



# *Loon Preservation Committee* **NEWSLETTER**

*P.O. Box 604, Lee's Mill Road, Moultonborough, NH 03254; [www.loon.org](http://www.loon.org)*

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FALL 2011



## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

### What's a Few Loons?

#### *The Loon Preservation Committee*

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*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 monitoring, research, management and education.*

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Last year we lost a record 11 adult loons to ingested lead fishing tackle in New Hampshire. That result was a shock to many, including us here at the Loon Preservation Committee. We have been working hard to create a culture of respect and appreciation for loons, and LPC staff spends many nights and weekends every year giving presentations to teach people about loons and their needs – a record 104 of them to date this year, and many more scheduled before January. The dangers of lead fishing tackle to loons, other wildlife, and people figure prominently in all of those presentations.

To see a result like last summer's lead tally is disheartening and shows that we clearly need to do more to end the use of toxic lead tackle. Granted, last year's result was particularly bad, due maybe to some combination of chance and other factors we don't yet understand; but we have lost an average of seven adult loons a year since 2000, the year New Hampshire's lead-free tackle legislation went into effect. Those deaths are a result of the continued use of illegal lead sinkers and a big loophole in the law that allows the use of lead jigs measuring an inch or longer in length – a size that is still deadly for loons.

Some argue that in the grand scheme of things, 7 or 11 loons a year is an acceptable consequence of our desire to continue to use toxic lead tackle. But loons are long-lived animals that are slow to mature and reproduce; the single most important factor in maintaining a viable loon population is to keep adult loons alive so they have many years to try and reproduce. Those dead loons cast a long shadow across the future of our small, and still threatened, loon population.

We detail the significant effects of lead tackle on our loon population, and the shortcomings of current regulations, in our article on pages 10 and 11 of this newsletter. But there are other, non-scientific reasons to do right by our loons. As someone who has witnessed first-hand the effects of lead on loons, repeatedly, and year after year, my question is more personal; why do we insist on subjecting even one of our loons to needless suffering and death when non-toxic alternatives to lead tackle are readily available? Why is any level of lead poisoning acceptable? In 2010 LPC staff and volunteers floated 66 rafts, a record number, to help loons overcome some of their challenges. The benefit of those efforts was entirely wiped out by 11 pieces of lead tackle. We can, and have to, do better by our loons.

New legislation has been introduced to increase the size standard for restricted lead jigs in New Hampshire. When this bill comes before our legislature early in the new year we will be in touch to urge you to voice your support for this critical measure to protect our loons, other wildlife, and people from the dangers of lead fishing tackle.



## New Hampshire Loons Make Gains in Nesting Success

### Thank You to LPC Volunteers for a Successful Season

Thank you to the many, many people who volunteered their help to make 2011 a successful season for the New Hampshire loon population. For every detailed story of volunteer action that makes it into our newsletter, there are a dozen unsung heroes who have helped to preserve loons around the state. The strength of the loon population is the best testament to your many acts of stewardship.

### Finally: a Successful Nesting season for New Hampshire's Threatened Loons

As Chris Conrod's summer newsletter article on habitat explained, to be a successful loon, you've got to know your territory. Brooding areas, nest sites (preferred and alternate), prime fishing coves, good hiding places when neighbors intrude—you have to know them all. And the knowledge is needed because a loon can live several decades but may only encounter a handful of perfect nesting years, when everything—the weather, nest predators, territorial rivalries—goes your way. In the good years, a savvy loon prospers. For most New Hampshire loons, 2011 was one of those years.

In spite of a wet start and abundant black flies, 2011 saw a record number of loon chicks hatched and fledged in New Hampshire, with nesting success above the 0.48 chicks surviving per pair needed for a viable population for the first time in the past six years. Although the adult population still hovers at only 60% of the LPC estimated carrying capacity for the state (see Figure 1), successful breeding years



Field biologist and Volunteer Coordinator Susie Burbidge thanks Monadnock volunteers in the historic Canaan Street Meetinghouse at an August potluck. Photo by Kittie Wilson.

are key for a steady, incremental recovery in the future. Following a wet and warmer than average spring, June brought cooler temperatures and wet weather but no major rain events. This was just the peace and quiet that a nesting

loon needs: stable water levels and perhaps the added benefit of gloomy weekends that kept the human populace indoors. A hot July followed with two heat waves and a record-tying 100° F day in Concord. But again there

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Loon Paired Adults, Nesting Adults, Chicks Hatched, and Chicks Surviving in New Hampshire, 1975-2011

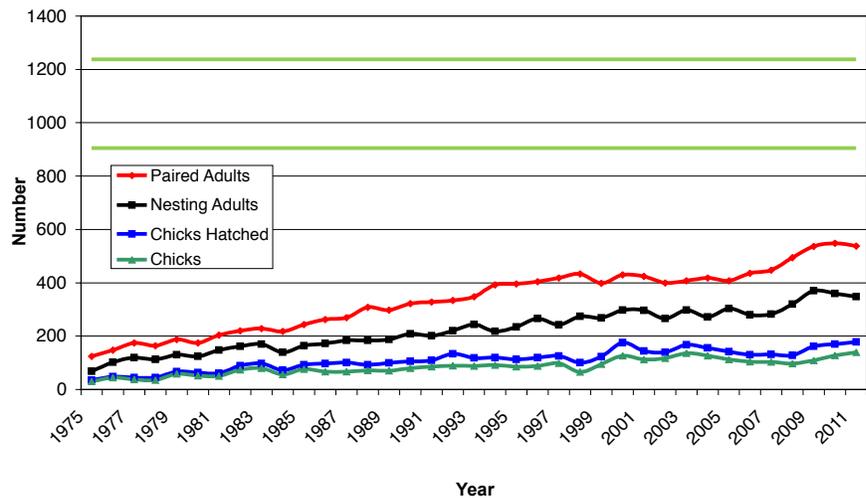


Figure 1: Loon Paired Adults, Chicks Hatched, and Chicks Surviving in New Hampshire, 1975-2011.

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were no extreme precipitation events, and loon chicks flourished. By mid-August, we tallied 148 chicks fledged, 11 chicks higher than the previous record set in 2003.

LPC’s Loon Recovery Plan funding has ensured population recovery in part through increased management, including the provision of more nest rafts and signs. In fact, LPC rafts and signs played an increased role in this season’s success. Raft nest hatches jumped from 16% to 22% of all chicks hatched, and almost 40% of all chicks hatched were from nest sites protected by ropes and signs. LPC volunteers and members floated a record 75 nest rafts. Fourteen additional rafts were floated on Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge by Refuge staff. Thirty-four rafts were used for nesting and twenty-six of these nests hatched chicks.

On the heels of five straight years with below needed breeding success and a record number of lead poisonings in 2010, the ex-

pected consequence—a plateau in adult loon abundance—proved true this year. We saw a slight decline from 550 to 542 breeding adults, and a slight increase in the total number of adult loons (including the more variable count of non-breeders), to 624. These trends can be seen in Figure 1 on the previous page and are compared with previous years in Table 1 below.

