in 1993. For a time, he was the District Ranger for the Plains Ranger District and ended his career in Forest Planning. He now lives in Missoula and volunteers for Forest Service historical restoration and archeological projects. He has a cabin on Salmon Lake where he has watched and enjoyed loons for 21 years. His favorite thing about loons is their songs, strange habits, and beauty. He said, "I joined the Society because Lynn Kelly asked, and I have a lot of respect for her and her work with loons." Thank you, George, for your many years of service. ♦

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
- ♦ Tally Lake Ranger Station
650 Wolfpack Way, Kalispell, MT 59901
(406) 758-3544 ajacobs@fs.fed.us
- ♦ Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
Natural Resource Department
301 Main St., Polson, MT 59860
(406) 883-2888, germainew@cskt.org
- ♦ Murphy Lake Ranger Station
12797 U.S. Hwy 93 S, Fortine, MT 59918
(406) 882-8345 lmjohnson@fs.fed.us



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



Montana Common Loon Working Group (CLWG), Spring 2014 Update

This year's Loon Ranger Training will be May 3rd at the Forest Service offices in Kalispell. Anyone interested is invited to attend. Special emphasis will be given to the steps that need to be taken to avoid the spread of invasive species while doing loon work. Contact Chris Hammond for details.

2014 **Spring Loon Survey date is May 17** and the **Summer Loon Survey date is July 19** (or as close to those dates as possible). To help survey lakes, please contact Amy Jacobs or Chris Forristal (contact info below).

CLWG Area Coordinators are continuing to try to complete one lake-specific plan each year. To view Montana's Loon Plan, go to Appendix F at <http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/commonLoon>.

At the January 2014 CLWG meeting, Dave Evers presented on "*Biodiversity Research Institute's Role in Loon Conservation and What It Means for Montana*". This nonprofit (www.briloon.org) has over 100 projects across the globe in many ecosystems. Its latest large-scale effort is "Restore the Call" (<http://www.briloon.org/looncenter/restore>), to recover loon populations to their former range in the East, Midwest, and Wyoming/Montana/Idaho. In 2013, BRI surveyed for loons in and near Yellowstone National Park (YNP) and generated status reports for Montana and Wyoming (available on the above website). In 2014, BRI hopes to capture loons in MT, WY, and WA for banding and for

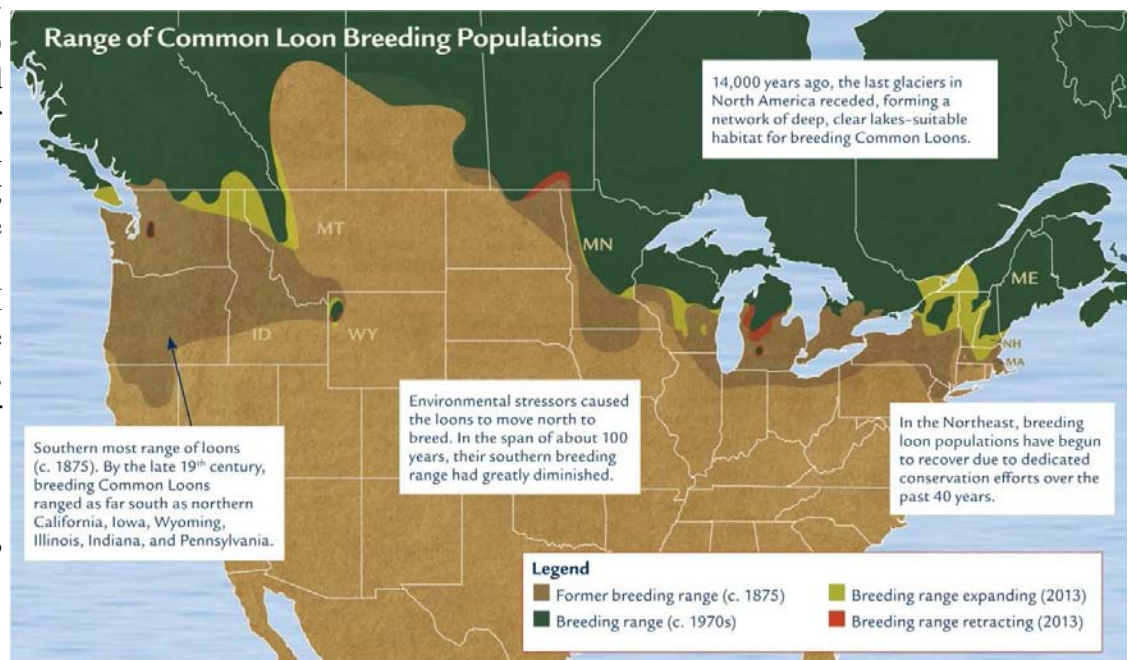
Biodiversity Research Institute Map
<http://www.briloon.org/looncenter/restore>

