



ADIRONDACK CENTER *for* LOON CONSERVATION

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

ADIRONDACK LOON RESEARCH: Our dedicated field staff, volunteers, and interns monitored loon reproductive success on 111 Adirondack lakes this summer. Despite the flooding and intense periods of torrential rain, we **sampled 23 loons on 9 lakes** to assess their health and exposure to mercury, PFAS (*flame retardants*), avian malaria and avian flu. A special ***Thank-You to our 450+ observers who participated in our 2023 NY Loon Census on more than 300 lakes!*** Additionally, we placed 7 trail cameras to capture valuable insight into the lives of nesting loons by documenting first-hand the threats, such as black flies, predation, and human disturbance, that loons encounter when attempting to hatch chicks.

LOON MANAGEMENT: We use a variety of management techniques to protect individual loons from many threats.

➤ **Loon Nest Site Protection***: Twelve nest rafts were placed on select Adirondack lakes to improve loon hatching success. Volunteers monitoring these rafts observed two of the rafts successfully hatching a total of 3 loonlets! We also placed buoys and signage near several loon nests that had high potential to be disturbed by people.

➤ **Loon Rescues***: Our volunteer loon rescue teams continue to grow – we trained over 20 volunteers in ice and summer rescue techniques. This year, we rescued 13 loons, two of which were tangled in fishing line, six were grounded, four were either sick or injured from boat strikes, and one chick was found on the side of the road after walking half a mile from its natal pond. We are most grateful to Dr. Bentley of Paws & Claws Mobile Veterinary Clinic and the Vermont Institute of Natural Science who helped us provide diagnostic, surgical, and medical care for several of the loons who were severely ill. Additionally, we also reassured dozens of people who mistakenly reported possibly distressed loons which were actually behaving quite normally, such as bathing and preening.



PUBLICATIONS: We co-authored several publications this year, including an *Ecotoxicology* article synthesizing 50 years of mercury research and monitoring in NY, and one of our *Science Summary* articles titled “*Are Loons on Thin Ice with Climate Change?*”. You can download all our publications at www.adkloon.org/reports.



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH: We reached a new record of over 8,000 people visiting our Loon Center in Saranac Lake! Additionally, more than 2,000 adults and children attended our presentations, camp and class programs, guided paddles, and community events, including our Annual Loon Celebration and winter “*Loon Zooms*.”



➤ **Loon-Friendly Lake Certification Program***: Over 40 lake associations participated in our community stewardship program in 2023. We greatly appreciate the deep commitment and engagement of these communities in helping to protect Adirondack loons and their habitats!

➤ **Lead-Tackle Buy-Back Program***: Thirteen Adirondack fishing tackle outfitters helped us spread the word about the problems with lead, and encouraged anglers to switch to non-lead sinkers and jigs. These outfitters across the Adirondacks helped facilitate an easy and accessible disposal of old lead sinkers and jigs in order to properly get the lead out and safeguard loons from this avoidable cause of mortality.

➤ **Exhibit Plans for the Adirondack Loon Center are Taking Flight:** We are delighted to receive grants from the North Elba’s Local Enhancement and Advancement Fund (LEAF), the Lake Champlain Basin Program, and Brookfield Renewable to design and create our “*Loon Courtship and Nesting*” exhibits for the Loon Center. These engaging museum-quality exhibits will be launched in the spring of 2024, and will utilize stunning photography, interpretative panels, and interactive maps and videos to depict loon nesting behavior, the threats loons face during the incubation period, and our management efforts to mitigate those concerns.

➤ **Student Interns:** Seven wonderful interns provided incredible support this summer and fall for our research and education programs, including Emma Borys, whose internship was generously supported by the ADK 46ers, Erik Gross, Naomi Hodgson, Natalee House, Andrew Hudnut, Alexa Lim, and Dakota Arabia-Meyer. They expressed their gratitude for their training in wildlife research, conservation, and environmental education, providing them with valuable skills and experience for their future careers.



Follow our updates all year at www.adkloon.org, on Facebook, www.facebook.com/adkloon and Instagram, www.instagram.com/adkloon - Enjoy!

** These projects are supported in part by the US Fish and Wildlife Service on behalf of the Bouchard Barge 120 Buzzards Bay Oil Spill Trustees.*

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