



ADIRONDACK CENTER  
FOR LOON  
CONSERVATION

# THE ADIRONDACK TREMOLO

2019 Winter Newsletter

## ABOUT THE ADIRONDACK CENTER FOR LOON CONSERVATION

The Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation (ACLC) is dedicated to the conservation of Common Loons (*Gavia immer*) in and beyond New York's Adirondack Park.

With the loon as our centerpiece, our work encompasses scientifically-driven research on loon health and population dynamics; educational outreach to residents and visitors in the Adirondack Park; wildlife biology and conservation training for college students and volunteers; and conservation and management activities related to maintaining robust Common Loon populations.

The Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation evolved from research on the impact of mercury pollution on Common Loons and their aquatic habitats conducted in the Adirondack Park by Biodiversity Research Institute beginning in 1998.

We became an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit organization in the spring of 2017. The Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation is led by a highly dedicated Board of Directors, including Chandler Ralph (Chair), Kathleen Colson, Gail Doering, Cathy Dove, Kate Fish, Bonnie Keet, Kathryn Ruscitto, Susan Semegram, Ramsay Tanham, and Connie Weatherup.

Through our scientific studies and engaging outreach, the Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation seeks to ensure that Common Loons remain an integral and vital part of New York's wildlife heritage, and that their haunting calls continue to echo across Adirondack lakes for generations to come.

### For More Information:

Adirondack Center for  
Loon Conservation

P.O. Box 195

Ray Brook, NY 12977

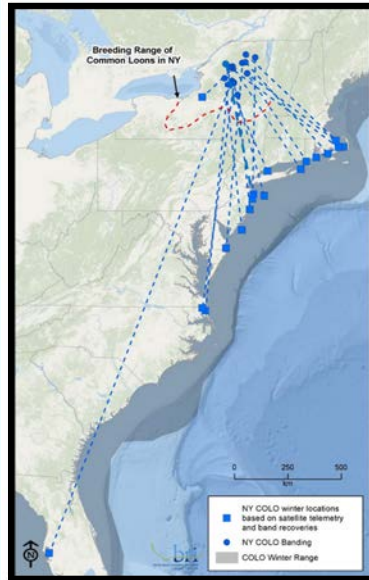
info@adkloon.org, 518-354-8636

www.adkloon.org

www.facebook.com/adkloon

Visit the Adirondack Loon Center at:  
15 Broadway, Saranac Lake, NY or  
www.adkloon.org/adklooncenter

## GREETINGS FROM THE FROZEN ADIRONDACKS!



This winter has seen a rollercoaster of weather, from way below zero and several feet of snow to complete meltdowns with no snow left on the ground at all, just a few days later.

As I sit at the computer reviewing the data from last summer, I often think about where our Adirondack loons spend the winter. Thanks to our migration studies (with band returns, geolocators, and satellite transmitters), we've learned a bit about their travels to the east coast during the colder months (*see the map to the left showing the annual travels of some of our Adirondack loons*).

Every now and then, we receive a report from the Bird Banding Lab, or hear about a banded loon someone saw on e-bird. Recently, someone sent us a photo of a female loon we banded on Chaumont Pond in St. Lawrence County in the summer of 2014. She's doing quite well, spending her winter relaxing in Manasquan Inlet, New Jersey. This was a very exciting report, as we didn't see her on Chaumont Pond last summer, and we didn't know where she went. Apparently she was very popular, as two different people reported seeing her there!



As you'll read in this newsletter, we've been expanding our staff and Board of Directors, and also extensively analyzing our data to produce several publications. Additionally, we're finalizing several exhibits for the Loon Center. I hope you will be able to stop by this spring and summer to see them and learn more about loon behavior, ecology, and conservation. We look forward to talking with you and learning about your own encounters with loons.

It seems hard to believe as I look outside on this frigid snowy day, but in just a few weeks, we'll be preparing for our field season, the loons will be settling into their Adirondack territories, and our field staff will be back on the lakes monitoring our study birds once again.

As the only organization in the Adirondacks dedicated to promoting the conservation of Common Loons, we are immensely grateful for your generous support, which has made all of this important work possible—*Thank you!*

**We invite you to donate today to support a healthy population of Adirondack loons this upcoming field season.** Your contribution is critical to the health of these magical birds and their habitats—Please help ensure that the call of the loon resounds off Adirondack lakes for years to come!

Thank you, and we look forward to seeing you at the Loon Center soon!

