



Loon Preservation Committee **NEWSLETTER**

P.O. Box 604, Lee's Mill Road, Moultonborough, NH 03254 603-476-LOON (5666)

SUMMER 2009



"Grapenut"

Photo Courtesy of John Rockwood; www.oegallery.com/NaturePhotosByJohnRockwood

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The Loon Preservation Committee

183 Lee's Mill Road, P.O. Box 604
Moultonborough, NH 03254
603-476-LOON (5666); www.loon.org

The Loon Preservation Committee (LPC) is a non-profit, self-directed and self-funded constituent organization of the Audubon Society of New Hampshire (ASNH). Autonomous in membership and fundraising, LPC works to preserve loons and their habitats in New Hampshire through research, management and education.

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Kimberley Beardwood Smith
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Rosebud Does What She Can for Loons

Every year for the past five years, New Hampshire's lakes have held fewer loon chicks than the year before. In the last three years the number of chicks fledged across the state has not been enough to maintain our loon population over the long term, despite record numbers of rafts floated and loon nests protected by the Loon Preservation Committee. The possible reasons for these declines are many, verging on legion; likely suspects include habitat loss, increased human use of lakes, contaminants, temperature and precipitation extremes (as predicted by global climate change models), and growing populations of egg scavengers that have benefited from their close associations with humans.

Some of these issues could be easily solved with a little will and some simple changes to protect our environment, our wildlife and ourselves. Others seem like intractable problems that will require some sacrifice and significant changes to our epicurean lifestyles to address. When faced with these seemingly overwhelming problems, I always remind myself of some words of wisdom from noted author Sydney Smith: "It is the greatest of all mistakes to do nothing because you can only do a little. Do what you can."

Faced with these various issues, Loon Preservation Committee biologists carry out management each year to help loons incubating eggs or raising chicks. (Please see our new website, www.loon.org, for an overview of LPC's management to benefit loons.) And from time to time, we have tried some unconventional management initiatives to help loons challenged to live and breed on our lakes. On a recent paddle I came across a traditional loon nesting site on a tiny island that was covered with freshwater mussel shells, indicative of a raccoon or other mammal presence on the island. I cleaned the shells off the old nest, but I knew the offending mammal would soon be back, and that its presence would keep the pair from nesting. Fortunately, my faithful field companion Rosebud was with me, and ready to be pressed into service on behalf of loons. She happily obliged my request to jump out of the canoe and mark her presence on the island, in the usual canine way. I hope some lingering scent of Labrador retriever will keep the mussel eater away long enough for loons (who have little if any sense of smell) to re-establish a beachhead and nest on the island once more.

I am not for a minute recommending that we all turn our dogs loose on potential loon nesting islands. But who knows, it might just work in this one very specialized case, and surely doing nothing would result in another year without a nest or loon chicks on the lake. Adaptive management at its finest, or a futile effort and dumb idea? Time will tell, but a happy man and dog paddled away from that small island, thinking they had done what they could.



A Rogue is a Rogue: Territorial Competition Among Loons

Anyone who has watched the fierce drama of a territorial confrontation between adult loons knows that this combat can determine the very survival of the loons involved, both territory holders and intruders. Loon fights often prompt concerned reports to LPC from eyewitnesses, and have been noted in New England loon populations since people first began to monitor and study loons here. Serious injury from territorial disputes is surprisingly common. A few loon mortalities collected each year in NH and examined at Tufts University are determined to be caused by other loons, but many other loon cadavers with a diverse range of mortality causes show signs of healed wounds from territorial fights. Besides being a direct source of adult loon mortality or injury, territory intrusions by unpaired adult loons ("floaters" or "rogues") have long held a bad reputation among LPC volunteers for their perceived tendency to disrupt successful nesting and chick survival.

The burning question, then, with three decades of LPC monitoring data to test it on, is whether territorial competition among loons has increased as the loon population density has grown. Does less elbow (or wing) room mean more loon fights and less successful nesting? If loons are competing for increasingly limited habitat, productivity and growth should slow down as the competition for available territories becomes more intense. This is the population ecologist's notion of density dependence in its simple form. While other dynamics are at play, the New Hampshire loon population (composed of long-lived and territorial preda-

tors) should demonstrate density dependence at some point in its growth.

However, signs of density dependence in LPC monitoring data are mixed. Jason Grear and LPC co-authors (Grear et al., 2009) found that annual loon population growth from 1985-2004 in New Hampshire does appear to depend on population size, but several years of growth since 2004 were not included in the analysis. More importantly, breeding success shows no apparent relationship with the size of the statewide population. Even though the breeding population is now 2.5 times larger than it was in 1980, loon productivity shows no clear relationship with population size over that time. If "elbow room" is shrinking, it is not showing up in the nesting numbers.

But what if loons are slow to occupy empty lakes, and instead tend to cluster around existing territories? Recent studies of Wisconsin loons reveal that unpaired loons are drawn to established territories, prospecting for sites that have successfully produced young and seeking to evict or replace one of the pair members (Piper et al. 2006). This social strategy keeps loons close to their neighbors, even if empty lakes exist in other places. At the same time, some rogue loons will attempt to create new territories, staking a claim on an unoccupied lake and hoping a mate will appear. Would the combination of these two strategies explain why territorial competition has been observed in New Hampshire since the early days of LPC

continued on page 4



Photo courtesy of Peter Broom (photos at <http://peterbroom.com>)

when the loon population was relatively small, while continued expansion on the periphery has caused overall numbers to grow? Last fall, LPC's Chris Conrod pointed out that the obvious place to look for the impact of territorial competition on nesting success was on territories (and during years) when rogues were present. Instead of looking for evidence of density dependence in the whole population, we compared breeding success between territories where an intruding loon and a breeding pair were present and territories where only the pair was present (see Figure 1). The results were clear. For 120 territories that had years with and without an unpaired adult present, the average number of chicks surviving per territorial pair (CS/TP) was 0.83 when unpaired adults were not present, and 0.49 when they were. These same territories had an average of 20 years of pair presence and at least one additional unpaired adult was recorded in three of those years.

