



Montana Loon Society 2016 Newsletter

IN HER OWN WORDS

A Loon Ranger Summer

by Ashley Huinker,
2015 Blackfoot-Clearwater Loon Ranger



loon ranger program from their internship website.

I grew up in Waconia, Minnesota and we always saw lots of loons around our cabin in northern Minnesota. I loved seeing them from the boat and hearing their calls. Later, I spent a summer living near the Boundary Waters where every lake I canoed on had a pair of loons.

My responsibilities as a loon ranger in Montana included locating loon nests, setting loon nesting area buoys to notify boaters that loons were there, and posting educational signs at public boat launches. Increasing recreational pressure could be a main driver to the loons' declining population in the future for Montana, so I also talked with people about the needs of loons and how to behave around them. Lastly, I observed the loons and tried to read the bands on their legs so we could identify which birds were on which lakes, and to understand their migration and dispersion patterns. Occasionally I helped with loon banding.



I attended college at Montana State University in Bozeman. For two years during that time I worked for MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks, so I was familiar with the agency. I heard about the



I usually visited six to eight lakes a day, sometimes more. Morning was a good time to catch anglers, and to see loon behavior, so I tried to be at the lakes by eight. Then I would set up the spotting scope and observe

the loons. It was easier to see loon bands in the morning when the loons were active. I also talked with anyone who asked me what I was doing. One lake was on a private ranch, so I occasionally visited with the landowner.



The best part of being a loon ranger was loon banding. It was exciting to be out on the lake in the middle of the night, to see the loons up close, and to handle them. I handled several chicks, one of which was large enough to band. I also enjoyed seeing the chicks after they hatched and watching them grow up.

The hardest part of being a loon ranger was reading leg bands. I once sat at a lake for 3 hours trying to read a band. The loons never show their bands when you want them to!

I definitely plan to go to graduate school, but I am going to take a couple years off and work some seasonal jobs first to figure out exactly what I want to do in grad school. I've applied to many jobs for the 2016 summer, including more waterfowl technician jobs. Hopefully someone hires me!

I already love the outdoors, but through my loon ranger experience I learned that I love birds. I loved observing loons, talking to people about them, and being able to help with banding. I loved learning to identify other waterfowl that I saw, too, such as goldeneyes, grebes, mergansers, and coots. I also watched herons, and trumpeter swans and helped with an American bittern survey. I would definitely like to continue studying birds in the future.



Photos by Donna Love
at Rainy Lake, 2015

The jury is still out on my dream job. It definitely involves some combination of education and field work. I especially love talking to children and students in classrooms. Check back with me in a few years!

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By MLS President, Lynn Kelly

Someone once said that that most important words in the English language are "Hello" and "Goodbye." This newsletter seems to support that.

On the front page we say "Hello" to **Ashley Huinker**, 2015 Blackfoot/Clearwater Loon Ranger. Ashley worked hard for loons all through the 2015 loon season and fell in love with them. (Loons have a way of making people do that, you know.) All too soon we have to say "Goodbye" to Ashley as she continues on her path of working with nature the rest of her life.

From page 6 - We said "Hello" to 2015 Volunteer of the Year, **Jami Belt**, a few years ago when she was working as a biologist in Glacier National Park. We met her on Loon Day as the Citizen Science Coordinator for Park. Jami not only worked tirelessly for loons in the park (and all the other critters, too), she stepped out of her work day role and took on the task of getting the Blackfeet Indian Reservation Loon Ranger program off the ground. All too soon we had to say "Goodbye" as she moved to Alaska and begins her new job as a Biologist/ Natural Resource Program Manager for the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park near Skagway, Alaska.

On page 7 we say "Hello" to our new MLS Region 3 Board Member, **Kris Kindberg**. We first met Kris in 2003 when she moved to Tetrault Lake in the northwest corner of the state and fell in love with the loons on her lake. Just last year Kris became our newest MLS Board Member. We haven't had to say "Goodbye" yet to Kris, and hope we don't have to for many years.

Also from page 7, we said "Hello" to **Chuck Schwartz** when he moved to Dickey Lake (also in Northwest Montana) in 2001. He too fell in love with the loons on his lake and soon joined the Montana Loon Society. He also served on our Board for several years. Chuck was just a regular guy that had the ability to work with people. He



MLS President Lynn Kelly explains the need to use non-lead sinkers at Pablo Bird Festival in April of 2015.