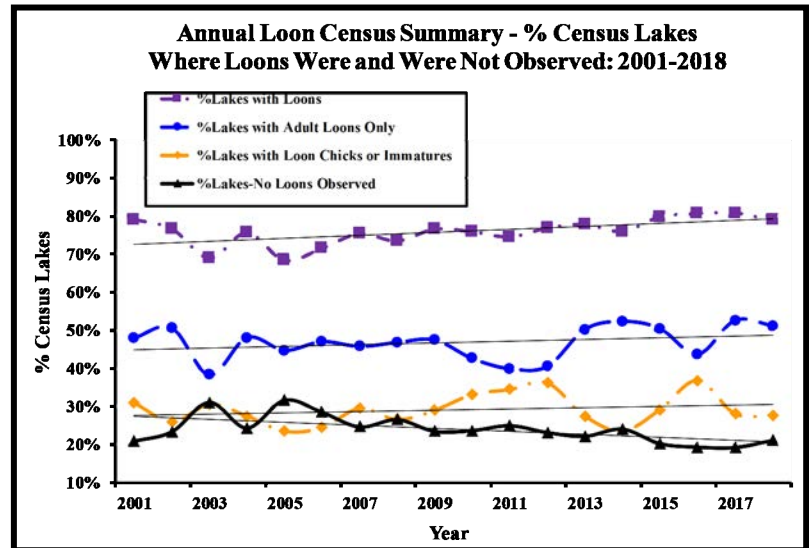
~Nina Schoch, Executive Director  
Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation

## ~ 2018 NEW YORK LOON CENSUS RESULTS ~

More than 520 observers participated in the eighteenth Annual New York Loon Census on Saturday, July 21, 2018. The map below shows the locations and results for the lakes and ponds surveyed during the 2018 Annual Loon Census. One hundred ninety (95%) of the 199 Census lakes were in the Adirondack Park.

A total of 607 loons were observed on 153 (79%) of the Census lakes, including 519 (86%) adults, 79 (13%) chicks, and 9 (1%) immature loons. The percent of Census lakes with loons has been gradually increasing over the 18 years of the NY Loon Census, as shown in the graph to the right, indicating that the NY loon population is slowly growing in size and expanding its range (also documented by the increase in loons on lakes between the two NY Breeding Bird Atlases in the 1980s and the early 2000s).

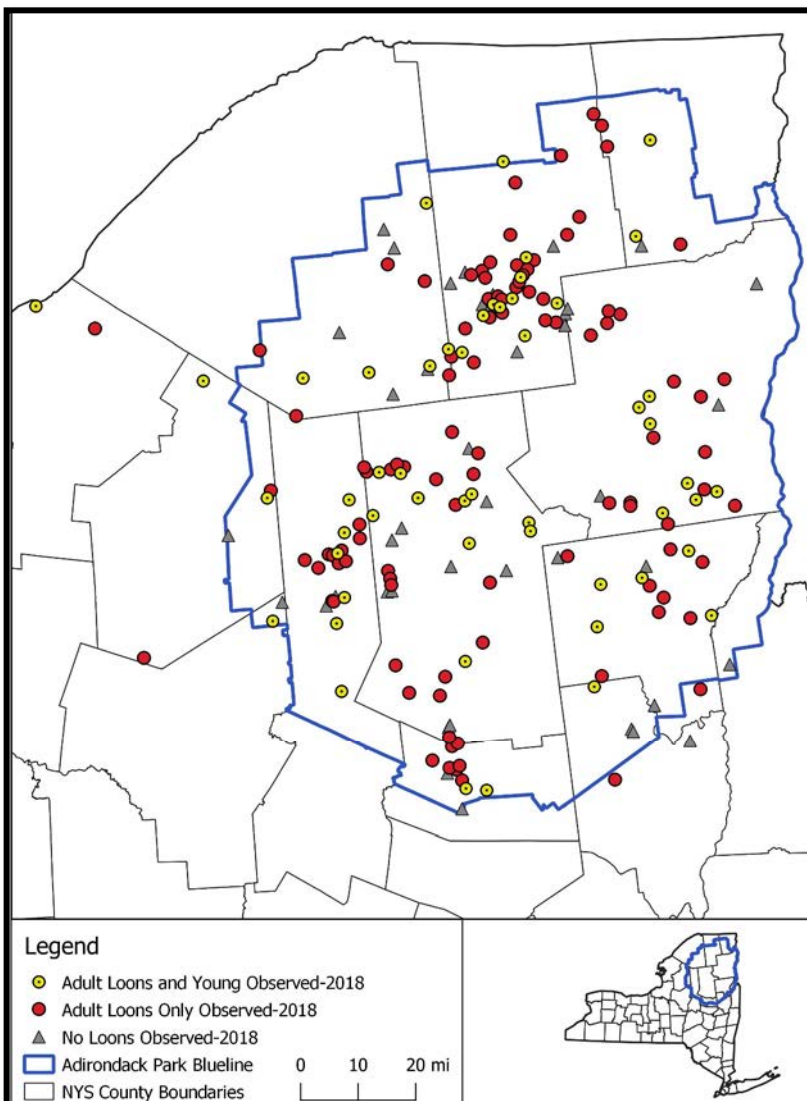
The Census has provided data, as well as anecdotal evidence (*e.g., the quote from Follensby Clear on the next page*), that the Adirondack loon population is likely nearing the carrying capacity of the Adirondack Park, as loons are filling the majority of the available territories. In some cases, they may try to fit in new sub-optimal territories. In other cases, loner loons may battle with an existing pair (even to the point of killing another adult or chicks) to try and take over a high-quality territory. Reports of loon fights have also