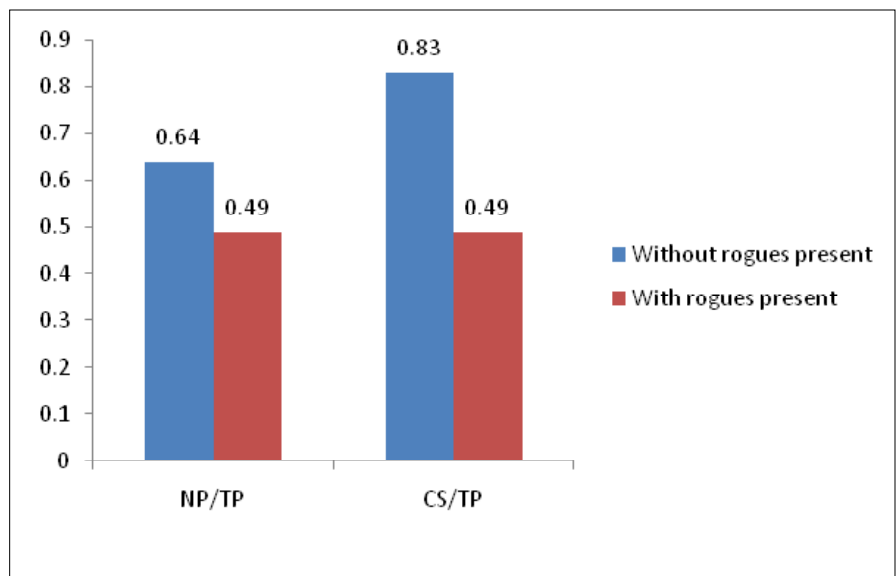


Figure 1: A territory-by-territory comparison of breeding success with and without the presence of intruding loons

If you've watched a rogue loon on your lake prevent the usual pair from nesting successfully, these numbers should offer some comfort. Your lake is not alone. Loon behavior is adapted to this kind of territorial intrusion and it appears to have played a role in the New Hampshire loon population all along. It is also important

to note that rogue loons will be the ones to replace a member of an established pair in the event of a lead death or other causes. We may see more competition as the loon population continues to grow, but it is already a regular and familiar drama on our lakes.

~John H. Cooley, Jr.

Sandwich Youngster Supports Squam Loons



Center Sandwich, NH has produced a young ally for loons in the fundraising and raft-building efforts this spring of Finn Powers, son of former LPC Americorps naturalist, Bethany Powers. Finn applied his interest in threatened species to a neighborly capital campaign that raised over \$100 towards the cost of a nesting raft. Finn and Bethany lent capable hands to the construction of the raft and in mid-May got to see the raft at its new location off Great Island on Big Squam Lake, where it replaces an aging raft that has hosted numerous nest attempts. Many thanks to Finn and the Powers family for their generous and inspiring help!

Artificial Nest Rafts

This April, as the first loon reports began to trickle in from around the state, The Loon Center's back parking lot came alive with another sign of spring: the construction and repair of artificial nest rafts. Goose and duck calls from the Markus Sanctuary mixed with the sound of spikes being hammered into cedar logs and the squeak and crunch of bits of blue Styrofoam underfoot. The bird calls encouraged us to hurry (Spring is here!) so that the rafts were ready in time. Fortunately, LPC volunteers supply the elbow grease needed to maintain more than a third of the rafts around the state, and this spring volunteer crews constructed new rafts in Wolfeboro and Eaton. By the second week in May volunteers and staff had floated over 40 rafts, and early nests were already underway at rafts on Pleasant Lake in New London and Heron Cove on Big Squam Lake.

The annual flurry of spring raft work reopens a perennial debate at LPC over artificial raft use. It also gives LPC a chance to reiterate the guidelines for selecting potential raft sites and for discussing the inherent limitations of artificial raft management. When is a raft justified? With only half of the floated rafts actually used for nesting each year, is all the effort worthwhile? And most of all, with rafts provided to almost 25% of NH's breeding loons and hatching close to 20% of the state's loon chicks, are we relying too much on this artificial tool and neglecting more fundamental conservation problems and solutions? If an artificial population is not what we intend, what else can be done? The guiding principles that have evolved from over three decades of artificial nest raft use in NH

(DeSorbo et al. 2007, 2008) reflect some of this debate and can be summarized with the following three points:

1. *Artificial nest rafts are best used to mitigate two specific problems: water level fluctuations and shoreline predator access. Loon territories where these factors have consistently prevented successful nesting for several years should be considered as potential raft sites, depending on the availability of suitable raft locations and committed local support for long-term upkeep of the raft.*

2. *Artificial nest rafts may alter the distribution and reproductive success of breeding loons in unintended ways, in addition to the anticipated benefits.*

3. *Artificial nest rafts are a last ditch, stopgap conservation band-aid, and at a population or ecosystem level are not an adequate substitute for wild, natural shorelines that provide nest sites for loons as well as habitat for a large number of other species.*

Rafts continue to be a useful tool for LPC. But ultimately, it will be a measure of success for LPC to reduce its reliance on nesting rafts and to assure loons adequate natural habitat through the preservation of critical lake and island habitats throughout the state.

~John H. Cooley, Jr.



LPC Squam Biologist, Tiffany Grade, adjusts the artificial nest raft constructed by Finn Powers (see left) at Great Island on Big Squam Lake.

Off-Season Loon Rescues: From New Hampshire to Georgia

There were a couple of notable loon incidents over the winter, during what is normally the off season for loons. In early December, after several attempts, LPC and the Northfield Fire Department succeeded in rescuing a loon on Sondogardy Pond that had become trapped as the pond froze. In full cold-water survival gear, the firemen reached the open water by pulling their way through the ice with net in hand. After more than thirty minutes of bobbing around in the water with the loon as it dove and surfaced, the persistence of fire department staff paid off, and the two-man rescue crew was able to retrieve the loon and return to shore.