MLS President Lynn Kelly at 2016 MT Wildlife Society Conference in Missoula in February.

helped local land owners understand the needs of loons. In 2007 he reported a new nesting pair near his lake on Dickey Pond. In 2009, Chuck and his wife, Myrna were recipients of the Montana Loon Society Volunteer of the Year Award.

In recent years Chuck used his mechanical engineer skills to develop a "Cadillac" loon nesting platform that has access ramps, overhead cover AND splash guards. Then in 2015, he developed an improved version of the floating loon nesting buoy that doesn't sink - and I shouldn't say this here as we don't want to encourage it, but we all know it happens - even when shot. We thank him for his contributions to the Montana Loon Society and we are very sorry to have to say "Goodbye" so soon to this good man.

As you say "Hello" to the loons on your lake this spring and "Goodbye" next fall, remember these people and wish them well on their next great adventure. And take a look at the celebration below and see if you can attend. Very cool things are happening out there for loons due to people like you.

ALVORD LAKE

COMMUNITY FOREST CELEBRATION

On Friday, July 8, from 10:00-2:00, come help the little town of Troy, MT celebrate the completed acquisition of the lakeshore and adjacent upland section of Alvord Lake. The free event includes speakers, activities and lunch. Learn about the new 142 acre Alvord Lake Community Forest, see lots of birds on the 3-mile lake trail loop hike led by Flathead Audubon and the Montana Loon Society, and more!

The celebration begins at Roosevelt Park in Troy where you will be shuttled to Alvord Lake's Outdoor Classroom. Those traveling from the Flathead can meet in Kalispell at 7:45 a.m. in the Gateway West Mall west parking lot near the United Way Public Meeting Room entrance. Return will be around 5:00 p.m. Please **RSVP to Paul Rumelhart by July 5th** so we have a head count for food and travel. To sign up or learn more, contact Paul Rumelhart at 406-293-7544 (h) or 406-293-1359 (c) or by Email pwr@frontiernet.net.

2015 AREA LOON REPORTS

Area Loon Reports are composed each year by loon rangers, Common Loon Working Group (CLWG) Area Coordinators, or by U.S. Forest Service or MT FWP employees, and Tribal members, who report to the CLWG, a collection of individuals from various agencies, the Confederate Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and industry, who along with MLS, monitor Montana's loons. 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

Blackfeet Indian Reservation

Loon Ranger, Krissy Chief Moon

During May-July 2015, no nesting loons were seen in this area, but Babb Beaver Pond had one adult with one older chick seen later in the season, and Goose Lake had eggs on a nest, but lots of recreational disturbance, so no chicks and no nesting was observed. Other lakes surveyed included Green, Four Horns, Twin, Mitten, Kip, and Lower Saint Mary. A loon was heard on Duck Lake. Dancing Wind and Pike couldn't be surveyed due to lack of access. Along with loon duties, many youth camps and middle school education presentations were conducted. This loon internship is sponsored by the Montana Loon Society and Biodiversity Research Institute, and facilitated by a memorandum of agreement between Blackfeet Community College and the Montana Loon Society. Although not typically nesting lakes, the area is important for both foraging and migration.

Blackfoot/Clearwater (Ovando/Seeley Lake)

Loon Ranger Ashley Huinker

The Blackfoot/Clearwater loon season covers 20 lakes, with 9 nesting territories. Seven of these lakes are in the Clearwater drainage and 3 had chicks: Rainy raised 2, Summit 2, and Clearwater 2, despite eagles attempting predation. Nesting failed on Seeley, Placid, Hidden, and Alva. Alva continues to be a difficult lake to sign as the loon nest is on the island with water up to 80 feet



Island on Alva Lake in Seeley Lake area attracts recreationists in kayaks and canoes even during loon nesting season.

deep on several sides. In addition, people ignored the signs and canoed and kayaked in the bays, as well as walked around on the island during nesting season. In the future may consider placing an artificial nest platform on this lake.

