



Montana Loon Society

2017 Newsletter

Aquatic Invasive Species and Montana's Loons

Montana's aquatic invasive species (AIS) are plants or animals that are non-native to Montana ecosystems meaning they do not have natural diseases or predators to keep them in check. If introduced, their populations explode damaging the ecosystem they have invaded, impacting Montana's economic, environmental, and/or human health. Anyone who works or plays in and around water can unknowingly transport AIS and once established, complete eradication is usually impossible or prohibitively expensive. While several AIS are already present in loon country, the ones we want to focus on are non-native zebra and quagga mussels.

Montana's Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP) have actively monitored for these mussels for over a decade, instigating "Clean, Drain, Dry." Up until 2016 none had been conclusively detected in Montana's waters. In October 2016, a sample detected the presence of mussel larvae (called veligers) in the Tiber Reservoir. Then suspect samples from Canyon Ferry and the Missouri River south of Townsend were found. MFWP deployed mussel sniffing dogs and state divers to search for adults mussels.

At this time, no adult mussels that reproduce have been found. In November 2016, the Montana Mussel Response Incident team formed, including MFWP, Montana Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation (MDNRC) and the Governor's Council on Invasive Species to manage outbreaks.

The Montana Loon Society is interested in predicting how aquatic AIS like zebra and quagga mussels might affect Montana's loon population. Here are some areas for concern:

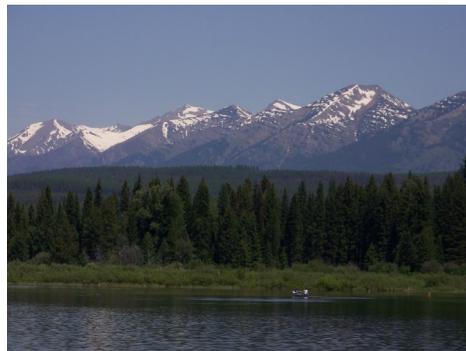
1) These mussels are filter-feeders which vary in size from the nail on your little finger to the nail on your thumb. They suck in water containing microscopic plants called phytoplankton and microscopic animals called zooplankton. Clear water is ejected after the plankton are removed. Phytoplankton, being plants, are the first level in the aquatic food chain. Zooplankton feed on phytoplankton. Tiny fish of different species consume both phytoplankton and zooplankton which are consumed by larger

and larger fish. Loons are primarily fish-eaters here in Montana so as mussels reduce the foundational populations of plankton, the food web above these organisms collapse. The fish populations that loons and their chicks depend on will be reduced over a relatively short time.

2) An estimated average concentration of mussels in Lake Michigan is 70,000 per square meter. Each mussel filters up to one liter of water per day causing the water to look very clean and causing people to think that the lake is in good shape. But clean water means there is little or no food for fish. Clear water allows sunlight to penetrate into deeper waters stimulating the growth of unwanted plants (weeds) - including various species of algae which actually poison the waters of shallow ponds and bays during late summer months.

3) The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has estimated that there are 4 quadrillion zebra and quagga mussels at the bottom of Lake Superior. The filter-feeding activity of these organisms means that there is less food and energy in the upper levels of lakes which is where most aquatic organisms, including loons, feed. Essentially, these mussels have turned the lake "upside down" by concentrating the reduced food supply at the bottom of the lake. Furthermore, mussel feces rich in organic matter, settles on the bottom where it is fed upon by snails, invertebrates and bottom-feeding fish. Scientists are trying to determine if lake bottoms rich in mussels and their feces could be creating the conditions that are producing increasing outbreaks of avian botulism which have been causing massive bird fatalities in the past few years. If the avian botulism bacterium is in the water, it will be strained out by the mussel as it feeds.

(See AIS and Montana's Loons, Page 6)



Working together we may be able to keep Montana's pristine lakes like Rainy Lake AIS free for Montana's loons.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By MLS President, Lynn Kelly

Greetings Loon Lovers!

Wow! We seem to have started 2017 with a bang as we consider a number of scenarios and how they might impact Montana's nesting loon population. These issues range from concerns about how much radiation from Japan's damaged nuclear reactor has entered the wintering areas of Montana loons to how loon nesting productivity might be affected if zebra/quagga mussels manage to get into the waters of northwest Montana. Right now, we just don't know. We must be ever vigilant as we ask questions of and read scientific papers from other loon managers/researchers around the country.