At Plymouth Animal Hospital, radiographs revealed the reason this loon had lingered on such a small pond for much of the summer and fall—a metal projectile lodged in one humerus and a fractured bone where the projectile entered. In spite of this injury, the loon was energetic and responded well to the competent care of Kappy Sprenger, who released it in Maine after a week of rehabilitation. Hearty thanks to the fire department staff who were willing to practice their cold-water rescue technique on short notice, and to Sondogardy residents for coordinating access and monitoring of the loon, including Mark StCyr and Mark Chaffee.

On the other end of the off season, in the first week of May, LPC received a call from Paula Gordon



in Fairmont, West Virginia. Sudden storms had grounded an immature loon in Paula's town and she had taken it in. When we talked to her the loon had been in her care for several days and Paula confessed that she was running out of goldfish. Several bait stores and some West Virginia MapQuest lake searching later, Paula was able to release the loon on Tygart Lake, southeast of Fairmont. West Virginia Department of Natural Resources biologists were able to confirm that no loons were present on the lake the following weekend, and it seems likely that Paula's efforts enabled this loon to resume its migration, probably to freshwater lakes in Ontario, Canada.

Finally, another migrating loon stranded by severe weather was

reported in early April, from Leesburg, Georgia. This time, the homeowner relocated the loon to a small pond well stocked with fish. When Flint River Aquarium staff assisting with the relocation realized the pond was too small for a normal takeoff, and that recapturing the loon might be necessary, they contacted LPC. Fortunately, a windy day a week later gave the loon enough of a headwind to get airborne and head north without further help.

~John H. Cooley, Jr.

Photo caption: Members of the Northfield Fire Department, along with LPC Senior Biologist John Cooley, stand by as a crew attempts to rescue a loon trapped in the ice on Sondogardy Pond in early December.

To report a stranded, injured or dead loon, or loon harassment please call. . .
Loon Preservation Committee: 603-476-5666, or
NH Fish & Game Dispatch: 603-271-3361

Notes from the Field Office

WELCOME BACK CHRIS

The 2009 field season brings Chris Conrod (pictured below) back as LPC Field Program Coordinator. In addition to his winter work on LPC's Loon Recovery Plan and crafting display cases for mounted loon specimens, Chris spent the off-season putting the finishing touches on his Master's thesis (the demographic responses of food/mast availability on granivorous rodents). In his spare time, Chris is an active member of the Bearcamp Trackers, assists with summer whippoorwill monitoring in the Ossipee Pine Barrens and is a trail volunteer and newsletter editor for the Wonalancet Outdoor Club. We have added a new row of hooks in the back hall at LPC to accommodate Chris' many hats, and we are delighted to have another opportunity to exploit his diverse skills.

VOLUNTEER TRAINING

LPC's 2007 Monadnock field biologist Jill Rolph has continued her work to recruit and train loon monitor volunteers this season. For the second year, Jill collaborated with LPC Board Member Jacquie Colburn and staff at the NHDES Volunteer Lake Assessment Program (VLAP) to present loon information to participants at a VLAP workshop in May. Jill is also planning a loon presentation at the Harris Center in Hancock, NH on June 26, and several local presentations in Franconia.