Here’s how the season played out in eight different monitoring regions around the state:

**LAKES REGION**

**In a Nutshell:** Thirty-four of the forty-six loon pairs nested, fledging 20 chicks. This lagged behind the rest of the state for nesting success.

**Nest Debuts:** **Wentworth Lake** in Wolfeboro’s only successful pair occupied Brewster Heath, a new

territory on the lake’s west side.

**Best Loon Outpost:** Remote **Sawyer Pond**, deep in the White Mountains and a dozen miles from the nearest loon lake, hosted a pair of loons for the first time. Field biologist Tiffany Grade made a 10-mile round trip hike on

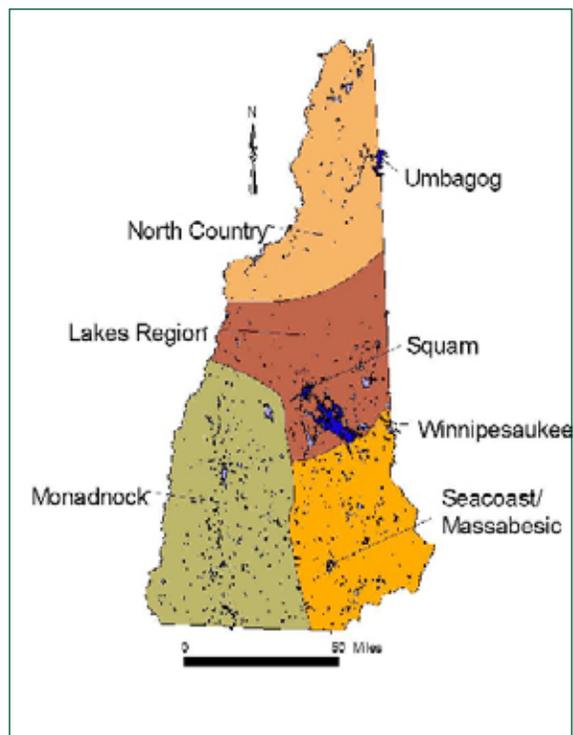


Table 1: 2011 New Hampshire Loon Breeding Season Results Versus 2010 and 2007-2011 Average

	2011	2010	2011 vs. 5-yr. Average (%)	2011 Rank in 36-yr. monitoring period
Adults-Paired	542	550	+6%	2nd
Territorial Pairs	271	275	+6%	2nd
Adults-Unpaired	82	63	+11%	10th
Adults-Total	624	613	+7%	1st
Immatures	7	1	+67%	3rd
Nesting Pairs	178	185	+5%	3rd
Chicks Hatched	185	173	+19%	1st
Chicks Surviving to mid-August	148	129	+26%	1st
Nest Failures	75	81	-8%	5th
Nesting Pairs/Territorial Pair	0.28	0.67	-1%	22nd
Chicks Hatched/Nesting Pair	1.03	0.92	+14%	15th
Chicks Surviving/Chicks Hatched	0.80	0.76	+6%	12th
Nest Failures/Nesting Pair	0.42	0.44	-13%	23rd
Chicks Surviving/Territorial Pair	0.55	0.47	+20%	12th

a late-August survey to check for loon chicks, after Hurricane Irene had washed out bridges and road access. Unfortunately, a dead adult loon was collected at the pond in early August.

**Biggest Disappointment:** The hard-won nesting success in 2010 (after 5 years of nest failures, see our Fall 2010 newsletter) did not continue this year for the **Leavitt Bay** loons on Lake Ossipee. A nest failure was followed by a second attempt on aptly-named Loon Island in Broad Bay, closely tended by Camp Huckins staff and campers but ultimately unsuccessful. Hope springs eternal for 2012.

### MONADNOCK

**In a Nutshell:** Sixty-three loon pairs fledged 47 chicks, almost a third of the state total. Successful nests in western NH continue to propel the state's loon recovery.

**Nest Debuts:** At **Baptist Pond** in Springfield, volunteers were excited to watch the first known successful hatch ever and the first documented nesting attempt since a string of nest failures in the late 1980s! Land and loon steward, Linda Howes, turned up a surprise chick in mid-July at **Grafton Pond** in Grafton for a total of three successful pairs on the 318-acre pond!

**Best Underdog Success:** Dam repairs spearheaded by local residents have ensured stable water levels at **Spectacle Pond** in Groton and the resident loon pair fledged two chicks, the first successful fledging documented on the pond after a decade of nesting failures.

**Latest Hatch:** The loons on **Highland Lake** in Andover started nesting on July 5th, hatched two



*At Spectacle Pond in Groton, Bill Moberg caught this view from his dock of one of the adult loons bringing a minnow to its chicks.*

chicks on the 2nd of August (the latest hatch in the state) and ended a slump of six chick-less years.

**Newest Examples of All-terrain Management:** LPC field biologist Susie Burbidge worked with **Crystal Lake** residents, Enfield Conservation Commissioners, and the Upper Valley Land Trust to cordon off a hiking trail close to an active nest, leading to a successful hatch. Lake residents on **Thorndike Pond** in Jaffrey coordinated with The Nature Conservancy and LPC to float a nest sign and rope off hiking trails on TNC's Whittemore Island.

### NORTH COUNTRY

**In a Nutshell:** Fifty-four breeding pairs fledged 28 chicks. This was slightly above average but lower than most other regions.

**Nest Debuts:** A huge victory for **Ogontz Lake** in Lyman having produced its first nest success since LPC surveys began in the late 1980s!

### **Most Favorable Water Levels:**

Dam manager Bob Ward confirmed that regular rainfall kept the **Connecticut Lakes** full through the nesting season when lake levels usually yo-yo up and down by many feet. This allowed for three successful natural nests in addition to six successful raft sites on three lakes (Francis, First and Second Connecticut).

**Earliest Start:** Storing the 12 rafts on the Connecticut Lakes is always a chore but not for LPC **Field Biologist Krista Newell and volunteer extraordinaire Larry Metcalf**. Historically, many a self-respecting field crew has split the job into two full days. When I asked Krista how things had gone, she said that Larry had helped her pull *all* the rafts in a single day. The key, she said, was getting to the Lake Francis launch by 5 o'clock. 5 a.m.? Yep.

### MASSABESIC LAKE

**In a Nutshell:** Success! Massabesic had the highest nest success

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of any monitoring region. All five of the eight breeding pairs that nested were successful, fledging five chicks. This was over twice the usual breeding success.

### **Most Satisfying Management:**

Quick signage by field biologist Molly Lindh and volunteer John Rockwood at the **Severance Point** nest site, a popular fishing spot, avoided the human disturbance that caused nest failure in 2008.

### SEACOAST

**In a Nutshell:** Forty-five pairs fledged thirty-five chicks. Sea-coast loon pairs fledged 75% more chicks per pair than average, a bumper crop. This was the most successful region in the state and a vast improvement over recent seasons when Seacoast nests have borne the brunt of late spring and summer flooding.