And these concerns haven't even mentioned the changing political environment and how actions by federal and state governments might impact loon management, such as the repealing of the prohibition of the use of lead bullets and fishing tackle on U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands by Ryan Zinke in one of his first actions as Secretary of the Interior. Lead poisoning is one of the top killers of loons (and many other birds) in the United States....and it takes just a quarter of a small lead sinker to do the job. One thing is for sure - everything is connected!!

As you peruse this newsletter you will notice a great loon photo taken by Mission Valley resident Carolyn Beecher on Jordan Pond at Acadia National Park in Maine. It occurred to us that many of you may have loon photos taken right here in Montana or elsewhere that we would love to put in this newsletter. We haven't considered publishing photos partly because we always have lots to share with you but also because of concerns about how photos are taken. Any loon photo must be taken with the welfare of the birds as the top concern meaning that the use of a large lens at a respectful distance (no close approaches to nests or birds) is required. Of course we would love a story to go with the picture. So, if any of you end up with a loon photo for 2017, send it to our email address with its story and we will make every effort to share it.

In addition, the Montana Loon Society (MLS) was one of several organizations that contributed to the 2018 Flathead Audubon Nature Reference Calendar which features daily nature happenings, weekend outdoor activities and events and monthly featured animals and plants. Our page includes a



MLS President Lynn Kelly (right) with world pioneering loon researcher, Dr. Judith McIntyre, Wisconsin Loon Symposium,

brief description of MLS, encouragement to purchase the loon license plate that funds loon management and a cute photo of a loon with a chick onboard. You can purchase this outstanding calendar from MLS for \$10.00 plus shipping (see details below). Personally, I love this calendar because reading the daily nature events such as "buttercups are blooming " or "chorus frogs are singing" cause me to look for the buttercups and listen for the frogs which brings immeasurable pleasure and causes me to "tune-in" to my surroundings. These calendars make great gifts.

As we look forward to the arrival of "real" spring and the sight and sounds of loons, remember that it takes a village to "get the job done." Every one of you has a purpose and a place in the world of loons and loon management. Purchase a license plate or calendar to help fund the cause, attend one of the festivals that include a loon booth, join a team of loon banders on a local lake or help remove loon signs from your lake. Try to take one more action "for the birds" above what you already do and be sure to watch for the buttercups and listen for the frogs en-route for your favorite loon lake. Happy Looing!♦

2018 Flathead Audubon Nature Calendar



Purchase a 2018 Flathead Audubon Nature Calendar and enjoy this cute loon photo for a month!

Calendars available in May from MLS for \$10.00 plus \$3.00 shipping for 1st calendar ordered (add 50 cents more for each additional calendar.)

Calendars sold by MLS supports MLS.

To order a calendar send checks to

Montana Loon Society

P.O. Box 2386

Missoula, MT 59806

2016 AREA LOON REPORTS

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



Lower Two
Medicine
Lake,
Blackfeet
Indian
Reserva-
tion

Blackfeet Indian Reservation

Terry Peterson, Crown of the Continent Research Learning Center

11 Priority Lakes and 6 Lower Priority Lakes are monitored in this area. 2016 was the third year for obtaining specific loon data. Goose Lake had a nesting pair that nested in both 2015 and 2016, and had 2 chicks in 2016. Loons have been seen with chicks on Pike Lake, which has been confirmed with a photo, but not in 2016. Babb Pond had 2 chicks in 2016. One adult loon was observed on Flattop Lake and one adult on Swift Reservoir. **4 chicks were counted in this area.**

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.**

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

The Clearwater area had five nest attempts. Three were successful with a total of six chicks hatched, 2 each on Placid, Clearwater and Summit that survived until July Loon Day. Seeley Lake nested, but did not have chicks. Rainy nested and had one chick that did not survive. Alva had no confirmed nest. Signs were set on five lakes, Clearwater, Rainy, Alva, Seeley and Placid. For the Blackfoot watershed, Upsata nested, lost the first nest and renested. One chick hatched, but only survived six days. Signs had been placed around the nest. No nests were found on Doney or Shoup. **This combined area had 6 chicks that survived until July Loon Day.**

Eureka Area

Lynn Johnson with Loon Ranger Derek Deshazer

The Eureka/Murphy Lake area loon ranger monitored 4 lakes and Koozanusa Reservoir. This year we had a report of a single chick with the adult pair on Costich Lake on June 11. This report marks the first successful documentation of nesting on this lake for many years due to a number of factors. An adjacent landowner on this privately owned lake conducts this monitoring for us. Unfortunately, the chick was not observed in July with both adult loons continuing to use the lake. The Carpenter Lake pair (both banded) hatched one chick off the platform this year. Sophie Lake and Koozanusa Reservoir each had adult loons reported on the loon count days, with no known nesting attempts. No loons were observed on Moran lake. **Two chicks hatched in this area with one chick surviving until the July Loon count day.**

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, post your own loon stories and photos!