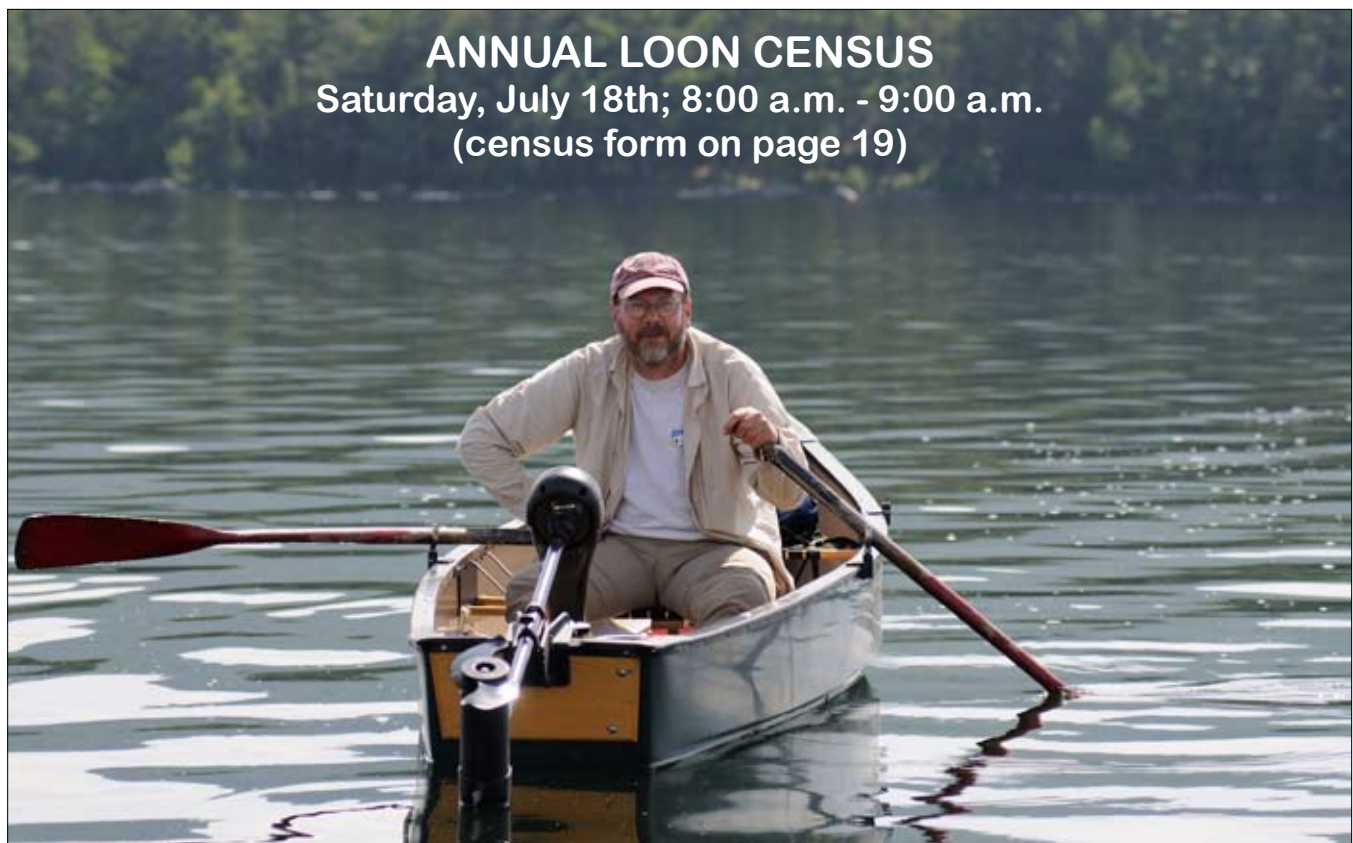
BIG THANKS

LPC volunteers helped prepare for the field season this spring in many ways. LPC Board Member Ralph Kirshner performed his usual magic on the boats and trailers to get them ready for the season. Paul Berube (a self-pub-

lished author, corporate manager, and now pre-law student at Hessian College in Concord) lent his carpentry skills and good humor to trail work and boat preparations. Emily Wilcox, Eliot Johnson and Roger Woodberry all helped to assemble reference lake maps for our monitoring. Aubuchon Hardware in Moultonborough provided a generous discount on hundreds of dollars of raft and floating sign materials. A crew from LifeShare, Inc. in Ossipee helped with spring cleaning and trailwork. We are grateful to all these volunteers and donors for their help!

We also owe a huge thanks to the many people involved in floating and building loon warning signs and in maintaining artificial nest rafts around the state.

~John H. Cooley, Jr.



2009 LPC SUMMER STAFF

LAKES REGION



Tori Kentner

Tori attended York College of Pennsylvania where she earned a BS in Biology. She designed and implemented a turtle monitoring research project while working with the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission. She has a strong interest in threatened and endangered species.

SEACOAST



Sam Merker

Sam is currently a student at the University of New Hampshire pursuing a BS in Environmental Science. An avid paddler, he is especially interested in waterfowl species. He is experienced in bird identification, banding and handling, primarily songbirds and raptors.

MONADNOCK



Susie Burbidge

A graduate of Antioch University New England, Susie is passionate about working with seabirds and spent the past three summers monitoring terns on Seaveys Island on the Isles of Shoals. She has also assisted with the rehabilitation of oil spill loons.

SQUAM LAKES



Tiffany Grade

We are delighted to welcome Tiffany back for a second season on the Squam Lakes. Tiffany's passion for waterfowl inspired her to return to school for a 2nd degree in Wildlife Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She also holds a PhD in Medieval History.

MONADNOCK SOUTH



Phil Brown & Julie Tilden

LPC is lucky to have the local knowledge and field experience of Julie and Phil to share coverage in LPC's southern Monadnock region. Julie and Phil live in Nelson, NH where they can hear loons on nearby lakes, and are recent students at Antioch New England in Keene.

UMBAGOG



Mike Sharon

Michael is a recent graduate of Union Institute & University at Vermont College where he earned a BS in Environmental Science. He is working toward a career in the field of environmental conservation and will be attending Antioch University New England this fall.

NORTH COUNTRY



Keith Blanchette

We are delighted to welcome Keith back for a second season surveying loons in LPC's northernmost territory. Keith is an avid outdoorsman dedicated to helping wildlife and preserving wild lands. He will complete his BS in Wildlife Conservation at Unity College next year.

WINNIPESAUKEE



Vincent Spagnuolo

Vincent is a Master of Liberal Arts student in Environmental Management at Harvard University. He is interested in the human component of environmental and wildlife conservation. An avid boater, he is well equipped to patrol the loons and people on Winnepesaukee.

Loon Watching Tips: Deciphering Loon Behaviors

The loon territorial disputes and confrontations with predators (described on pages 3 & 4) provide much drama for the loon observer, but quieter periods on the lake may allow you to see another type of loon behavior with its own bizarre appearance—loon preening. Preening is an habitual but sporadic part of healthy maintenance behavior, but it attracts almost as much attention from human observers as the flashier territorial conflicts. LPC receives many calls each summer from people who are concerned by a loon's behavior. Some of these are truly loons in distress, but often healthy preening has prompted the concern. Thanks to LPC friend and volunteer Bette Ruyffelaert for compiling the following ways to recognize preening:

OILING FEATHERS

A loon will squeeze waterproofing oil from a gland at the base of its tail and spread it over its feathers with its bill. To coat the head and neck feathers, which it cannot reach with its bill, it spreads oil on the large feathers on its upper back and shoulders and throws its head back and rubs against the oil deposits.

BELLY PREENING

While floating, a loon will roll to its side and sometimes onto its back, exposing its belly above the surface of the water and will grasp and pull the small white feathers on its chest and abdomen. During this "belly preening" it may splash to wash away debris pulled from its feathers. This process often takes several minutes.

BATHING

Bathing, another part of preening, involves more vigorous splashing



A foot waggle exposes plastic leg bands on this loon on Lake Massabesic. Photo courtesy of John Rockwood.

and submerging. A loon may completely roll over while thrashing water with partially opened wings, causing a great deal of splashing.

SHAKING & STRETCHING

After preening and bathing, a loon usually shakes or wing stretches. Body shaking (rising up out of the water and vigorously shaking) removes trapped water droplets and re-aligns ruffled feathers. Wing stretching usually occurs at the end of a preening session. During a wing stretch, a loon rises high up on the surface of the water and with neck outstretched, bill held high and wings spread, it will flap several times while shaking its head and neck.

TAIL WAGGING

Tail wagging usually follows wing stretches. The loon holds its tail above the water's surface and shakes it from side to side, expelling water and air drying the stubby feathers. After grooming, it may swim for a short time with its tail erect.