**Biggest Bumper Crop:** Loons have nested on **Bow Lake** every year since 1976, but this year was the best ever, with six chicks fledged. Bow Lake loons continue to be closely managed with rafts and signs thanks to many dedicated volunteers.

**Nest Debuts:** **Little Island Pond** in Pelham recorded the first documented nesting ever!

**Great Example of Loon Preservation Coordination:** Over a dozen loon watchers banded together by email and phone on **Pawtuckaway Lake** to protect and monitor three different nest sites, with a successful hatch at the southern territory. See sidebar description (right) from one "Loon Mom."

### SQUAM LAKES

**In a Nutshell:** Fifteen loon pairs

Email: Early July  
Subject: Pawtuckaway South Loons

Hi John and Molly: Happy 5th of July! Just wanted to give you an update on the loon nest on the south end of Pawtuckaway Lake.

As of this morning, the nest was still active and all was calm. It's been a noisy three nights of fireworks on the lake, along with lots of boat traffic and waves. However, the pair hasn't seemed overly distressed and we've been able to keep people off the islands and away from the nest all weekend. That, in itself, was a major success.

The various types of protection we have in place right now are:

#### **WATER**

- \* Two floating signs (one on either side of the small channel to prevent passage).
- \* A yellow rope line around the small island and part of the larger island on each side.

#### **LAND**

- \* Two large white LPC signs that Molly left at our house this weekend (they're posted on trees on the west and south sides of the larger island and really stand out).
- \* Two orange and two neon green signs that Ed made up, laminated, and posted. One is on the main trail on the larger island. The others are posted at landing spots.
- \* Flagging tape and rope across the main trail on the island to discourage use beyond that point.
- \* Flagging tape across two landing spots.

We didn't end up using the third floating sign because it didn't have an anchor and because the big white LPC land signs worked so well. However, we may use it after the chicks hatch because it has the orange Loon Chicks signs underneath the nesting signs.

Also, I made the rope line more buoyant by adding more noodle pieces. The noodles I bought were fatter than the regular ones so they do a better job of holding the rope up. I think they're called something like Monster Noodles...\$3.88 at Walmart.

I never thought I'd want to see this much stuff out around a nest but it got the message through to people very clearly and protected the nest. We saw lots of people on all the other islands but not on the small one with the nest or the large one next to it.

Thanks for all your help, including the floating sign near the northern nest, Molly. That should be all we need for that location because the rocks keep large boats out of the area and the nest is so hidden. From Therese's message last night it sounds like that pair was more distressed about the fireworks than the southern pair. Fortunately the houses that were shooting off fireworks are quite a ways from the nest itself (not like when the pair used to nest on East Twin).

Hoping for two chicks on the south lake on or about July 15. Timing for the northern nest is anyone's guess but we'll keep you informed on the status.

Thanks again to the LPC for providing such great support to us on Pawtuckaway. And thanks to everyone else who's helped this year.

Best regards, Liz



*Severance Point on Lake Massabesic. Photo by John Rockwood.*

fledged five chicks. Nesting success continues to be below average and far below state-wide nesting success this year.

**Newest Loon Babysitters:** If you used the town boat launch in Sandwich or were out on the lake, you may have noticed the revival of an old tradition – loon chick patrols. **Sue Berking and a hearty team of kayakers** were a cheerful but vigilant presence where boating and loon brooding areas overlapped, posting signs and making sure that lake users knew that baby loons were near and how best to share the lake.

**Most Identifiable:** Close monitoring of the **Squam Lakes' loon population** has translated into an active banding effort each summer over the last fifteen years. By season's end, over three-quarters of the breeding population consisted of marked individuals, providing insight into the health, performance, behavior, and territory use of these individual loons. These efforts, as well as increased management and outreach to sup-

port Squams' loons, were funded by donations to the Squam Lakes Loon Initiative (SLLI).

#### LAKE UMBAGOG

**In a Nutshell:** Fourteen loon pairs fledged one chick. Umbagog has half the adult loons that it supported in the late 1990s and – this year – almost no breeding success.

**Most Colorful Old-timers:** Field biologist Michael O'Brien confirmed the return of the female loon banded as an adult at Sweat's Meadow in 1993. This makes her at least 21 years old. Her mate is an old-timer too, banded as a juvenile in 1994, now 17 years old. Down the lake at Black Island Cove the male loon's color bands were matched to an adult banded on Akers Pond in 1996 and, therefore, at least 18 years old.

**Most Mysterious Pair:** After nesting successfully last year, the loon pair at **Southeast Arm**, across from the state boat launch, played a now-you-see-them, now-

you-don't game all summer. No evidence of nesting to explain the absence of one or both loons from the territory.

#### LAKE WINNIPESAUKEE

**In a Nutshell:** Twenty-six pairs fledged seven chicks. A slight improvement in nesting success but still sub-par.

**Biggest Success:** A successful nest in **Robert's Cove** came the first year for a loon raft floated (by sailboat!) after several years of nest failures. This is the way loon rafts are supposed to work.

**Best Port in a Storm: Volunteer, Dave Joyce,** of Braun Bay works for a professional sea-towing service on the lake – a good person to know – and maintains the raft and signs at nearby Gline's Island. His dock was handy this year for jet-skiing field biologist Liz Jackson when the lake got too cold and rough and later in the summer for night-time capture work.

**Worst Luck for Young Loons:** We were disappointed to lose three immature (1-2-year old) loons from the lake this year. All were rescued alive, but in each case rehabilitation was unsuccessful (see Rescues and Recoveries section). Most loons spend this sub-adult period on the ocean, but a few are observed inland each summer. There were an increased number of immature loons reported from NH and Maine lakes this year.

We are deeply indebted to three field biologists who filled in at the last minute with tremendous and unexpected enthusiasm and skill: Cory Gucwa, Seacoast; Alexis Rudko, Seacoast; and Michael O'Brien, Umbagog.

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### 2011 Loon Census: A Record Turnout for the July Count

The July 16th volunteer loon census featured the most participants in at least a decade: 572 on 124 of New Hampshire’s lakes. They tallied a total of 517 adult loons, 13 immature loons and 91 loon chicks. Loon watchers also turned up three new nesting pairs with chicks around the state on census day (Round Pond, Grafton Pond, and Squam Lake).

This year’s overall chick count was almost 20% higher than the 2010 census. Season-long monitoring showed a similar 15% increase in surviving chicks over last year. The number of immature loons reported on census day and those observed during the field season was also higher than usual. Thirteen were sighted during the census, compared with five last year. Season-long monitoring tallied a total of seven this year, up from one in 2010. Immature loons tend to show up on the larger lakes such as Winnepesaukee, Squam, Newfound and Sunapee, but volunteers and field biologists reported seeing them on smaller lakes and ponds this year as well. Although the census covered eight fewer lakes than last year, a handful of lakes were covered for the first time (ever or in many years) including Cummins and

Reservoir Ponds in Dorchester, Smith Pond in Enfield, and Nippo Pond in Barrington.