2016 Area Loon Reports Continued...

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

Submitted by Chris Forristal

A total of nine lakes were surveyed during the 2016 nesting season. Of these lakes, four had confirmed nesting attempts and two other lakes had loon pairs but no apparent nesting. Pairs of loons were recorded at Murray Lake and Woods Lake, however nesting activity was not observed. The Cyclone Lake pair nested and laid two eggs, however no chicks were observed during July Loon Day. Loons at Beaver Lake, Boyle Lake, and Little Beaver Lake successfully nested and each produced two chicks that likely fledged. This is the first time that Little Beaver Lake has produced chicks in recent monitoring history. **A total of 6 chicks in this area survived until July Loon Day.**

Flathead River-Forks

Rachel Manley, Wildlife Technician

Ten lakes were monitored in this area. Of those ten, seven were breeding territories. On May 21, Cedar Lake Reservoir received enough rain to qualify as a 100 year flood. Whether the pair on that lake established the nest before or after the flood unknown. But, by mid-late June, they had clearly established a nest that produced two chicks! Spoon Lake has many vacation rentals around its shores and receives a lot of recreation. I contacted the vacation rental managers/owners and mailed loon information to all of them to make available to their renters. The managers were extremely appreciative of this information and eager to help educate their guests. The pair didn't hatch any chicks, though did appear to have attempted. Two breeding lakes had nest failures and one (Lion) never established a nest at all. **The 2016 breeding season produced 6 known chicks hatched from four nests, with 5 chicks still surviving on July Loon Day.**



The Kootenai name for loon.

Flathead Indian Reservation

Whisper Camel-Means, CSKT Wildlife Management Program

With its many lakes, especially Flathead Lake,

Common Loon usúl



The Salish name for loon.

this area is a great staging area for migrating loons from Montana and Canada. 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 paired up with Wildlife and Fisheries students from Salish Kootenai College to complete the surveys by boat, which helped them see the lake's shorelines.

Glacier National Park

Terry Peterson, Citizen Science Program Coordinator for Glacier National Park

129 citizen volunteers surveyed 45 lakes that counted 51 adult loons, with 15 pairs, and 21 singles. The park had 7 chicks. May 14 was the earliest hatch and June 13 the latest. These data are trending upward and more loon activity has been observed on lakes higher than 5200 feet. **7 chicks were counted in the park.**

Kalispell West

Loon Ranger Keely Benson

This area had 13 nesting pairs. Eight nests were successful, and five failed. Ten chicks hatched, nine of which survived until July Loon Day. Island, Lower Thompson, Upper Thompson East and Upper Thompson Middle, Leon, and Rogers had one chick each. Ashley Lake, which has four nests (East, Eagle, Causeway and Dam) had one nest that produced two chicks (Eagle). Ashley Lake continues to be developed along with increasing recreational boating. The critical work that the MLS supports gives us all the best chance. **Total chick count for this area: 9 chicks.**

Libby Ranger District

Mandy Rockwell, USFS Wildlife Biologist

Six lakes are watched in this area for loons including Rainbow, Double N, Howard, Kessler, Loon and Lower Geiger lakes. During surveys, only one adult loon was seen on Howard Lake in June. **No nests were reported in this area.**

2016 Area Loon Reports Continued...

Murphy Lake Area

Lynn Johnson with Loon ranger Derek Deshazer

Ten lakes are actively monitored by the Murphy Lake/Eureka loon ranger with many others monitored on the two loon count days. Nine chicks were hatched off seven lakes, with eight chicks surviving until the July loon count. Successful nesting occurred on Bull, Dickey, Frank, Lick, Loon's Echo, Martin, and Murphy Lakes, while Fish and Loon Lake (Trego) had no known nesting attempts. Nesting was attempted at Marl Lake but was unsuccessful. Nesting platforms were used once again on Bull, Dickey, Lick, and Martin Lakes. Banding was attempted on Martin and Murphy Lakes, with the chick from Murphy Lake being successfully captured and banded. **8 chicks survived until July's loon count day.**