FOOT WAGGLE

A loon may also stretch out its leg and waggle its foot (as seen above). A banded loon will have colored (red, orange, yellow, green, blue) plastic bands or a silver band on its leg.

Do not hesitate to call LPC if you see unusual loon behavior that may signal a problem. But as you monitor the loon, try comparing the behaviors listed above with what you are seeing—you may be able to determine whether your loon is really in trouble or just taking care of its plumage.

~Bette Ruyffelaert

Bette Ruyffelaert has been a volunteer at The Loon Center for over 15 years. Prior to moving "inland," she and her husband Mike spent endless hours observing and enjoying the resident loon pair from their lake-front home on Wakondah Pond. Her knowledge of loons and their peculiar behaviors is evident in these helpful loon watching tips. Bette will be part of the seasonal staff at the Loon's Feather Gift Shop this summer!

John Rockwood, Nature Photographer

The Loon Preservation Committee first became aware of John Rockwood when he inquired about selling his loon photos in the Loon's Center Gift Shop. We were immediately impressed by John's extraordinary photos, and his knowledge and respect for loons. John holds a degree in marine biology, but had worked for 22 years as a systems analyst before rediscovering his roots watching loons on Lake Massabesic, close to his home. He entered one of his loon photos in a town photo contest and won first prize, and then had photos published in *Natural New England Magazine*, *Birds and Blooms Magazine* and other publications.

John was impressed with the dedication of the LPC staff, our work to educate the public about loons, and ways to help loons thrive in New Hampshire. He was soon volunteering to help us in those efforts by monitoring loons on Lake Massabesic and emailing LPC updates when he observed loons arrive in spring, nesting activity, new chicks and any other significant events on the lake. He also freely shared his photos for

LPC publications and PowerPoint presentations to help LPC spread the word about loons. In fact, you need look no further than the cover of this and some past LPC Newsletters to see examples of John's impressive photographs. John also created loon slide shows which he presented at New Hampshire Audubon centers and at The Loon Center's Summer Nature Talks, and exhibited some of his photos at The Loon Center.

Two years ago while kayaking on Lake Massabesic John met a newly-hatched loon chick (below). As he carefully watched the chick (which he named Grapenut because it was born on Grape Island) grow over time he found himself gradually adopted by the chick and its parents, and was



able to observe the family's interactions and the chick's activities as it grew. As he related this memorable and moving experience he received many requests to write the story and eventually published a book, *"Adventures With Grapenut"* (see page 11). To our surprise he decided to donate a portion of the proceeds of the sale of his book to LPC and to New Hampshire Audubon.

John's generosity in allowing us free use of his photos to help encourage an appreciation and respect for loons is deeply appreciated by LPC. John will be back at The Loon Center to talk about his experiences with loons this summer (see our Summer Nature Talk schedule on page 18). We appreciate his enthusiastic support of LPC in keeping a watchful eye on the Massabesic loons and helping LPC in many other ways in its work to safeguard loons in New Hampshire. Thank you John!

~Harry Vogel

Photo courtesy of John Rockwood



LPC Welcomes its Newest Board Member – Renée J. Speltz

LPC is excited to welcome Renée Speltz to the LPC Board! Renée has been a member of the Development Committee for the past year and chair of the Events Committee since December of 2008.

No stranger to the call of the loon, Renée and husband, Ambassador Paul Speltz, have owned a home on Lake Winnepesaukee for the past 25 years. A lover of nature and animals, she has watched the loons on Green's Basin for many years. Though they have lived overseas on and off over the past 30 years, Renée and Paul always return to the Lakes Region. Over the years Renée has volunteered with numerous non-profits in China, Hong Kong, Singapore and the Philippines. While in the Philippines she was the Founding Chair of the Philippine Canine Search and Rescue Foundation, which trains K9 teams to respond to disasters, the first non-government organization to do so in Asia. She also served on the Boards of the American Associa-



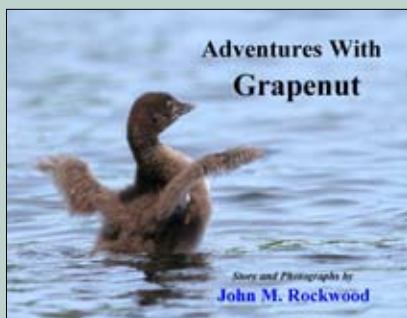
tion of the Philippines as well as the In-Touch Foundation, which provides free counseling services to both the international and local communities. She is the first foreign female to be inducted into the Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary and carries the rank of Captain.

Renée divides her time between New York City and Moultonborough. When not working with LPC, she volunteers with her therapy dog Tex (pictured with Renée) at the NY Presbyterian Hospital and Golden View Health Care Center in Meredith, NH.

~Rachel Williams

"Adventures With Grapenut"

Nature Photographer John Rockwood has documented his unique encounter with a loon chick on New Hampshire's Lake Massabesic in this delightful tale. John earns the trust of a loon family which leaves young "Grapenut" in his care. Always respectful of wildlife, John captures Grapenut's summer and fall activities with some of the best loon photography we've ever seen! An endearing story told with exceptional full color pictures and a thoughtful narrative on each page. Soft cover; 10 3/4" x 8 3/8"; 55 pages; autographed.



\$19.99 (plus \$5.00 shipping)

Call 603-476-5666 to order your
autographed copy today!

Or visit our website at www.loon.org.

LOON PRESERVATION COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Wild HOGs for Wild Loons: Ride and Raffle

The new owners of Laconia Harley-Davidson of Meredith, Steve and Anne Deli, are hosting a *Wild HOGs for Wild Loons* ride event to benefit LPC on August 22, 2009. Riders will register at the dealership for the self-guided tour of the Lakes Region starting at 9:00 a.m. The cost for the ride is \$10 per rider and \$5 for passengers. Special discount coupons for area attractions will be provided to registered riders. Riders may return to the dealership to enjoy food, entertainment and the camaraderie of fellow bikers between 3:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. The festivities will conclude with a raffle drawing.