This year’s census also featured an online entry form for census observations. Over half of the participants used the form to submit their sightings. The online option received rave reviews and we hope to extend it to include non-census sightings in the future.

Our neighbors in Vermont saw an increase in total number of loons counted during their annual Loon-watch, which also takes place on the 3rd Saturday in July each year. They had an increase in the number of immature or sub-adults counted as well.

July 16th was also recognized by the New Hampshire State Senate as “Loon Appreciation Day” to honor loons and to encourage the protection of one of New Hampshire’s greatest icons. A proclamation was presented by Senator Jeanie Forrester to Executive Director Harry Vogel (pictured above) at LPC’s Loon Festival following the census.

Save the date for the 2012 Loon Census, which will be held on Saturday, July 21 from 8-9 a.m.



### Fall Volunteer Update

This summer our field biologists enlisted the help of approximately 400 field volunteers across the state who logged close to 1900 hours! Twenty-six percent of these field volunteers also participated in the census. Combined volunteer field and census efforts surpassed 3000 hours! The dedication from our volunteers is truly impressive.

Don’t forget you can track the movements of loons in the Midwest during migration and on their wintering grounds on the following website: [http://www.umesc.usgs.gov/terrestrial/migratory\\_birds/loons/main.html](http://www.umesc.usgs.gov/terrestrial/migratory_birds/loons/main.html).

You can follow recent news and learn about upcoming events through LPC’s e-Newsletter or Facebook page. If you missed an issue of the e-news, you can now see them all online. Click the LPC News tab on our home page ([www.loon.org](http://www.loon.org)) for the archived list of newsletters. Past issues of the LPC Newsletter are also available online. This winter we are hoping to add a list of lakes that need coverage to our website, so make sure to check back often.

Table 2: Volunteer Census Results, 2009-2011

	2009	2010	2011
ADULT LOONS	418	465	517
CHICKS	59	78	91
IMMATURES	9	5	13
TOTAL LOONS	486	548	621
LAKES CENSUSED	116	132	124
OBSERVERS	524	546	572

## Rescue and Recovery Highlights

Fortunately, we've encountered fewer incidents of lead poisoning in loons so far this year, but otherwise, there has been a predictable gamut of mortality causes and cases. We've rescued eight live adult loons; three have been released, and five did not survive. Seven other mortalities were collected, for a total of twelve adults. Two chicks were rescued and released, and five additional chicks were collected dead. Three immature loons were rescued, but none survived.

## Capture and Banding

LPC and BioDiversity Research Institute (BRI) staff continued nighttime capture and banding work on Squam and Lake Winnepesaukee as well as smaller Lakes Region waterbodies like Bearcamp and Hawkins Ponds, Hatch Pond in Eaton (using a canoe!), and Highland Lake in Andover. Over 12 nights in June, July and August, crews netted 22 adult loons, including 11 previously banded recaptures.

The addition this season of LPC biologist John Cooley to BRI's federal banding permit extended the capacity of BRI and LPC to capture and study loons in New Hampshire. Mercury and loon health sampling and band re-sighting continue to provide key data for both organizations.

Tufts veterinary intern Sarah Stephan (pictured above) was also a key contributor to 2011 sampling work, enabling loon health checks and immediate blood lead tests for captured and rescued loons. Quick blood lead results are a huge help for wildlife rehabilitators who work with LPC to provide prompt treatment to rescued loons.

~ John Cooley, Susie Burbidge,  
and Harry Vogel



*Tufts University veterinary student Sarah Stephan contributed necropsy and conservation health expertise and did yeoman duty as part-time boat pilot and sign hauler on Winnepesaukee this summer. Thank you, Sarah!*

## THANK YOU!

### Collaborators and General Support

BioDiversity Research Institute  
Irwin Marine  
Manchester Water Authority  
Massabesic Audubon Center  
NH Fish and Game/Conservation Officers & Dispatch  
NH Marine Patrol  
Squam Boat Livery  
Squam Lakes Association  
Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine  
US Fish and Wildlife Service (Northeast Field Office and Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge)  
US Forest Service, White Mountain National Forest (Kathy Starke, Kori Marchowsky, and staff)

### Veterinarians and Rehabilitators

Avian Haven  
Capital Area Veterinary Emergency Services (CAVES)  
Elaine Connors Center for Wildlife, Cathie Gregg and Bethani Garland  
Fisherville Animal Hospital, Dr. Messenger and staff  
Northwood Veterinary Hospital, Drs. Mahoney and Jarden  
Plymouth Animal Hospital, Drs. Cote, Tighe, and staff  
Sandwich Animal Hospital, Dr. Julie Dolan and staff  
Kappy Sprenger  
Wings of Dawn, Maria Colby

# The Effects of Lead Fishing Tackle on Loons in New Hampshire

Since 1989, the Loon Preservation Committee has sent any dead loons we find on New Hampshire lakes to Dr. Mark Pokras, a Veterinary Pathologist at Tufts Center for Conservation Medicine, to learn about causes of mortality in loons. In 2010, LPC staff and volunteers recovered 16 adult loons; 11 of these adults were found to have died from ingested lead fishing tackle, the highest number ever recorded. As a result of this record number of lead tackle mortalities, LPC and University of Wisconsin-Madison graduate student (aka Squam Lakes Loon Biologist) Tiffany Grade undertook a comprehensive investigation of collected loon mortalities from 1989 to 2010 to establish: 1) how many loons died from lead fishing tackle during that period; 2) the success of New Hampshire's legislation to protect loons from lead fishing tackle mortality; 3) the sizes and types of lead tackle ingested by loons; and 4) the population-level impacts of lead fishing tackle on loons in New Hampshire.

**We found that 50% of the loon mortalities LPC has collected from 1989-2010 resulted from ingested lead fishing tackle** (Figure 1). Legislation to restrict the use in *lakes and ponds* of lead sinkers weighing one ounce or less and lead-headed jigs measuring less than one inch in length (including the hook) took effect in New Hampshire in 2000. Subsequent legislation to restrict the use of these tackle in *all freshwater* in New Hampshire took effect in 2005, and the *sale* of these tackle was restricted beginning in 2006.