Swan Lake Ranger District

Data collected by Alissa Anderson, USFS Wildlife Technician

During the 2016 loon nesting season 6 chicks survived at 4 lakes; Loon Lake (Ferndale) -1 chick, Loon Lake (Kraft Crk.) -2 chicks, Pierce Lake - 1 chick, and Van Lake - 2 chicks. This is the first year that Van Lake is known to have successfully produced young. A 7th chick was lost at Loon Lake (Ferndale) between 22 and 28 June for unknown reasons although resident bald eagles regularly forage on that lake from a nearby nest. -breeding and/or non-successful pairs were observed on 7 other lakes: Crystal, Glacier, Holland, Horseshoe, Lindbergh, Swan, and Upper Holland Lakes. The loon reported on Holland and Horseshoe lakes may actually be the pairs nesting on near-by Pierce and Loon (Ferndale) lakes. Of the 19 lakes surveyed in the monitoring area, 23 adults were observed. Only 5 lakes did not have any loons recorded on them. A loon platform on Pierce Lake, refurbished in 2015, was used again successfully in 2016. A new (floating island) platform was installed on Lindbergh Lake, in fall to enhance habitat at the head of that lake for the 2017 season. Increased monitoring efforts at Crystal, Glacier, Holland, and Lindbergh Lakes are desired for 2017. **Total 2016 chick count was 6 chicks on 4 lakes.**

Tally Lake/Stillwater Area

Lexy Anderson

In the 2016 season, I monitored 17 lakes in this area, had a 55.6% nesting success rate and a 100% chick survival rate. All 7 of the chicks that hatched survived until the loon survey day in July. Bootjack had the most interesting loon activity. I visited on a few occasions, but had only ever seen one loon swimming or loafing on the lake. However, on June 26, I took a kayak out onto the lake to get a better look around and ran into five loons. Three of them flew away and the other two remained, but were acting territorial and emitting tremolo calls when I passed by. This was because they had a rather young chick with them. During prior visit I had never observed a nest site, and saw only one loon that was never in the same spot on the lake. I was pleasantly surprised to see that chick! **7 chicks survived until July Loon Day.**

Troy Area

Mandy Rockwell, USFS Wildlife Biologist

Four lakes are routinely monitored for loon use and reproduction in this area. A total of 3 chicks hatched on Kilbrennan, Rene and Slee lakes. A chick hatched on Alvord Lake, which historically has produced and successfully raised chicks. Unfortunately, this chick was lost late in the season just before Loon Day. On Kilbrennan Lake, for the second year in a row, a third adult was observed on the lake during the summer. Two loons were observed on Savage Lake this summer which is unusual as this lake generally only experiences occasional use by a single loon. An additional four lakes were checked for periodic use by foraging loons during May and July. **3 chicks survived in this area until July Loon Day.**



Nesting loon with chick submitted by Carolyn Beecher, Jordan Pond, Acadia National Park, Maine

Total 2016 Montana Loon Chicks

Although 63 chicks are reported in this newsletter, Montana had a chick count of 55 during the July Loon Day Count, which includes the 7 chicks in Glacier National Park. (The extra chicks might have been counted after July Loon Day.) This resulted in a fledged young per territory of about .65 (National models indicate that a .48 fledged young per territory is needed for a sustainable population.) ♦

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

This means that consuming a mussel or something that ate the mussel could be the cause of avian botulism.

"Aquatic invasives like zebra or quagga mussels can be prolific and cause trophic collapse in aquatic food chains causing real impacts to common loons that depend on Montana's lakes for forage. Our loon ranger program helps provide public education at boat ramps on AIS aimed at helping folks detect AIS, prevent their spread, and understand the impacts AIS can have," said Mark Ruby, Forest Service Wildlife Biologist, Swan Lake Ranger District and MLS Board Member.

Bottom line, we must consider the considerable impacts that zebra mussels could have on loons in light of the fact that this AIS was found in central Montana. The next question is what can we do in the meantime? We must:

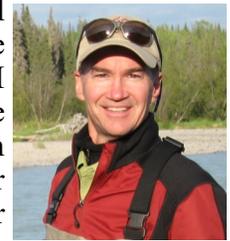
- 1) support all efforts to stop and search ALL boats from kayaks to cruisers.
- 2) get trained and volunteer to help at an inspection station near you.
- 3) always clean, drain and dry our own boats.
- 4) never move water in any container from one lake to another.
- 5) not lose hope! Our loons are counting on us. ♦

BOARD MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

MLS Region 4 Board Member

Tony Dawson

As a third-generation Kalispell native, I have always valued the wildlife around us. My wife and I purchased a little slice of lake front property on Ashley Lake in 1988 and I have had a love affair with loons ever since. When our three children were young and impressionable, we tried to instill in them a love for nature and the outdoors. My first work on behalf