In the Blackfoot drainage two nesting territories are surveyed for loons. This year Shoup did not nest. Upsata nested, but no chicks produced despite full term incubation by the adults. Egg shells were then found in the nest and one egg in the water. Some type of disturbance (encroaching boat or predator?) must have occurred causing the ejected egg. **In all, 6 chicks in this combined area survived until July Loon Day.**

Eureka Area

Lynn Johnson with information collected by Loon Ranger Hailey Graf

The Eureka/Murphy Lake area ranger monitors 4 lakes and Kooconusa Reservoir. Carpenter Lake is the only lake with a nesting pair. In 2015, they used the platform placed on the lake a few years ago instead of nesting on the island located at the boat launch that has so much human activity. The nesting pair was not the same 2 loons that were observed in 2014, which might be the reason they took to the nesting platform located in the quieter bay across from the island/boat launch. They lost the hatched chick by June 29 possibly to eagles, which frequent this lake. This new unbanded pair were captured and banded during the summer. Three adults each were observed on Sophie and Moran on the July count while 2 adults were observed on Costich Lake. Kooconusa reservoir's widely fluctuating water level prohibits nesting on this large body of water. **No chicks survived in this area.**

2015 Area Loon Reports Continued...

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

Chris Forristal

A total of nine lakes in this area were surveyed during the 2015 nesting season. Of these lakes, two had confirmed nesting attempts and three other lakes had pairs of loons but no apparent nesting. Breeding loons at Cyclone Lake and Beaver Lake successfully nested and produced one and two chicks, respectively. The Boyle Lake territory, one of the most consistent producers in the survey area, failed to produce a chick this year for unknown reasons. Little Beaver Lake had a resident pair for the first time in at least five years. Single loons were occasionally present at Murray Lake, however these could be individuals foraging from Beaver or Spencer Lakes. **A total of 3 chicks in this area survived until July Loon Day.**



North Fork of the Flathead River Valley looking east into Glacier National Park.

Flathead River-Forks

Rachel Manley, Wildlife Technician

Eight Lakes were monitored this year in the Hungry Horse/Glacier View districts of the Flathead National Forest. While I was the primary observer and recorder, I had assistance from Tally Lake biologist Laura Holmquist. I also was assisted by numerous volunteers including Doug MacCarter, Dennis and Terry Divoky, Val and Larry Parsons, Jack and Rachel Potter, and Susie Bouton; a hearty thanks to all, for without their help, these results would be incomplete. I'd also like to thank Terry Peterson from The Crown of the Continent Research Learning Center in Glacier National Park for providing valuable information on Spoon Lake. Landowner cooperation is vital and I'd like to thank North Fork property caretaker Richard Hilduer and land owner Ron Orlopp for granting access permission. Collectively, we observed 5 nesting pairs with 5 known nesting attempts. 4 chicks were hatched from 2 of those nests. **3 chicks survived until July's loon day.**

Flathead Indian Reservation

Whisper Camel-Means, CSKT Wildlife Management Program

With its many lakes, especially Flathead Lake, the CSKT area is known for being a great staging area for migrating loons from Montana and Canada, so loons can be seen there in spring and fall, as well as occasionally in summer. At this time no known nests are in this area. However, crews are gearing up for spring and summer surveys. In 2016, Tribal Wildlife Managers will pair up with Wildlife and Fisheries students from Salish Kootenai College to complete the surveys by boat, which will better help them see the lakes and shorelines.

2015 Kayakers enjoying a beautiful day on Bowman Lake, Glacier National Park.



Glacier National Park

Laura Luther

Citizen scientist and park trail crews surveyed forty-five lakes last year in Glacier National Park. These lakes are ranked in five priority levels, with the highest level being nesting lakes, of which we have eight. On the lakes we surveyed we had 27 singles, eight pairs, and seven chicks. The larger, more isolated lakes had the best overall success. **7 chicks survived in this area until July Loon Day.**

Kalispell West

Brittan Austin

Kalispell West lakes had 12 pairs with 16 chicks hatched, but 2 chicks were lost on Upper Thompson and 2 on Rogers Lake (possibly to an eagle), and one chick was lost on Middle Thompson. Lower Thompson's nest was abandoned. This lake doesn't have a "no wake" shore buffer and has lots of boaters. Ashley Lake continues to be a great example of homeowners working together. This lake has almost 500 homes on the shoreline and still had three nests that produced five chicks. In addition, the homeowners association helps fund the loon intern. **This area had a total of 11 chicks in 2015.**

Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex (BMWC)

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.**

2015 Area Loon Reports Continued...

Libby Ranger District

Submitted by David Deavours

Loon surveys results for the Libby Ranger District were fairly typical for this area as lakes were largely lonely for loons again in 2015. Of the seven lakes annually surveyed, only two had reports of loons. The Double N Lake was utilized by a pair of loons with no success reported and Kessler Lake was also occupied and produced one chick. However, by mid-summer the chick was lost (bald eagle suspected as the culprit) and the pair moved off the lake. Maybe 2016 will produce better results for the District.