In addition to hosting the benefit ride, the Deli's have generously donated a 2009 Harley Davidson Softail Rocker motorcycle (pictured below) to raffle for the benefit of the Loon Preservation

Committee. The kick-off for the raffle coincided with the 86th Annual Laconia Bike Week on June 13, 2009 at the Harley-Davidson dealership in Meredith, NH. LPC had a booth set up all week and

ed. Second prize is a \$500 gift card and third prize is a \$100 gift card, valid at both Laconia Harley-Davidson of Meredith and White Mountain Harley-Davidson of North Conway.

Promotional items include men's and women's T-shirts (\$15), ball caps (\$15), all with the whimsical Wild HOGs for Wild Loons logo (pictured center), masterfully designed by LPC colleague, Victor Young.

It is the hope of both organizations that the raffle of the motorcycle will raise significant funds for LPC's Loon Recovery Program as well as raise awareness for the future of loons here in the Granite State. Raffle tickets and wares are also available at the Loon's Feather Gift Shop, or call The Loon Center at (603)

476-5666. Visit our website for more details and complete raffle rules at www.loon.org.

~Rachel Williams



sold raffle tickets and wares. Tickets are \$10 each or three for \$25 and only 3,000 tickets were print-



Get your "Wild HOGs" t-shirts & caps while supplies last!

LPC Executive Director Harry Vogel (back left) and LPC Board members Nancy Christie and Carl Johnson look on as Mike Bartlett (LPC Board member and NH Audubon President) checks out the raffle bike at the 86th Annual Laconia Bike Week kickoff.



"Loon.org" is Live and Well

Ladies and gentlemen, one and all, come to loon.org to hear the call...the call of the loon that is! LPC is proud to announce that our new and greatly improved website (www.loon.org) is now live for all to enjoy.

For more than 30 years, LPC has been monitoring, researching and managing loons and their habitats in New Hampshire and has striven to share its findings and knowledge with the world. Our old website, although current in its day, has been limiting our ability to impart information for quite some time.

The staff at LPC has been hard at work over the past several months with Victor Young, our graphic designer, and Sullivan and Wolf, a professional web design company, to create what we believe will greatly enhance LPC's efforts, awareness and mission. Our thanks go to the Davis Conservation Foundation for awarding our grant application with funds to carry out this work.

The many improvements and additions to loon.org will entice

all from the casual observer to the committed loon enthusiast and scholar.

Listed under the menu choice of "About Loons" are many facts and information pertaining to loons, their daily activities and social networking. Sound bites of the four loon calls can be heard at the subcategory of "The Voice of the Loon."

The "Work of LPC" is the real meat and potatoes of who we are and what we do. This section boasts an extensive collection of LPC's past and present projects including the Squam Lake Loon Study and Loon Recovery Initiative. Among its subcategories are: "Monitoring," "Research," "Management," "Outreach and Public Education" and "Partnerships for Conservation." If you really want to know the trials and tribulations of being a loon in New Hampshire, log onto the "Work of LPC."

The form for the 2009 Loon Census can be found under "Volunteer." The trail map to the Markus Wildlife Sanctuary can be printed from the "Facilities" sec-

tion. Additional pertinent information about LPC can be found under "Events" and "Contact Us."

The online gift shop has many items to purchase including t-shirts, notecards, CDs, books and even novelty items. And as always, if you don't see what you are looking for, just give a call.

Memberships can now be acquired over the internet saving time, postage and paper. One can even make a donation or order a gift membership in honor of that special someone by choosing "Memberships/Donations."

If you haven't yet stumbled across the new website, take a few moments to see the richness and splendor of the loon photographs (many of them donated for LPC's use by Ginger Gumm, Dan Poleschook and John Rockwood) and learn a little more about loons today. We will continue to add to the site over the next few months and update it often with new news as it happens. So be sure and check back from time to time!

~Kimberley Beardwood Smith

www.loon.org

“Eye Help Animals” is Keeping an Eye on Loons

The Loon Preservation Committee is pleased to have connected with an organization willing and enthusiastic about supporting our mission to preserve loons and their habitats in New Hampshire. Jim Fontaine and DJ Geribo live in Alton, NH, where Jim manages their company, Eye Help Animals LLC, and DJ paints the beautiful animal eyes that are their trademark.

Jim and DJ started Eye Help Animals because of their passion for preserving wildlife. Their mission is to “promote and support wildlife conservation and habitat preservation through awareness, education, and by donating 25% of all profits to wildlife and habitat protection organizations worldwide.” The Loon Preservation Committee is proud to be included in the list of beneficiaries that includes the World Wildlife Fund, National Wildlife Federation and Society for the Protection of NH Forests. We are also very pleased to be the recipient of a portion of the proceeds from the sale of pins, t-shirts, caps or bags bearing the beautiful and sometimes startling images of the eyes of world wildlife.



In fact it was one of these eye images that initiated the contact between our two organizations. An eagle eye pin caught the eye of an LPC friend. After a visit to the website a call was made to find out if they had the loon eye as part of their repertoire. The answer was no, but DJ would be delighted to paint one, which she did. Loon eye pins and other merchandise are now available at the Loon's Feather Gift Shop and www.loon.org. Not only is this a spectacular piece of jewelry, but Eye Help Animals has agreed to donate all earmarked profits from the sale of this particular pin to LPC. Check out their website, www.eyehelpanimals.com.

~Alisoun Hodges



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Take a Chance for Loon Preservation!

Don't miss a chance to win this year's raffle quilt which celebrates the return of the loon and the spectacular flora and fauna that grace our summer landscape. The Loon Preservation Committee logo provides the dramatic center-piece. It is surrounded by native wildflowers while turtles, ants, praying mantis and other critters hide among the blooms. Colorful butterflies and dragonflies complete the scene.