This legislation has not been as effective as we had hoped in reducing loon deaths from ingested lead tackle. Rates of lead

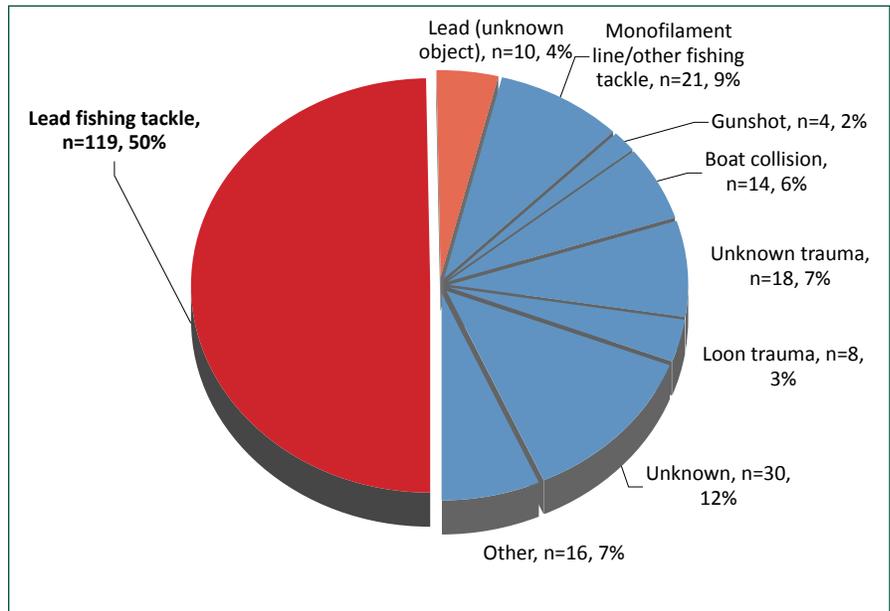


Figure 1. Lead fishing tackle accounts for 50% of documented causes of adult loon mortality in New Hampshire from 1989-2010.

tackle mortalities fell only a small amount, from 12.4/1,000 adult loons to 9.8/1,000 adult loons. Any drop in loon deaths from ingested lead tackle is a good thing, but this was not a statistically significant reduction (i.e. the rate of lead deaths varies substantially from year to year, so we might have seen a difference that small by chance alone). A large proportion (45%) of the lead tackle deaths are from continued use of illegal sinkers, but an almost equally large proportion (41%) are from large (1" or longer in length including the hook) lead-headed jigs not covered by the current legislation. **These larger lead jigs are still legal for use and sale in New Hampshire, but they are deadly to loons when ingested.**

Our data indicates that most of the lead tackle in lead-poisoned loons results from current fishing use. If loons were ingesting tackle primarily from a reservoir of lead tackle on lake bottoms, we would expect a roughly even number of lead deaths every month that

loons are on lakes (April through October). However, lead tackle mortalities peak markedly in July and August, coincident with the peak of the summer fishing and tourist season. We found associated tackle (hooks, line, swivels, and/or leaders) in 66% of loons with ingested sinkers or jigs, also indicating ingestion from current use.

**Lead fishing tackle is having a population-level impact on New Hampshire's loons.** Lead tackle is the largest contributor to documented adult loon mortality (Figure 1). It should be noted that the numbers we present in this article are only documented cases of lead mortalities – we are not recovering every loon that has died from ingested lead tackle, so the data we present here should be regarded as minimum numbers and an under-estimate of the true impact of lead tackle on loons in New Hampshire.

Loon life history is characterized by low rates of natural adult mortality, delayed maturation

(average age of first breeding of a loon is 6-7 years), and low productivity (an average of about ½ a chick per pair, per year). Adult survival is by far the largest factor influencing the growth and viability of New Hampshire's loon population; therefore, LPC takes anything affecting survival of adult loons very seriously. Humans caused the deaths of an average of at least 1.8% of the total adult loon population each year over the period of this study, with the majority of those deaths (at least 1.1% of the total adult population) resulting from ingested lead tackle (Figure 2). Final results for 2011 are not in, but in the previous five years (2006-2010), lead tackle deaths *alone* took an average of at least 1.2% of the adult population each year, and in 2010 that number was a staggering 1.8%. To put those numbers into perspective, a recently published study put the maximum sustainable level of human-caused mortality of Sooty Shearwaters and White-

headed Petrels, two close relatives of loons that share the same life history characteristics, at 0.6% and 1.4% respectively. And to provide a human comparison to these numbers, the great flu pandemic of 1918, an event that we still talk about nearly 100 years later, resulted in the deaths of only 3% of the human population.

Intensive management of New Hampshire's loon population has helped loons to overcome some of the negative consequences of human activities over the past 37 years. LPC is proud of what our small but dedicated staff has been able to achieve with the help of our volunteers and the support of our members and friends. However, loons are still far below their estimated historical abundance in New Hampshire (see article on pp. 3 to 4), and their challenges continue to grow in number and in scope every year. Despite record levels of management and outreach, our loons have achieved the minimum reproductive success required to sustain their

population in only one of the past six years.

One of the most evident and successful of LPC's management activities is the provision of artificial nesting rafts to loon pairs. Last year, despite a record number of nesting rafts floated by LPC staff and volunteers, the benefit to our loon population of our raft program was more than wiped out by just 11 pieces of lead tackle. Lead has by far the largest impact in limiting New Hampshire's loon population growth and viability of any currently quantified stressors.

Our state-wide loon numbers in 2011 show a drop in paired adults (see article on pp. 3 to 4); this result is not surprising given the recent poor reproductive success of our loons and the high number of lead tackle mortalities in 2010. LPC's Loon Recovery Plan projects a declining loon population based on published loon life history parameters, quantified stressors, and current levels of management. This projection may be optimistic given our limited knowledge and likely underestimation of the effects of present and future stressors and uncertainty about our ability to maintain and expand our research, management and outreach programs. This uncertain outlook makes it of prime importance to bolster our loon population against future stressors by adopting simple measures like using non-toxic fishing jigs. Our data indicate that restricting the use and sale of lead-headed jigs weighing an ounce or less, as proposed in recently introduced legislation, would be protective of loons.

~Harry Vogel

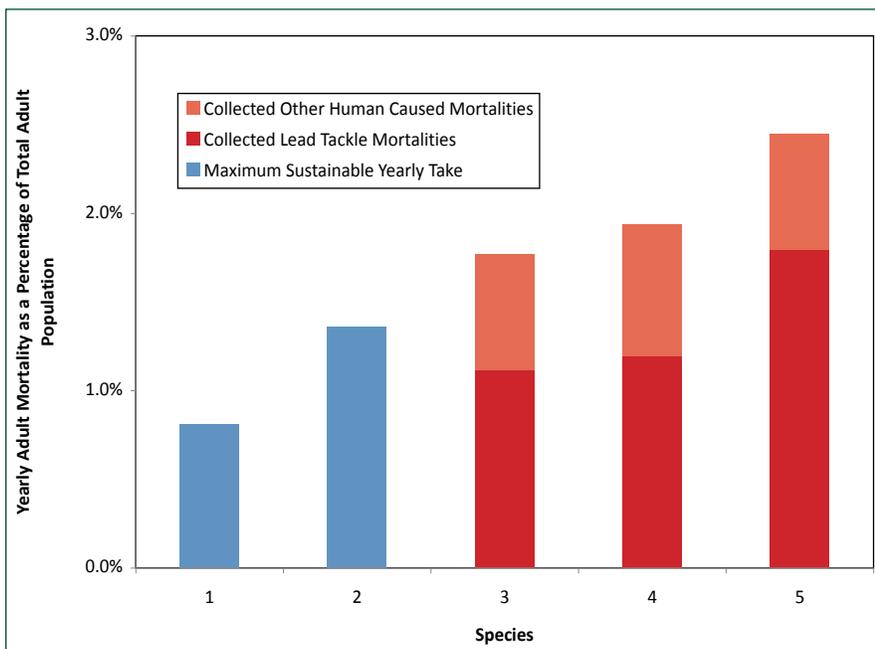


Figure 2. Collected adult loon mortalities as a percent of total adult population reveal that yearly collected lead mortalities are approaching or exceeding sustainable levels for New Hampshire's loon population. These are conservative estimates of actual mortality.