increased in the last several years, but were not observed earlier in our work.

Two hundred and sixty-two Census reports were received in 2018, 11 of which were not included in the analysis because the observations were conducted outside the Census hour or were duplicated efforts on a lake. Thus, 251 reports were included in the 2018 Loon Census analysis.

**See more results from the  
2018 NY Loon Census at  
[www.adkloon.org/ny-loon-census](http://www.adkloon.org/ny-loon-census)**



*"After covering the census area, [we] went back to observe the loon family for a while. Parents fed the chicks several fish and chicks seemed to be learning to dive. A friend took many pictures, some very nice. Great morning! Love participating in the census."*

~Paradox Lake



The Annual Loon Census provides valuable information about the status and trends in New York's summer loon population, enabling the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation to better manage the population of these beautiful birds who breed in New York.

We are most grateful to the staff of the former Wildlife Conservation Society's Adirondack Program, particularly Carrienne Pershyn, who collaborated with Dr. Schoch for many years to coordinate the NY Annual Loon Census. Sadly, the WCS' Adirondack Program closed its doors in the fall of 2018. However, we will be continuing the NY Loon Census, and look forward to your participation in 2019, and long into the future!

*"I've lived on our lake (Upper Saranac) and paddled the nearby ponds all my life (1/2 century!) and although it was very rare to see loons years ago, the last few (8-10) years have seen an "explosion" of our loon population!"*

*Very good news, but now it appears they're running out of bodies of water to live on in the summers - almost too many of them. I see loons "everywhere" now, on every little pond and lake, as long as they have enough distance to fly back off. They're such a unique creature, so beautiful and strong and older than us by 6x!*

*They're my absolute favorite, having studied them (on a novice level) and read/researched them for many years (decades!)—My home and office are decorated with loon "stuff!"*

*~Follensby Clear*

## LIKE TO WATCH LOONS? SAVE THE DATE! JOIN US ON SATURDAY, JULY 20, 2019, FOR THE NY LOON CENSUS!

*"It was most interesting to watch adults protect chicks when osprey appeared. This was my pleasure. I look forward to your report. Thank you for your excellent work."*

*~Sixth Lake*



## NEW FOR 2019! SELECT A CENSUS LAKE AND ENTER YOUR OBSERVATIONS AT [WWW.ADIRONDACKATLAS.ORG/ADKLOON](http://WWW.ADIRONDACKATLAS.ORG/ADKLOON)

Since last summer, we have been working extensively with Steve Signell, of Adirondack Atlas, LLC, to develop an online lake selection and data entry format for the New York Loon Census. We are thrilled that our census observers will be able to select their 2019 Census lakes online and easily enter their observations. This will also greatly streamline our analysis of the annual results.