Murphy Lake Area

Lynn Johnson with Information Collected by Loon Ranger Hailey Graf

Ten lakes are actively monitored by the Murphy Lake/Eureka loon ranger with many others monitored on the loon count days. Eight chicks were hatched off of 5 lakes, with 7 chicks surviving until the July count. Bull, Dickey, Frank, Lick and Marl pairs all hatched chicks successfully, while nesting attempts by the Murphy and Martin lake pairs were unsuccessful. Swans nesting on the island at Loons Echo most likely resulted in displacement of the loons for the second year in a row. Bull, Dickey and Lick lakes all hatched their chicks off platforms that have been in place for many years. Two of the three platforms were launched many years ago with the help of long time Dickey Lake resident and loon advocate Chuck Schwartz. His sunny disposition, laugh and great engineering skills will be sorely missed. **7 chicks survived in this area until July Loon Day.**

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



Pierce Lake Nesting Platform in the Swan Lake Area.

Swan Lake Ranger District

Wildlife Technician USFS: Jessica Curry

In the Swan Lake Ranger District area the 2015 Loon count included 4 chicks and 15 adults. We were able to identify nesting pairs on four lakes, Loon (Ferndale), Loon (Kraft Creek), Van and Pierce. Also we observed two additional non-breeding pairs on Lindberg and Van lakes. Loon Lake in Ferndale has a 4H camp, but the lake is electric boats only. A new lake, Lake Mary Ronan was added for survey with loons seen in early May, but has had no known nesting attempts in the past. In addition, a Youth Conservation Corp crew of 2 adults and four students completed loon surveys on lakes that required longer hikes to access. Crystal Lake in the Mission Mountains had nesting loons in 2014, but nesting in 2015 was unverified. Both May and July surveys at Crystal Lake yielded only 1 adult loon observation. In the past decade, there has been no other observations of loon nesting attempts on Van. It is unknown why the 2015 nesting attempt on Van failed. **Total 2015 chick count for this area included 4 chicks.**

Tally Lake/Stillwater Area

Sara Gaulke

8 nesting attempts took place in this area with 1 nest failure on Bootjack Lake. 12 chicks hatched from the remaining attempts, but 3 chicks lost. Little Beaver Lake near Beaver Lake had a new pair, although they didn't nest this year, but may in the future. Upper Stillwater Lake dam was washed out. In the future it is recommended that that dam repair isn't completed during loon nesting season. **Total 2015 chick count in this area: 9 chicks.**

Troy Area

Submitted by Mandy Rockwell

Four lakes are routinely monitored for loon use and reproduction in the Troy Area. Three chicks hatched on Alvord (2) and Slee (1) Lakes, all of which survived through Loon Day in mid-July. No

2015 Area Loon Reports Continued...

chicks were observed on either Kilbrennan Lake or Lake Rene which historically have produced and successfully raised chicks. A third adult was observed on Kilbrennan Lake in mid-July which was an unusual observation. An additional six lakes were checked for periodic use by foraging loons. **3 chicks survived in this area until July Loon Day.**

Total Montana Chicks in 2015—49

Although 53 chicks are reported in this newsletter, Montana had an official total statewide chick count of 49, which includes the 7 chicks in Glacier National Park. (The four extra chicks might have been counted after the official July Loon Day count.) The 49 were from 65 nesting territorial pairs including 8 nesting pairs in Glacier National Park. This resulted in a fledged young per territory of .75. (National models indicate that a .48 fledged young per territory is needed for a sustainable population.)

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@cslt.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!

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

2015 MLS Partner of the Year

Lynn Johnson helps place a loon nesting platform on Martin Lake.