health assessment and to deploy remote cameras in elected nesting territories. Their longer-term aims (years 3+) include translocating an estimated 30 loon chicks and eggs for restoring loon populations around YNP. Most of these would likely come from British Columbia. The 5 or 6 eggs or chicks that might be taken from Montana would be from territories with situations like a nest on the verge of flooding or a two-chick brood on a territory that rarely if ever raises two juveniles. BRI has learned a good deal about how to rear loon chicks. With veterinarian Dr. Mark Pokras' oversight, they expect to keep the young in fenced-off parts of lakes and have divers feed them with hand puppets. Montana FWP would need to prepare an Environmental Assessment and USFWS approval would be required. Support of Montana Loon Society is highly desired. CLWG discussed how this may be difficult for some since Montana's loon conservation work naturally strives to protect every individual loon, but there was agreement that BRI's efforts are worthy of our serious consideration and assistance. This will again be a topic at the summer CLWG meeting, planned for **July 23 and 24 at the historic Ant Flat Ranger Station** near Trego, Montana. ♦

Montana CLWG Co-Chairs:

Amy Jacobs, 406.758.3544, ajacobs@fs.fed.us

Chris Forristal, 406.751.2259 cforristal@mt.gov





Plum Creek



REWARD



FOR OBSERVATIONS OF MONTANA'S BANDED & UNBANDED LOONS!

The Montana Loon Society is offering cash prizes for the greatest number of 2013 observations of unique banded loons or confirmed unbanded breeding loons!

One \$200 award will go for the most observations of banded and unbanded breeding loons reported by May 31, another \$200 award will go for the most observations (cumulatively) reported by July 22, and one \$100 award will be decided by a random drawing from all individuals who submitted at least one observation. Federal and State government employees are not eligible for the cash reward if they observe loons as part of their job. Send band observations to Chris Hammond of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (chammond@mt.gov) before these dates. 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 23th-July 24th.

This contest is generously funded by Plum Creek Timber Company.
Loons are very sensitive. Please enjoy them at a distance.

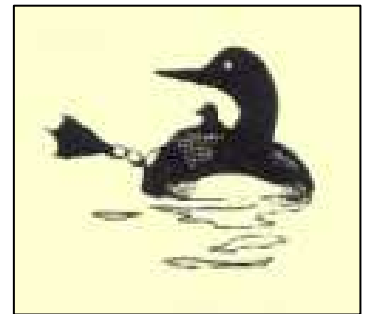
How to Read a Common Loon Band in Montana

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 that 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/>)

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>

Officers

President	Lynn Kelly	406.883.5797
Vice President	Christie Ferruzzi	406.882.4856
Secretary	Donna Love	406.677.3767
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	Vacant	
Thompson/West Kalispell	Tony Dawson	406.253.6111
Glacier Park	Steve Gniadek	406.892.7406
Libby/Troy	Vacant	

Mark Your 2014 Calendar

- ◆ May 3 – Loon Ranger Training at Flathead National Forest Supervisor Office in Kalispell
- ◆ May 10— Forestry EXPO in Columbia Falls
- ◆ May 17 — Spring Loon Day Count/Survey
- ◆ May 24 —Loon and Fish Festival, Seeley Lake Community Hall
- ◆ July 19 – Summer Loon Day Count/Survey
- ◆ July 23-24– CLWG Summer Meeting at historic Ant Flat Ranger Station near Trego
- ◆ September —MLS Annual Board and Membership Meetings, Date and Place 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 Member).....\$150.00
- ___Raft of Loons (Organization)\$300.00
- ___Loon Lake (Life Time Member)\$800.00

Name: _____
 Address: _____

 City: _____
 State: _____ Zip: _____

(Memberships are Tax-Deductible)

Mail this form and payment to:

**Montana Loon Society
 P.O. Box 1131
 Seeley Lake, MT 59868**

www.montanaloons.org



MONTANA LOON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 1131
Seeley Lake, MT 59868
406.677.3767
www.montanaloons.org

To:

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**TO READ THIS NEWSLETTER ONLINE go to
www.montanaloons.org and click on "Newsletters."**

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