**More information about how to sign up for a lake and use our new online NY Loon Census system will be available in our spring newsletter and on our website, [www.adkloon.org/ny-loon-census](http://www.adkloon.org/ny-loon-census).**

*Many thanks to the New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation for providing the funding for this project, and to Carrienne Pershyn of the former WCS' Adirondack Program and Dr. Valerie Buxton for their excellent assistance with refining the online data entry database.*

## LOON NEST CAMERA STUDY



This winter, KT Shumway, our Sales Associate at the Loon Center, has been cataloging more than 37,000 photos from the trail cameras we placed at 18 loon nests in the summer of 2018. This year, in addition to bear predation at two nests, we documented an egg rolling out of a nest and the loons unsuccessfully attempting to retrieve it at least four times; banded loons going up on the nest; loons turning eggs; and empty nests after the eggs disappeared.



Although we didn't record any chicks hatching this year, we did find out that incubating loons can be awake much of the night, turning eggs, and slipping off for a swim, just like in the daytime. Very fun!

## ~ ACLC CONTRIBUTES TO NY MERCURY SYNTHESIS PROJECT ~

The Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation is honored to collaborate with other New York researchers in a project led by Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) and supported by NYSERDA to compile the results of research on the impacts of airborne mercury pollution to New York's aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. As part of this project, we have partnered with Yang Yang and Dr. Ruth Yanai of SUNY ESF, Dr. Charley Driscoll of Syracuse University, and Dr. David Evers of BRI to analyze our loon mercury and reproductive success data collected since 1998 to produce three articles that were submitted to the journal *Ecotoxicology*, including:

1. *Spatial patterns and temporal trends in mercury concentrations in common loons (Gavia immer) from 1998 to 2016 in New York's Adirondack Park: Has this top predator benefitted from mercury emission controls?* An analysis of our loon mercury results from 1998-2016, this paper found that mercury levels in Adirondack loons increased 5.7% per year from 1998 to 2010, and then stabilized from 2010 to 2016. Based on these results, we concluded that there was a delayed recovery of mercury concentrations in Adirondack loons, despite recent declines in the deposition of atmospheric mercury on Adirondack ecosystems. Also, lakes in the southwestern part of the Park had higher loon mercury concentrations than in other areas of the Park.
2. *Determining optimal sampling strategies for monitoring mercury and reproductive success in common loons in the Adirondacks of New York.* We used power analysis, a statistical tool, to determine the sampling intensity required (i.e, # lakes/year, or # years to sample) to detect a particular rate of change in loon mercury levels or in fledging success. We found that increasing the effort in the # lakes sampled/year or the # years loons were sampled decreased the intensity required in the other parameter, and that more acidic lakes required greater sampling intensity than less acidic lakes.
3. *The influence of biotic and abiotic factors on banded common loon (Gavia immer) reproductive success in a remote, mountainous region of the northeastern United States.* We found that mercury may no longer be significantly impacting Adirondack loon reproductive success as we had previously documented. The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 and the 2011 Mercury and Air Toxic Standard Act strengthened regulations on mercury emissions, led to declines in mercury deposition in the Adirondacks, and likely decreased exposure of wildlife living here. Mercury's effect may also be obscured by other concurrent threats, such as rainfall, shoreline development, and human interactions, which have increased over the last 30 years in the Park.



These articles and the full NY mercury synthesis project will be released this spring when the special issue of *Ecotoxicology* is published. *Stay tuned!*

## ACLC BOARD MEMBER PROFILE—BONNIE KEET!

We are thrilled to have Bonnie Keet join our Board of Directors this fall. Bonnie comes to us after being a Trustee on the Cloudsplitter Foundation for 18 years. Bonnie divides her time between Santa Cruz, CA, and the Adirondack Park.

With a Master's Degree in Social Work, she has been a special education advocate and activist for many years. Bonnie is a co-founder of the wonderful Santa Cruz Children's Museum of Discovery, and has also been involved with early childhood education in the Adirondacks.

When in the Adirondacks, Bonnie immerses herself in local events, including taking part in the frying pan toss at Saranac Lake's Winter Carnival and learning Nordic skating on local lakes. Her favorite climb? Baker. Over and over and over again. Always spectacular.

Why did Bonnie want to be involved with the Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation? The loons—

*...because they play a vital role in educating us about human and environmental impacts on loon populations and lake health; and*

*...the cry of the loon is the music of the Adirondacks. The ACLC helps protect that beautiful background to an Adirondack day.*





# ADIRONDACK LOON CENTER FILLS A NICHE!

The Adirondack Loon Center at 15 Broadway is truly filling a special niche in the Village of Saranac Lake as a place where people can find a beautiful loon-related gift and also learn about loon behavior, our research and conservation efforts, and the status of the Adirondack loon population. We had a very exciting year, with more than 6,000 people visiting the Center (and making over 1,500 purchases) in 2018, almost double the number of visitors in the previous year! It was wonderful to meet so many of our supporters in person—thank you for stopping in and introducing yourselves.