The quilt measures 80" x 90" and is hand appliquéd on a cream colored background. At last count there were 350 hours put into its creation! The cast of characters include LPC volunteer Nancy Collins, who designed the layout and organized the production, as well as seven talented women from the Country Village Quilt Guild: Ann Wallace, Joan Colona, Freida Haynes, Dawn Thurston, Carol Hoagland, Joan Haslett, and Stephanie Drake. The wildflowers and critter blocks were designed by appliqué artist Carol Armstrong, and the piece was machine quilted by Dick Castrucci of Laconia, NH. The quilt is truly an outstanding piece of craftsmanship and a generous labor of love on behalf of New Hampshire's loons! A sincere thank you to all who played a part in producing it.

You can see the quilt on display at The Loon Center, where tickets are available (\$5.00 donation for 4 tickets).

~Alisoun Hodges



Loon Preservation Committee's 32nd Annual Loon Festival

Saturday, July 18; 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
at
THE LOON CENTER

CRAFTS★EXHIBITS★REFRESHMENTS...AND MORE!!!

Perennial Favorites . . .
Balloonologist, Mr. Phil & Face Painter, Mrs. Phil!



Come join in the fun!

Generosity is the flower
of justice.

~Nathaniel Hawthorne

“SWIM 2009” Needs Your Pledges!

Between the fall of 2004 and the spring of 2005, Squam Lake lost seven of its loon pairs. This decline, from 16 to 9 pairs, represented 44% of Squam’s loon population, a drop unprecedented on Squam or any other large lake in the Loon Preservation Committee’s 34-year history of monitoring loons. It also brought Squam’s loon population to its lowest level since LPC began surveying the lake in 1975. The decline was followed by an almost complete reproductive failure of the remaining loon population – only one loon chick was fledged from the lake in 2007, and only two chicks in 2008. LPC has been investigating possible causes of these declines to reverse these troubling population trends on Squam. Our efforts have included:

- an extended field season for LPC’s Squam Lakes biologist;
- testing inviable loon eggs collected from failed loon nests, blood and feather samples, and dead loons for a wide range of contaminants and pathogens;
- banding loons to track the survival, breeding success and wintering locations of individuals;
- analyzing the effects of a wide range of other factors on loon survival and breeding success, including fish populations, predator populations, recreational use of lakes, precipitation events, and temperature extremes; and,
- increasing management on Squam, including the use of ropes and signs around nesting loons, nesting rafts, and covers on rafts to protect eggs from avian predators.



These efforts are expensive. LPC’s testing of loon samples is the most comprehensive ever undertaken, and it costs LPC over \$2,000 to test a single loon egg. You can help support LPC’s work to safeguard loons on Squam Lake by donating to the “SWIM 2009” fundraiser. This year, swimmers Wendy Van de Poll, Rick Van de Poll, Jennifer Wright, Rose de Mars, Alex Adriance, Nancy Hansen and Susan Vachon will swim

the length of Squam Lake, from Holderness to Sandwich, in early August (exact date dependent on weather conditions). To pledge your support for the swimmers and for Squam Lake loons, call LPC at 603-476-5666 or visit the www.loon.org “donations” page and note “SWIM” in the donation box.

Thank you for your support!

~Harry Vogel

2009 Birdathon/Bloomathon

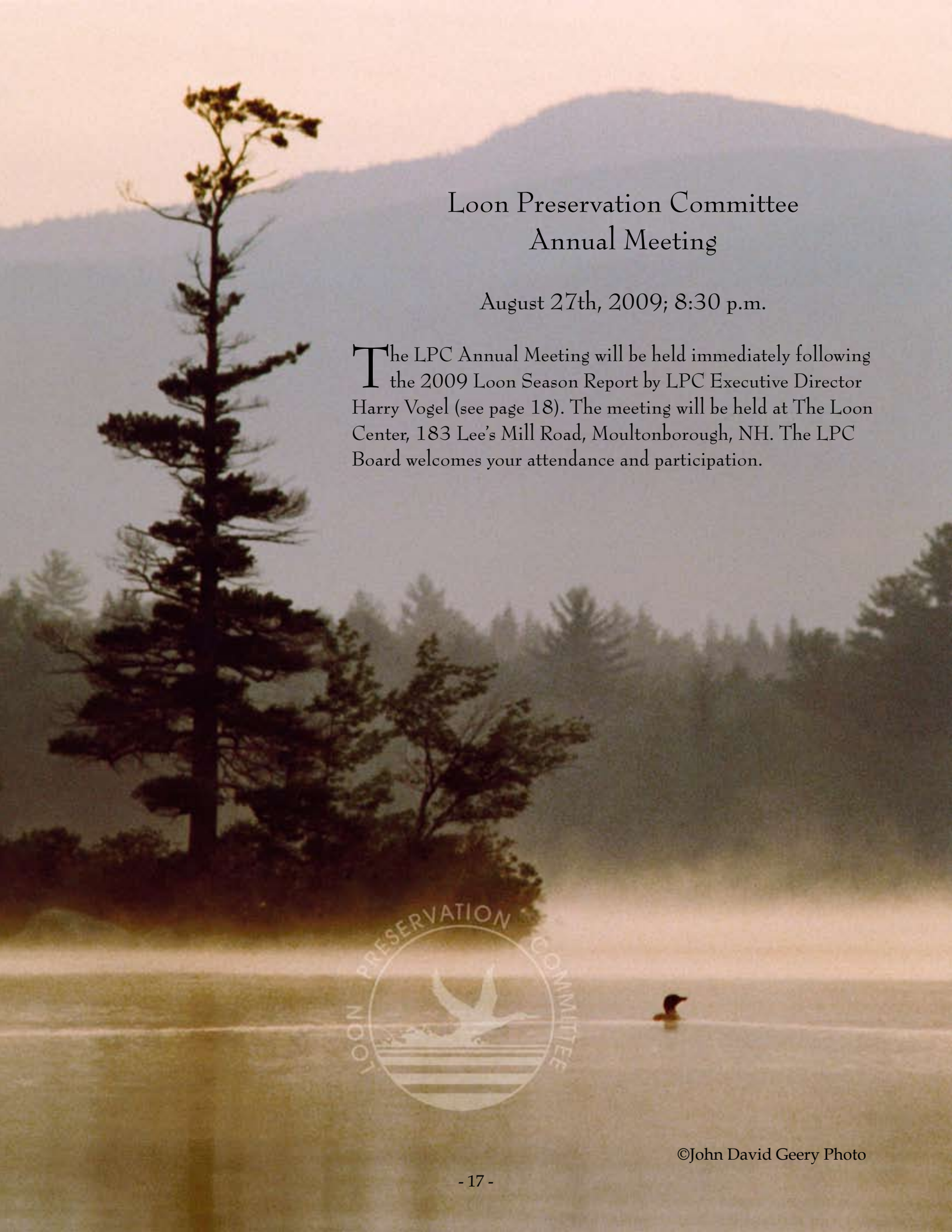
It was partly cloudy at 4:30 a.m. on May 14th when Lakes Region Chapter members started out on their annual quest for birds and blooms in the Tamworth area. But at least it wasn’t snowing!