### *LPC Honors Wendy Van de Poll at Annual Meeting*

The Loon Preservation Committee held its fifth Annual Meeting at The Loon Center on Thursday, August 25th, as required by the By-laws that accompanied LPC's incorporation as an independent 501(c)(3) organization in 2006.

The meeting opened at 7:30 p.m. with an outstanding multimedia presentation by New Hampshire wildlife photographer and videographer (and LPC volunteer and member) John Rockwood, featuring loons on Lake Massabesic. LPC Executive Director Harry Vogel followed John's exceptional photos and video with preliminary results of the Loon Preservation Committee's monitoring, research, management and educational programs in 2011 and reported on recent trends in New Hampshire's loon population (please see a full report on pp. 3 to 9 of this LPC Newsletter).

The Chair of the Loon Preservation Committee Board, Bill Crangle, presented the slate of LPC officers for the coming year: William R. Crangle, Chair; Peter C. Sorlien, Vice Chair; Eric A. Taussig, Treasurer; and Secretary to be determined. New to the Board are Ronald A. Baker, III, Austin "Chip" Broadhurst, Arthur "Sandy" McGinnes and Dr. Brian J. Reilly (see profiles, p. 13).

This slate was voted in unanimously. Bill also reported that the audit for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2011 was complete and that LPC had ended the year with a clean audit and a gain against budget of over \$23,000, a welcome result after a small loss in the challenging previous fiscal year. Please feel free to contact us for copies of LPC's FY11 Financial Statements and IRS Form 990.



*LPC Executive Director Harry Vogel presents Wendy Van de Poll the "Spirit of the Loon Award."*

A highlight of LPC's Annual Meeting was the presentation of the third annual "Spirit of the Loon" Award, created to honor LPC's founder Rawson Wood by recognizing an individual who exemplifies outstanding service to loons and the Loon Preservation Committee.

Wendy Van de Poll first approached the Loon Preservation Committee in 2005 with an idea to swim the length of Squam Lake as a fundraiser to help support LPC's monitoring, research, management and outreach on Squam. She proceeded to do just that and then swam the length of the lake several more times in following years, at the same time broadening the participation and fundraising associated with The Swim by involving a team of other

swimmers. Over the past seven years, Wendy and the Squam Swimmers have raised over \$75,000 to support LPC's work on Squam. Just as importantly, she and her fellow Squam Swimmers have raised awareness about the challenges facing loons on Squam and on other lakes in New Hampshire and about LPC's efforts to return healthy populations of loons to our lakes (please see article on p. 17 of this LPC Newsletter). Wendy has put her talents and enthusiasm to good use to help loons in the best tradition of LPC's founder, Rawson Wood, and we were pleased to recognize those efforts by making her the 2011 recipient of the Spirit of the Loon Award.

*~Harry Vogel*

***Donations raised through the Squam Swim help fund LPC's Squam Lake Loon Initiative, an ongoing research, management and outreach effort to address recent declines and continued poor breeding success of Squam Lake's loons.***

## *LPC Welcomes New Board Members*

Three long-serving members recently retired from the Loon Preservation Committee Board. We extend our sincere thanks to Stephen Delinsky, Lydia Torr, and Nancy Christie for the time, talent and treasure they generously gave to LPC and its mission. A Board member since 2003, Steve was instrumental in securing much needed boat motors for LPC's fleet and served as an invaluable voice on policy and governance issues. Lydia brought her talent and wisdom to the Board in 2005 contributing greatly to LPC's special events, a role she continues in her spare time. A former President of the New Hampshire Lakes Association, Nancy shared her wealth of knowledge in membership and development for the past three years. LPC was honored to have these three remarkable individuals serve terms on the Board and wishes them well.

As we salute Steve, Lydia and Nancy, we are fortunate to welcome four outstanding new members to our Board. **Ronald A. Baker, III** is a returning Board member, having served two terms on the LPC Board in the 1990's. He received his BS from Farleigh Dickinson University and MBA from Fordham University and served in multiple executive positions including Director of Internal Audit for one of America's top manufacturing and information services companies for 27 years. He later became CEO of the Geneva Point Center in Moultonborough until he retired in 2001. He has served locally as President of the Moultonborough Area Community Development Corporation, Treasurer of the Moultonborough Historical Society, Chair of the Capital Campaign for the Moultonborough Public Library

Expansion, and numerous positions for his church. Ron and his wife, Nan, have travelled across the 50 states and most of Canada in their RV.

**Austin "Chip" Broadhurst, Jr.** received a BA from Williams College and an MBA from Harvard University. He spent 35 years in the medical industry, in both the public and private sectors, including the former US Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Baxter Laboratories, and the former National Medical Care. He headed business and development and was CFO of Voluntary Health Enterprises and President and CEO of OcuSystems. This was followed by 14 years as an executive recruiter performing assignments across the medical field, including ten years with Russell Reynolds Associates. The past seven years he has added direct involvement with venture capital, private equity and independent firms in both advisory and board capacities. He has served on five medical company boards, four non-profit boards, two hospitals, one emergency medical service and one community college. Chip and his wife, Janine, have two adult children and reside in Moultonborough.

**Arthur "Sandy" McGinnes** graduated from Dartmouth in 1964 and received his MBA from Tuck School of Business in 1965. He spent 17 years in advertising agencies in New York City and Boston before purchasing MicroMedia of New England, a document scanning company that he later sold in 2001. Sandy officially retired last April after staying on to run the business for the new owners. Since then, he has served as Chairman of Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center

and is on the Board of the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center. Additionally, Sandy has served on the boards of the Squam Lakes Association, Lakes Region Conservation Trust and Squam Lakes Conservation Society, as well as several organizations in Boston. He and his wife Louise reside in Wellesley, MA and summer at their home on Squam Lake. He enjoys time with his two children and four grandchildren, and fondly remembers his numerous outings on Squam Lake with LPC Founder Rawson Wood.

**Dr. Brian J. Reilly** comes from Southern New Hampshire with degrees from both Holy Cross and UVM School of Medicine. He has been a family physician since 1978 and is now semi-retired. More recently, Brian has become involved with nature photography, combining his passion for wildlife with that of seeing the world through his camera lens. He especially enjoys sharing his experiences and photographs with others to engender a greater appreciation for loons. Brian began photographing loons five years ago in the Monadnock region and tallies several hundred hours observing them from his kayak around the ponds near his home in Keene. His interest in loons led him to be a key volunteer for LPC, and he is eager to commit more energy to our mission as a Board member through outreach and public education.