MLS Region 4 Board Member Tony Dawson.

of the loons was in 1990 when our daughter was 6 years old. She and I would find the nesting sites each spring and place signs on shore to keep people at a safe distance. Later, I was lucky enough to participate in the first training for banding loons that was done in Montana in 1996 and have been helping with banding ever since. We have the distinction at Ashley Lake to have the highest number of nesting pairs of loon on any lake west of the Mississippi at four pair. Ashley Lake, as with many loon nesting lakes in Montana, continues to be developed and see increased use. Luckily the Ashley Lake Homeowners Association places a high value on supporting and protecting loons and have contributed time and money to the Montana Loon Society annually. The critical work that the Montana Loon Society does gives us all the best chance possible to ensure that loons continue to thrive in Northwest Montana. I will never lose my fascination with loons because they are such a unique and special species with their ability to dive incredibly deep (200 feet), fly so fast (70+ mph), and call back and forth with one of the most beautiful and haunting sounds that exists among the wild birds of Montana. ♦

MLS Educational Loon Trunks Available In Four Places Around the State

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

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



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

2016 AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

2016 Conservation Partner of the Year **The Vital Ground Foundation**



MLS Secretary Donna Love presenting award to Ryan Lutey, Vital Ground's Executive Director.

MLS was very excited to present its 2016 Conservation Partner Award to The Vital Ground Foundation for its protection of 145 acres of private land on Alvard Lake, located near Troy, MT. This project was the culmination of 12 years of efforts by the private landowner and many other organizations to finally protect a piece of land that provides nesting habitat for common loons as well as habitat for many other species including deer, elk, grizzly and black bears, mountain lions, moose, osprey, and great blue herons. The parcel is now the Alvard Lake Community Forest and will be managed in conjunction with the partners and the local community who all made this project possible. "We want to specifically recognize the support and leadership of Ryan Lutey, Vital Ground's Executive Director who kept this highly complex proposal on track," said MLS President Lynn Kelly. ♦

2016 MLS Partner of the Year Award **Paul Rumelhart**

MLS was very pleased to present the Partner of the Year Award to Paul Rumelhart who was a huge help with coordinating all the activities at the 2016 Alvard Lake Festival. These included helping write press releases, arranging shuttles to and from Kalispell, and many other aspects of organizing a large event. At the event he continued to provide support, greeting attendees and providing handouts. "Many thanks goes to Paul for all he did to make this event so special," President Lynn Kelly said.



Paul Rumelhart at his home in Libby, Montana.

The Montana Loon Society has two new 2 x 4 foot banners that advertise our sponsored license plate. Support the Society and purchase our beautiful plate for your Montana vehicle at a Montana county courthouse near you today!

MLS Volunteer of the Year: **Tony Dawson**

The 2016 Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Tony Dawson in honor of and in recognition to 27 years of volunteering for all aspects of loon management on Ashley Lake.



MLS Board Member Tony Dawson releasing a loon during night banding.

Chris Hammond of MFWP who nominated Tony wrote: Tony recognized a potential problem with a new home being built almost directly behind the floating platform at the Causeway Territory on Ashley Lake. He suggested that we put in place a screen that would hide the heavy equipment and workers from the platform. He obtained permission from the landowner to allow us to put up a screen. On the first attempt, we (Tony, Keely (tech), and I) used a black heavy landscape fabric that was attached to trees using large screws and 2" x 2" x 8' wood pieces. We cut slits in the fabric to help with wind flow. Unfortunately, the wind was too strong and the blind was ripped off of the trees. We moved on to plan B. I purchased camouflage similar to that used on duck blinds hoping that the wind would not be an issue. Tony and I took down the remaining landscape fabric and replaced it with the camouflage. The nest was unsuccessful, but we are not sure if it was loon related or blind related. Tony made every effort to protect the nest from the construction short of asking the landowner not to build (Who knows, maybe he did!). The good news is that Tony's communication with that landowner was positive and they seemed sincerely interested in loon conservation and management on Ashley Lake. His dedication to the management and conservation outreach efforts for common loons are unmatched by any other Montana lake home owner that I know. ♦





Montana Common Loon Working Group (CLWG) Spring 2017 Update

By Laura Holmquist and Chris Forristal

The MT CLWG 2016 Winter Meeting was January 18 in Kalispell. Needs for the upcoming 2017 summer were discussed. Weyerhaeuser is no longer providing money for the Band Contest, so rules and award amounts have changed. (See band contest Page 9-10 in this newsletter.) MLS is donating the award money.