The MLS Partner of the Year Award was received by Lynn Johnson, Wildlife Biologist, Kootenai National Forest, Fortine and Rexford Ranger Districts (newly combined into the Ksanka Ranger District) for her many years of dedication to loon management. Lynn has been involved with loon monitoring, platform building, and the placement of nesting platforms and sign buoys since the early 1990s. She has coordinated the Loon Ranger program at Murphy Lake for the last 8 years and is currently the Common Loon Working Group Area Coordinator for the Murphy Lake and Eureka Areas. MLS President Lynn Kelly said, "Thank you, Lynn, for your many years of dedicated service."

2015 MLS Volunteer of the Year :



Jami Belt at her new job as Biologist/ Natural Resource Program Manager for the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park near Skagway, Alaska

The MLS Volunteer of the Year Award was received by Jami Belt who, for the past two years organized, guided and developed not only the depth and breadth of the Blackfeet Reservation Loon Ranger program, but personally oversaw the Loon Ranger and the on-the-ground work. As a biologist for Glacier National Park, this was not a part of her regular job, but took it upon herself to develop and become a part of this program, not only establishing it, but advancing it as well. Jami has recently taken a job in Alaska. MLS President Lynn Kelly said, "Thank you, Jami, for your awesome help and dedication to loons in Glacier National Park and on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. The program is off to a terrific start because of you."

LOONS (and Society) IN THE NEWS

Former Society Board Member Passes

By Christie Ferruzzi, Montana Loon Society Vice-President

Charles "Chuck" Schwartz, former Montana Loon Society Board Director for the Kootenai/Tobacco/Stillwater Area, unexpectedly passed away November 20, 2015 in Kalispell surrounded by this family. He was sixty-nine years old.

Chuck and Myrna moved to Dickey Lake in 2001 and became actively interested in watching loons. They worked with local land owners, educating them and their grandchildren about loons. In addition, they garnered permission and support from local landowners to place signs as well as a nesting platform on the privately owned Dickey Pond. In 2007, they alerted biologists to a new nest on Dickey Pond. In 2009, Chuck and his wife, Myrna were recipients of the Montana Loon Society Volunteer of the Year Award.

Chuck was a mechanical engineer. In recent years he used his skills to develop the "Cadillac" loon nesting platform with splash boards, access ramps and overhead cover. In 2015, he developed an improved version of the floating loon nesting buoy that doesn't sink. We thank him for his contributions to the Montana Loon Society and to Montana's loons. Chuck was quiet and kind, and he loved loons. And he had a quick wit. It is with sadness that we say goodbye.

Chuck is survived by his wife, Myrna; their two daughters, six grandchildren and one great grandson.



Chuck Schwartz and his wife, Myrna at their home on Dickey Lake in 2015.

BOARD MEMBER HIGHLIGHT MLS Region 3 Board Member: Kris Kindberg

MLS Region 3 Board Member Kris Kindberg at her home on Tetrault Lake.



I moved to Tetrault Lake in 2003. Kayaking summers on the lake, the highlight is seeing loons and hearing their beautiful calls. A couple of years ago a loon pair nested on our island near the fishing access and 2 chicks were hatched. We watched them mature and fly off in the fall. 2015 was the first time I could watch the loons nesting. A platform nest had been placed just opposite my house on the south end of the lake making viewing easy. It was exciting to watch the pair taking turns on the nest and see the chick just after it hatched and riding on mom's back. This is when I really fell in love with loons. Sadly, the chick was predated by an eagle a month later.

I am a recent MLS member. Last year was busy with loon activities. The loons were banded, chick included, and I was able to attend as a bystander. It was an incredible experience and so professional.

Counting the loons this past year on Tetrault Lake was noteworthy. Early morning on the lake for the count, to my amazement, at least 7 loons landed and flew off during the count. That was the first time I had encountered so many loons in one place.

The thing I love most about loons is their regal character, coloring, shape of their head, and commitment as a pair and to raising their young. My wish for 2016 is to see another chick hatch, but this time live to fly off in the fall.

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!



Montana Common Loon Working Group (CLWG) Spring 2016 Update

By Laura Holmquist and Chris Forristal

The MT CLWG 2016 Winter Meeting was Feb. 24 at the MT Wildlife Society Conference in Missoula. Last year's 2015 Summer Meeting was in Whitefish on July 22 & 23. At the Feb. meeting, needs for the upcoming 2016 summer were discussed. Updates were given on Alvord Lake, which is hosting a festival to thank its partners on July 8, and on Biodiversity Research Institute's work in Wyoming, which has discovered 17 nesting pairs.