Chris Clyne and her Bloom team, which included Ned Beecher, Tony Vazzano and Alan Dibiase, reported 74 species, tying the record set in 2002 and repeated in 2004. The Birders, Tony Vazzano, Ned Beecher, Will Grinnell, Gloria Hoag, Chele Miller, Sarah Schmidt and George Hurley, reported a respectable total of 104

different species. The Bird record was set in 2006 with 117 species.

We are very appreciative of the Chapter’s efforts and accomplishments, with a special thanks to Chris Clyne, Ned Beecher and Tony Vazzano who again organized and spearheaded the day. And no article about the Birdathon/Bloomathon is complete without mention of the late Betty Steele of Tamworth who initiated and successfully led this effort for so many years.

~Alisoun Hodges



Loon Preservation Committee Annual Meeting

August 27th, 2009; 8:30 p.m.

The LPC Annual Meeting will be held immediately following the 2009 Loon Season Report by LPC Executive Director Harry Vogel (see page 18). The meeting will be held at The Loon Center, 183 Lee's Mill Road, Moultonborough, NH. The LPC Board welcomes your attendance and participation.



©John David Geery Photo

Summer 2009 Nature Talk Series
at The Loon Center
Lee's Mill Road, Moultonborough, NH
(603) 476-5666

7:30 p.m. ♦ Admission Free ♦ Donations Appreciated

Thursday, July 2 Loons – From Hatch to Fledge

New Hampshire Nature Photographer John Rockwood narrates a slide-show covering the loons' arrival in the spring through their departure for the ocean in the fall. You'll come away with new insights and understanding into the day-to-day life of the Common Loon.

Thursday, July 9 Summer Birds of the Lakes Region

Life-long birdwatchers, Bob and Dana Duxbury-Fox, share facts, photos and sound bites of over 50 birds commonly found in the Lakes Region. Join them at 7:30 a.m. the following morning for a half-day bird walk on the Markus Wildlife Sanctuary at The Loon Center. Children are welcome if they can walk quietly through the woods. Bring binoculars if you have them.

Thursday, July 16 Geology of the Lakes Region

Dr. Jim Vernon is back this year to tell us all about the fascinating geology of the Lakes Region. Jim holds a PhD from the University of Oklahoma and is a geologist with ENSR in Belmont.

Thursday, July 23 Dark Side of the Loon – A Docuscience Film

Where and how do loons survive in winter? Join filmmaker Gail Osherenko and conservation biologist and ornithological expert Dr. Paul Spitzer to get the answer to this and many more questions as they seek ways to ensure the survival of the Common Loon.

Thursday, July 30 Coyotes – Everything You Wanted to Know

New Hampshire Fish & Game Wildlife Biologist Kris Rines tells us everything we've always wanted to know about NH's coyotes. Meet Kris' trusty assistant, Sam, the Australian Shepherd.

Thursday, August 6 Falcons in Flight

Master falconer, Nancy Cowan, of the New Hampshire School of Falconry offers an exciting opportunity to get up close and personal with these fascinating birds. Come early (6:30 p.m) for the outdoor flight demonstration. For a small fee, have a souvenir photo taken of yourself and a falcon.

Thursday, August 13 Global Climate Change

New Hampshire Naturalist Ed Sharron breaks down the complicated and sometimes confusing science behind global warming and offers suggestions on how we can all cut back on our personal impact on climate change.

Thursday, August 20 Moose on the Loose!

Wildlife biologist Judy Silverberg of New Hampshire Fish & Game will share slides and stories about the adaptations and behavior of the state's largest mammal. From a demonstration of a moose call to a close look at a moose hide, Judy's presentation will enthrall young and old alike.

Thursday, August 27 2009 Loon Season Report

LPC Director Harry Vogel will present overall trends in loon populations and preliminary statistics on how loons fared in NH over the past year. Also featured will be a slide show by Nature Photographer John Rockwood. The Loon Preservation Committee Annual Meeting will follow.



New Hampshire Common Loon Census
Saturday, July 18, 2009
8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

Lake/Pond: _____ Section: _____ Town: _____

Observer(s): _____ Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

Total number of people in party: _____

	Time	#Adults	#Chicks	#Immatures	*Location/Direction
Example	8:17	1			Flew in from east.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

TOTALS: _____

Notes:

*(1) Record only the FIRST sighting of each loon or group, then be sure to total the number of loons observed on the appropriate line. Be sure and note the direction in which the loons move or fly.

(2) It is CRITICAL that observations continue for the ENTIRE HOUR.

(3) Remember, a report of zero is just as biologically important as a report of ten loons.

CENSUS FORMS SHOULD BE RETURNED BY AUGUST 1ST TO BE INCLUDED IN THE FINAL TALLY.
A REPORT OF ZERO IS STILL VERY IMPORTANT TO THE CENSUS!

Please return this form to your coordinator, LPC staff, or to the LPC office as soon as possible.

Loon Preservation Committee, P.O. Box 604, Moultonborough, NH 03254
(603) 476-LOON (5666); Fax: (603) 476-5497

Thank you!

Loon Preservation Committee
P.O. Box 604
183 Lee's Mill Road
Moultonborough, NH 03254

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