



REWARD



FOR OBSERVATIONS OF MONTANA'S BANDED & UNBANDED LOONS!

The Montana Loon Society is offering cash prizes for 2023 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 by July Loon Day. To qualify, submit a Montana Loon Survey 123 form, or send band observations to the Common Loon Working email:

montanaloonworkinggroup@gmail.com

(To learn more, go to: <https://montanaloons.org> and click on *Report a Loon Sighting*)

The most useful band reports are the ones that come in as soon as possible, so send them in as you see them, even if you are not 100% sure of your observation. Qualified observations will be determined and counted solely by the CLWG. See the reverse side for information about how to observe and report loon bands. Winners will be announced at the Montana Common Loon Working Group Summer meeting in July.

(Federal and State government employees are not eligible for the cash reward if they observe loons as part of their job.)

This contest is generously funded by the Montana Loon Society.

Loons are very sensitive. Please enjoy them at a distance.

How to Read a Common Loon Band in Montana

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

If you spot common loons this spring, summer, or fall, and have a spotting scope handy, take a few minutes to check them for the presence of color leg band combinations. You can usually see a band, if one is present, within 10 minutes, but it could take up to an hour. If you see a band and your scope is not adequate or your time is limited, report this to the CLWG immediately. We 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. Blue, green and red colored bands may also have an white stripe or dot and orange, white, and yellow bands may have a black stripe or dot.
- ◆ Silver on right leg means banded as an adult.
- ◆ Silver on left leg means banded as juvenile.

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.

Please include the following info for all observations of bands or loons that you could clearly see the legs and can confirm that they are not banded. Please send photos if possible.

Lake name: _____ **Date(s) observed:** _____

Location on lake (Ideally coordinates or map with a pin): _____

Your name and contact information: _____

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

Contact the montanaloonworkinggroup@gmail.com or submit our Survey123 form (contact your Local Loon area coordinator for info on how to download the mobile app) ASAP with all new banded loon sightings, even if you couldn't read the bands.

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

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

(To learn more go to: <https://montanaloons.org> and click on *Report a Loon Sighting*)