Prior to Plum Creek Timber Company's merger with Weyerhaeuser, Plum Creek once again provided reward money for the Loon Band Observation Contest. Band return data on common loons in northwest Montana have increased substantially due to this donation. (For info on the Contest see pages 9 and 10 of this newsletter.)

Many of last year's loon rangers are returning, so the 2016 Loon Ranger Training has been canceled. If anyone would like to volunteer that hasn't had training, please contact Laura Holmquist or Chris Forristal (see contact info below) or Chris Hammond (chammond@mt.gov, 406-751-4582). In addition, valuable information and tools for conserving Montana's loons can also be found at <http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/commonLoon>.

The 2016 summer CLWG meeting will be held Wed. and Thurs., July 20-21 in Condon, MT.

2016 Spring Loon Survey date is May 14 and the Summer Loon Survey date is Sat. July 16 (or as close to those Saturdays as possible.)

To help survey lakes please contact Montana CLWG Co-Chairs:

♦ Laura Holmquist
406.758.3501
lholmquist@fs.fed.us

♦ Chris Forristal
406-751-2259
cforristal@mt.gov



Common Loon Working Group Co-Chair, Chris Forristal leads a discussion at the Feb. 24 CLWG meeting in Missoula.



CLWG members at their February 2016 meeting. Left to right, Mark Ruby, Chris Forristal, Lisa Bate, Chris Hammond, Laura Holmquist, and Jessica Curry.

2015 Montana Loon Society Annual Board Meeting

The 2015 Montana Loon Society Board of Directors meeting was held in the morning of Sunday, September 27 at the Bigfork Ranger Station. Six of ten board members were present along with 3 guests. The Board reviewed the budget and voted to support the Alvord Lake Project for another year. In addition, society secretary Donna Love moved from Seeley Lake to Missoula with her husband, Tim, after his retirement from the Forest Service. The society's new address will be reflected on future mailings, handouts, and on the Society website.

2015 Montana Loon Society Annual Membership Meeting

The 2015 MLS Membership Meeting was held in the afternoon on Sunday, September 27 at the Bigfork Ranger Station. Eight people were present. In 2015, society members manned booths at the Pablo Bird Festival, Montana Audubon Meeting in Helena and Family Forestry Days in Columbia Falls. Election of Officers included President, Lynn Kelly, and Treasurer Don Skaar, (both 2 year positions). No other Board members were up for reelection as the Board of Trustees serve three year terms.

REMEMBER: *The Non-Game Check-off found 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 the greatest number of 2016 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 18, 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 2016 summer meeting of the Montana Common Loon Working Group on July 20-21.

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

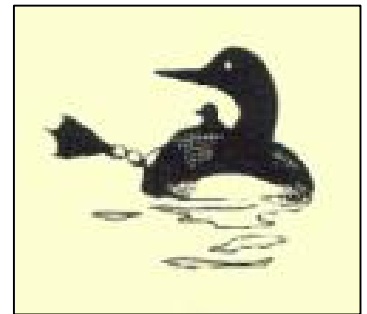
How to Read a Common Loon Band in Montana

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 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>

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 Kindberg	406.889.5077
Thompson/ West Kalispell	Tony Dawson	406.253.6111
Glacier Park	Steve Gniadek	406.892.7406
Libby/Troy	Paul Rumelhart	pwr@frontiernet.net

Mark Your 2016 Calendar

- ◆ May 7 – Loon Ranger Training canceled as many are returning rangers.
- ◆ May 7— Forestry EXPO in Columbia Falls
- ◆ May 5—Pablo Bird Festival
- ◆ May 14 — Spring Loon Day Count/Survey
- ◆ June 3-5—MT Audubon Society—Missoula
- ◆ July 16– Summer Loon Day Count/Survey
- ◆ July 20-21– CLWG Summer Meeting, Condon, MT
- ◆ September 25—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)	\$150.00
Raft of Loons (Organization)	\$300.00
Loon Lake (Life Member)	\$800.00

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Email (optional): _____

(Memberships are Tax-Deductible)

Mail this form and payment to:

Montana Loon Society
P.O. Box 2386
Missoula, MT 59801

www.montanaloons.org
montanaloonsociety@charter.net



MONTANA LOON SOCIETY

P.O. 2386
Missoula, MT 59801

406.926.2131
montanaloonociety@charter.net
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