We discovered several new artists and products to carry at the Center, and look forward to finding even more in the coming year. Some of our special items include handmade copper loon pictures by a Massachusetts artist, and the gorgeous loon carvings and ornaments locally made by Allen Aardsma of Pondsides Studios, [www.pondsidestudio.net](http://www.pondsidestudio.net). Our most popular items include the plush loons with their iconic wail call, locally made t-shirts and ball caps, jewelry, and informative books. We are always looking for new and unique products to carry, thus, if you have suggestions on items you'd like to see at the Center, please email Faith at [fgraham@adkloon.org](mailto:fgraham@adkloon.org) or call us at 518-354-8636.

All sales at the Adirondack Loon Center help support loon research, conservation, and education programs, as well as maintenance of the Center itself. When you come to visit, you may be greeted by our Sales Associate, Philanthropy Associate, Operations Manager, or even our Executive Director. We all look forward to giving you a tour around the Center and our exhibits, as well as helping you find the right t-shirt or gift, and providing you with information about loons and the Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation. If you aren't able to visit the Center in person, please visit our online store at [www.adkloon.org/adklooncenter](http://www.adkloon.org/adklooncenter).

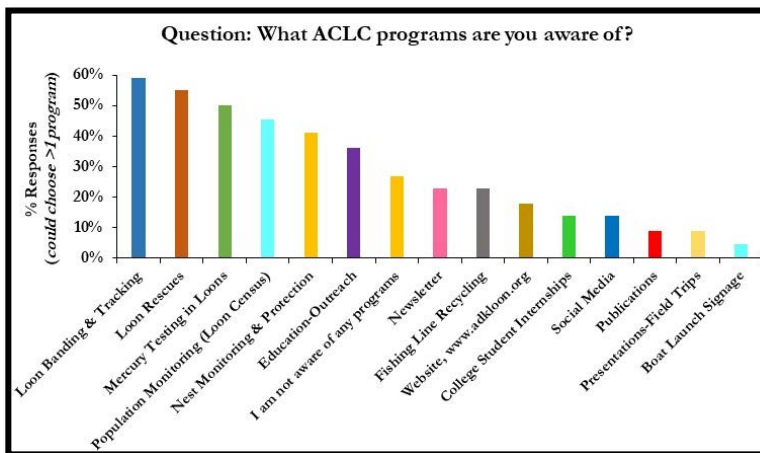


We hope to see you soon, and hear about your favorite loon encounter!



## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR SURVEY WINNERS!

Our summer 2018, Colgate Field School Intern, Madison Perez, helped us develop surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of our communications, outreach materials, and the experience of our visitors to the Adirondack Loon Center. The results of Madison's project will help guide us in refining and enhancing our educational materials and programs, as well as designing our exhibits for the Loon Center, and how to best meet your interests regarding loon conservation in the Adirondacks.



Based on the results of our surveys, the majority of Loon Center visitors last summer were also visitors to the Adirondacks and had never been to the Center before. People on our mailing list learned about us through the NY Loon Census, our newsletter, articles about our work, our website and social media, or by visiting the Center. Our donors supported our work for a variety of reasons—from a love of loons and the Adirondacks to the importance of our loon research, conservation, and educational programs to inform the public about loon ecology and conservation. Respondents learned more about loons and their conservation through outreach materials, exhibits, or by interacting with staff.

*Many thanks to all of you who participated in the surveys!*

*Congratulations to our survey winners, W. Hughes, E. Randall, and R. Bruce, who each won a beautiful photograph of one of the study loons.*

### SOME SURVEY ANSWERS:

- *What are some of our strengths as an organization? It's nice that you are dedicated to just loons!*
- *Please give an example or two of how you feel your support has assisted our loon conservation in the Adirondacks: Allows you to reach out to young people to raise awareness of problems relating wildlife.*

## ~ ACLC STAFF TRANSITIONS ~



**Geanette Orton** joined our team this winter as our new Philanthropy Associate. Born and raised in Saranac Lake, Geanette received her Bachelor's of Science from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 2015. She then moved to Reno, Nevada, where she worked for a grassroots nonprofit, honing her skills in grant writing and donor management. She is delighted to be back in her hometown, and to use her fundraising skills to benefit the Common Loon and the Adirondack community. We are thrilled to have Geanette as a member of our team—with her enthusiasm for writing, she is also becoming our primary communications person. Geanette prepares reports, writes grants, connects with donors, and keeps our Facebook and other social media pages up-to-date.

