

Loon Facts

- Most breeding pairs of loons will have 0 - 2 young
- Lakes smaller than 150 acres are unlikely to have more than 1 breeding pair of loons, which means that most small lakes will not have more than 1 or 2 juvenile loons.
- Adult loons frequently fly to other lakes for feeding and social interactions, thus while you survey your lake, the loon(s) may be off the lake or "extra" loon could be visiting.
- Chicks up to 1 – 2 weeks of age have gray downy feathers. Juvenile loons are brown and gray from 2 – 4 weeks and then turn gray and white after about 4 weeks of age.
- Female and male adult loons are indistinguishable by feather pattern and color. Males tend to be slightly larger. They share nest and chick-raising duties equally on average (it's a myth that only "mom" tends to the nest and young).

Loon Survey Tips

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~ Do Your Part to Protect Loons ~

- **Watch Loons from at least 200 feet away.** Close encounters can be deadly for swimming and nesting loons. Use binoculars or spotting scopes from a safe distance.
- **Use non-lead fishing tackle.** Ingesting one lead sinker or jig will kill a loon.
- **Avoid use of islands before July 15th of each year.** Loons prefer islands for nesting.
- **Protect native vegetation on all shores.** Loons often nest on natural shorelines and use natural materials to build their nests.
- **Conserve electricity.** Mercury emissions contaminate lakes and loon food.
- **Dispose of household garbage at a collection site.** Garbage draws raccoons, foxes, gulls, and eagles, which prey on loon eggs. Trash can ensnare wildlife like loons.
- **Be an ethical angler.** Never fish or cast near loon nests or swimming loons, and properly dispose of extra bait and trash on land.
- **Keep dogs and cats away from loons and nests.** Pets disturb nesting loons and destroy loon eggs.
- **Use only phosphorus-free fertilizers on shorelands, and only if needed.** Fertilizer that runs off into lakes increases aquatic plant growth, making it difficult for loons to swim and find food.
- **Report any unusual loon activity or harassment of loons to the Loon Watcher Coordinator.**
- **Monitor water quality or invasive species.** Check with your lake association, the Pollution Control Agency, and other organizations for ways that you can help.
- **Be a responsible boater.** Never chase loons or run motorboats or personal watercraft over areas where loons have been seen. Loons and loon chicks have died from being hit by boats and propellers.

~ Practice and Teach Wildlife Stewardship! ~