The Loon Preservation Committee is fortunate to attract such capable and hardworking individuals to serve on its Board. We are heartened by their contribution of time and talent on behalf of New Hampshire's loons.

*~Harry Vogel & Anna Koester*



Many thanks to Mercury Marine for donating two boat motors to LPC at the beginning of the field season. The motors were used on Winnepesaukee & Squam Lakes all summer. Special thanks to Steve Delinsky for arranging the donation from Mercury Marine. We'd also like to thank Irwin Marine for donating their time to install the new motors and Squam Boat Livery for servicing the motor on the Squam boat and providing the banner for the photo. Pictured: Bill Irwin (LPC Board Member & President of Irwin Marine), Harry Vogel, Tiffany Grade and John Cooley.

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## The Lodge at Belmont Helps Fund Loon Preservation

The Loon Preservation Committee sponsored gaming at the Lodge at Belmont from April 21 - 30. Once again, LPC Board member Bill Irwin was instrumental in this venture to raise much-needed funds for LPC's monitoring, management and outreach activities. Gaming Manager Kory Kamke, a fan of loons, was also happy to help LPC raise over \$12,500 to further its important work. Many thanks to all who helped with this effort!

## A New Twist on Giving

We were both grateful for and amused by a recent donation from longtime supporters. The husband and wife team shares a fascination with loons. This prompted a discussion to donate \$10 to LPC for every loon image in their home. They were a bit shocked to discover they housed 288 loons! They made good on their pact and sent LPC a check for \$2,880 with a note encouraging us to "Keep up your wonderful work!" We thank them heartily for such a fun and rewarding gift!

Do you have as many as 288 loons in your home? Feel free to take on this fun challenge to support LPC and New Hampshire's loons!

### *Summer Gala and Auction Sizzle with Success*

LPC members, volunteers and staff flocked to Church Landing on June 26th for the annual Gala and Auction. A great kick-off to summer, guests always enjoy the camaraderie of fellow loon enthusiasts as they share stories and learn more about their summer neighbors – the loons.

The silent auction was quite impressive with close to fifty tantalizing items, from gift certificates and gourmet chocolates to jewelry and fine art. Guests enjoyed light hors d'oeuvres and cocktails as they kept careful watch over their bidding. A delicious buffet luncheon followed with a short yet informative briefing on the state of the loons in New Hampshire by LPC Executive Director Harry Vogel.

Lakes Region radio personality, Pat Kelly, served as our Master of Ceremonies and Auctioneer again this year. Red Sox tickets to the EMC Club Fenway and an overnight for two at the Mandarin Oriental, Boston are just a sampling of the tempting live auction items. Bidding got underway as guests savored dessert and coffee. Altogether the Gala raised over \$11,000.00 to support LPC's work to protect loons in New Hampshire.

A special note of thanks to the Gala Committee: Renee Speltz (Chair), Liz Gabel, Terry Wetzler-Finn and Lin O'Bara for their tireless efforts in making the luncheon a huge success. A tremendous amount of work goes into organizing an event of this scale, and we would be lost without them.

The same is true for the following individuals and businesses whose generous donation of items and services made the silent and live auctions possible: Butternuts,



*Guests mingle among the many silent auction items at the Summer Gala. Photo by Liz Jackson.*

Canoe/North End, Ciardi Family, Coe House, Corner House Inn, Nancy Christie, Decorative Interiors, Dion's Plant Place, Downtown Grille, Dynamic Ceramics, Fashion Forward, Floral Creations by Mardee, Funspot, Hannafords, E.M. Heath, Inc., Holland Hill Studio, Home Comfort Unique Furnishings, Independent Marine, Janice Jenket, Joel Tree Farm, Barbara Keefe, Keepsake Quilting, L.A. Burdick's Chocolates, Lakes Region Computer, Lemon Grass, Janet Levetin, Lydia's Café, Mandarin Oriental/Boston, Meadow Pond Animal Hospital, Mill Street Meat Market, Karin Nelson, New Hampshire Boat Museum, New

Hampshire Music Festival, Oglethorpe Fine Arts & Crafts, Jane Rice, Mary Rice, Ridgewood Country Club, Spider Web Gardens, Stellaloon Bakery, Eric & Marlene Taussig, The Guest House, The Inns at Mill Falls, The Looney Bin Bar & Grill, The Manor on Golden Pond, The Restaurant, Village Kitchen, Walter's Basin, Waukegan Golf Club, Terry Wetzler-Finn, Wild Meadow on Lake Winnepesaukee, John & Kittie Wilson, Wine'ing Butcher, Winnepesaukee Playhouse, Winnepesaukee Chocolates, Wolfboro Inn, Wolfetrap Grill & Raw Bar, YIKES!

*~Linda Egli Johnson*

***Give your passion. Give your time. Give your fitness. Give your skills. And, yes, if you still can, give money. ~Unknown***

## *Bright Skies and Bright Spirits at Annual Loon Festival*

MANY THANKS TO OUR  
LOON FESTIVAL SPONSORS!

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John & Helen Tomb



The day dawned bright on July 16th for the annual Loon Festival. In its 34th year, families gathered at The Loon Center to enjoy a host of activities from educational slide shows and arts and crafts activities to bluegrass music and a complimentary barbecue—a festive and fun-filled day encouraging a better understanding and appreciation for loons!



*Meredith Rotarians cook up a delicious BBQ for guests at the Loon Festival. Pictured: Jim Matthews, Bill Lee, Vern Goddard, Mike Pelczar, Dick Gerken, Tom Fairbrother, and Carl Johnson, Jr. Not pictured: Donna Ulbricht.*

Special thanks to the Meredith Rotary Club for the delicious BBQ; the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center for the educational discovery table; Ms. Cedar for her amazing face painting; and to the crowd-pleasing Railroad Express Band. We'd also like to thank our faithful Festival volunteers: Alexandria Broderick, Chuck Brox, Jacquie Colburn, Bob & Susan Connolly, Bob & Marilyn Coppo,

Bill Crangle, Ken Mahl, Winnie & David McCullough, Anne McLean, Sheila Robusto, Mike Ruyffelaert, John & Sue Scudder, Terry Wetzler-Finn, and Rachel Williams. Last but not least, we wish to expressly thank our Loon Festival Sponsors (listed above), the financial backbone of this perennial event.

*~Linda Egli Johnson*

### STAYING CONNECTED

Are you getting our e-Newsletter? If not, would you like to? Simply email LPC Volunteer Coordinator Susie Burbidge at [volunteers@loon.org](mailto:volunteers@loon.org), and she will gladly add you to our list! The e-Newsletter is generated monthly allowing us to keep you current on LPC's happenings.

ALSO, you can now receive the LPC Newsletter electronically if you prefer by contacting LPC Development Coordinator Lin O'Bara at [lbara@loon.org](mailto:lbara@loon.org). This would replace the paper newsletter sent via the U.S.P. S. in November and July. You will continue to receive the paper issue unless you request otherwise.