Chris Forristal is stepping down as CLWG Co-chair. MFWP's Chris Hammond is the new Co-chair. Loon Ranger training is canceled as some are returning rangers and areas with new rangers are able to do on the job training.

With the discovery of invasive mussel larvae in Tiber Reservoir, MFWP is concerned about the spread of AIS and are ramping up education and boat check stations. How this all plays out for loon funding remains to be seen.

The 2017 summer CLWG meeting will be held August 1 and 2 (meeting place to be announced.)

2017 Spring Loon Survey date is May 13 and the Summer Loon Survey date is Sat. July 15 (or as close to those Saturdays as possible.) If anyone would like to be a loon volunteer contact Laura or Chris for more information:

- ◆ Laura Holmquist 406.758.3501
lhholmquist@fs.fed.us
- ◆ Chris Hammond 406.751.4582
chammond@mt.gov



At the 2016 MLS Membership Meeting MLS President Lynn Kelly (left) presented a loon dinner bell to the CLWG Co-Chairs, Laura Holmquist (middle) and Chris Forristal (right) to use at summer meetings to call loon rangers to dinner and activities.



At their September 2016 annual meeting, MLS Board Members and CLWG Co-chairs listen to a presentation by Terry Peterson, Glacier National Park Citizens Science Coordinator.

2016 Montana Loon Society Annual Board Meeting

The 2016 Montana Loon Society Board of Directors meeting was held in the morning of Sunday, September 25 at the Bigfork Ranger Station. Four guests and six of ten board members were present. Along with the regular Secretary and Treasurer's Report, the Board completed a 16-Year General Fund Review. In addition, Vice-President Christie Ferruzzi provided and discussed an in-depth Cost Share report. ♦

2016 Montana Loon Society Annual Membership Meeting

The 2016 MLS Membership Meeting was held in the afternoon of Sunday, September 25 at the Bigfork Ranger Station. Eleven members and three guests attended. CLWG Co-Chairs Laura Holmquist and Chris Forristal provided their 2016 Montana Loon Report. Terry Peterson, Glacier National Park Citizen Science Coordinator reported on loons in the park. Election of Officers included Vice President Christie Ferruzzi, and Secretary Donna Love, (both 2 year positions). Election of Officers included Board Members, Mark Ruby (Region 2), Tony Dawson (Region 4), and Paul Rumelhart (Region 6), which will each serve a three year term of 2017, 2018, and 2019. ♦

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 2017 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. (See next page for how to read bands.) Send band observations to Chris Hammond of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (chammond@mt.gov or 406-751-4582). The most useful band reports are the ones that come in to Chris as soon as possible, so send them in as you see them, even if you are not 100% sure of your observation. Qualified observations will be determined and counted solely by Chris. See the reverse side for information about how to observe and report loon bands. Winners will be announced at the summer meeting of the Montana Common Loon Working Group on August 1st & 2nd. (Federal and State government employees are not eligible for the cash reward if they observe loons as part of their job.)

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

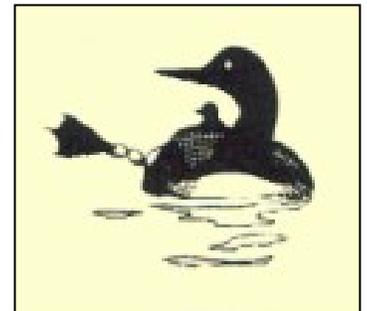
How to Read a Common Loon Band in Montana

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

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

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

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



Tidbits to help with accurate band recording:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Web Sites of Interest

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

Officers

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

Board of Directors

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

Mark Your 2017 Calendar

- ◆ May 13—Spring Loon Day Count/Survey
- ◆ May 14—Forestry EXPO in Columbia Falls
- ◆ May 25—Pablo Bird & Bear Festival
- ◆ June 9-11—MT Audubon Society-Great Falls
- ◆ July 15—Summer Loon Day Count/Survey
- ◆ August 1-2—CLWG Summer Meeting, Place to be announced
- ◆ September 24—MLS Annual Board and Membership Meetings, 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): _____

(Memberships are Tax-Deductible)

Mail this form and payment to:

Montana Loon Society
P.O. Box 2386
Missoula, MT 59806

www.montanaloons.org
montanaloonsociety@charter.net



MONTANA LOON SOCIETY

P.O. 2386
Missoula, MT 59806

406.926.2131
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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