## *The Squam Swim 2011: Swimmers Raise Awareness & Funds for LPC*

On August 5th at 7:00 a.m., a team of six intrepid swimmers began a length-long swim of Squam Lake, from the Squam Channel outlet in Holderness to the Sandwich Town Beach, to raise funds for LPC's work to bring a healthy population of loons back to Squam. This tremendous effort, begun and led by Wendy Van de Poll, has become a much-anticipated event in the Lakes Region. Since 2005, first Wendy, and then a team of volunteers known as the Squam Swimmers, swam the length of the lake six times, with five of those swims raising funds for LPC's work on Squam. The 2011 Swim team members included Wendy and husband Rick Van de Poll; veteran Squam Swimmers Rose de Mars and Blair Newcomb; and enthusiastic new team members Jacob Jason, Mark Longley and Sara Prouty. The Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, LPC's valued collaborator on Squam Lake, generously donated a boat and boat captain Dale Lary to the cause. LPC Board member Ralph Kirshner drove LPC's Boston Whaler as a spotter boat, and Tiffany Grade, LPC's Squam Lakes Biologist, accompanied the swimmers as cheerleader and loon spotter. Sara's husband, Bill Scott, helped spot the swimmers in a kayak along the route.

The team of tired but jubilant swimmers touched land at 12:15 after a journey of more than five hours. They were greeted by an enthusiastic crowd of supporters and a well-earned lunch donated by Heath's Market and the Corner House Inn. Our thanks to these local businesses for donating food for hungry swimmers and supporters of this wonderful event to help our loons!



*Pictured: Mark Longley, Dale Lary, Rick Van de Poll, Sara Prouty, Bill Scott, Rose de Mars, Blair Newcomb, Wendy Van de Poll, Jacob Jason, and Tiffany Grade. Photo by Harry Vogel.*

Donations raised through the Squam Swim help fund LPC's Squam Lake Loon Initiative, an ongoing research, management and outreach effort to address recent declines and continued poor breeding success of Squam Lake's loons. This year, LPC tested an additional five eggs collected from Squam over the past 16 years for contaminants, and tested isotopes of egg materials to confirm that the source of contaminants was Squam Lake and not the loons' ocean wintering grounds. LPC staff also floated eight loon nesting rafts, placed protective signs and floatlines around seven nesting pairs of loons on Squam, and floated a record 16 "Caution - Loon Chicks" signs on the lake. We also expanded our educational "Squam Lake Loon Tours" with the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center and greatly increased our educational presentations at venues around Squam Lake.

Despite these extraordinary efforts, loons on Squam continue to struggle. This year Squam loons raised five surviving chicks – the best result since the beginning of the decline of loons in 2005, but still short of the seven or more chicks needed to maintain a stable loon population on the lake. We are making progress in investigating and reversing the factors that have challenged Squam's loons, and we are confident that LPC's increased efforts will recover a healthy population of loons on the lake.

To date, LPC has received 146 donations totaling close to \$18,000 for The Swim. These donations will fund LPC's increased research, management and outreach to bring loons back to Squam. Thank you to the Squam Swimmers and to all who supported this important work by sponsoring a swimmer!

*~Harry Vogel*

## *Golf Tournament Honors the Late Senator Johnson*

On Monday, August 15, the Loon Preservation Committee (LPC) hosted its first “Carl Johnson Memorial Golf Tournament” at Ridgewood Country Club in Moultonborough, New Hampshire, honoring a legacy of loon advocacy and preservation by a truly dedicated statesman. Senator Johnson passed away on September 18, 2010.

Over 50 participants, including a dedicated corps of volunteers, came out in honor of the late Senator despite rainy conditions. Players were tempted by an array of hole-in-one prizes courtesy of Paugus Bay Marina, including a grand prize Bryant Bowrider boat and EZ Load trailer. Taking first place in the tournament were Stan and Garrett Plifka, Justin Dion and Tara Reardon. Second place went to Brad, Nick and Brent Leighton along with John Stevens; and taking third place were Chip Broadhurst, Jerry O’Donnell, Tom Beach and Tom Crane. Winning players were awarded hand-carved and hand-painted loon decoys crafted in the Adirondacks as well as gift certificates to the pro shop at Ridgewood. Prizes were also awarded for men’s and women’s closest to pin and longest drive.

Players enjoyed a hearty buffet luncheon back at the club house where it was warm and dry after a soggy round of golf. Raffle prizes were drawn that included limited edition, framed loon photographs courtesy of Kittie Wilson and Brian Reilly, both LPC members and outstanding photographers; and custom loon coasters by LPC member and artist Doug Whitley. These and other exclusive items contributed greatly to the overall success of the raffle.

It was and remains the gener-

**Carl R. Johnson Memorial Golf Tournament**  
**Thank you Prime Sponsors!**



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osity of Prime Sponsors that make these tournaments possible. Many thanks to Laconia Savings Bank, Reynolds American, and the Johnson Family for sponsoring this year’s tournament. We also extend our thanks to hole sponsors Jack and Fran Barnes, Bayside Realty, Austin Broadhurst, Century 21 Lakes Region, Vint and Julie Choiniere, Dave and Lucie Collins, Cross Insurance, Jean and David Gottesman, The Inns and Spa at Mill Falls, Irwin Zone, Arthur McGinnes, Meadow Pond Animal Hospital, Melcher and Prescott Insurance, Meredith Village Savings Bank, The Mug Restaurants, NH Farm Bureau, Normandeau Associates, Northeast Delta Dental, Overhead Door Options, Jordan and Phyllis Prouty, Rath Young & Pignatelli, Secondwind Water Systems, and Paul and Renee Speltz; and to Whip Saltmarsh of Saltmarsh

Insurance Agency for sponsoring the hole signs.

Last but not least, a special note of thanks to our tournament Co-chairs Carl R. Johnson, Jr. and Renee Speltz; Dave Collins for his invaluable help and guidance; our wonderful volunteers Bill and Katy Griffin, Bonnie Hunt, Jordan Prouty and Laurie Whitley; and Meg Diltz and Keegan Rice at Ridgewood Country Club for their professional and kind service.

The Senator would be pleased to know that his inspired efforts continue to ensure our success in carrying out LPC’s important mission. Stay tuned for details on the “2nd Annual Carl Johnson Memorial Golf Tournament” to be held next August.

*~Linda Egli Johnson*



*A gift purchased at The Loon's Feather is a gift made to New Hampshire's loons!*

**W**hen contemplating that perfect holiday gift, consider "The Loon's Feather Gift Shop" located at The Loon Center in Moultonborough, New Hampshire. Not only do we carry an extensive collection of loon motif gifts but many items for the nature lover in your life as well. The shop is conveniently open Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. for your holiday shopping needs. Most importantly, the profits from your purchase support loon preservation in New Hampshire. So, come on by or give us a call and make "The Loon's Feather" your gift shop of choice this holiday season. The loons will be glad you did!

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*Happy Holidays!*

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