When she isn't garnering support for the Loon Center, you can find Geanette enjoying the Adirondacks to the fullest by running, hiking, biking, paddling, rock climbing, and xc skiing.!

**Dr. Valerie Buxton**, who was our Research Scientist this past year, moved to Arkansas with her husband in January. Val helped us immensely with analyzing our 20 years of loon productivity data this fall and contributed extensively to our Ecotoxicology publications. We will greatly miss working with Val, and wish her all the best in her future endeavors!



## WE ARE SEEKING A NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR!

The Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation is pleased to announce that we are seeking a highly motivated, experienced, and detail-oriented full-time Executive Director to join our enthusiastic team. Our Executive Director will work closely with our Board of Directors to plan, implement, and oversee the financial operations, communication, fundraising, and administrative activities of the organization in order to support the mission and strategic plan objectives of the ACLC, as well as oversee a small team of 3-5 year-round staff and 10-15 seasonal staff and interns.

Our ideal candidate will have a deep passion for the mission of the Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation. Additionally, our future Executive Director should be friendly, social, outgoing, positive, passionate, cool under pressure, detail and deadline oriented, a quick learner, multi-tasker, willing to do what needs to be done to make things happen, and have a great sense of humor. If you are happy to leap in and get your hands dirty, and don't know the meaning of "not my job," then we are looking for you!

A Bachelor's Degree and a minimum of five years' experience in senior nonprofit management are required, as are management and fundraising aptitude; strong writing, public speaking and computer skills; and dedication to wildlife conservation and the Adirondacks. Experience with wildlife or environmental conservation non-profits and a Master's Degree in Business Administration or comparable field a plus.

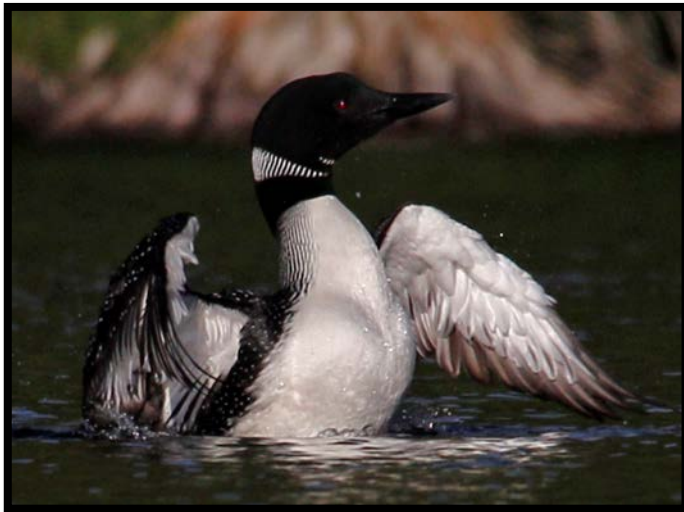
Visit [www.adkloon.org/acdc-career-opportunities/](http://www.adkloon.org/acdc-career-opportunities/) to view a full position description.

**To apply, please send a cover letter detailing your qualifications and your Curriculum Vitae to [info@adkloon.org](mailto:info@adkloon.org).**



**Dr. Nina Schoch** is also making a transition this year, as she will be taking on the role of Chief Scientific Officer after we welcome a new Executive Director. Dr. Schoch has been studying loons in the Adirondacks since 1998, which led to the formation of the Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation in the spring of 2017. She is excited to have the opportunity to focus on the research and conservation aspects of our organization, from the long-term mercury and population studies to expanding some of our other projects. She is also looking forward to working more closely with students from a variety of colleges, as well as Adirondack community organizations, visitors and residents to expand our education and outreach programming.

# THANK YOU!



Because of donors like you, Adirondack loons are notably more abundant, scientists are gaining a better understanding of Adirondack loons each year, and thousands of Adirondack residents and visitors are learning about loon behavior and how to mitigate threats to these beautiful birds.

**You have truly made a difference in loon conservation in the Adirondack Park.  
We are immensely grateful for all your support!**

This spring, we will release our first report summarizing the results of our first two fiscal years. We hope you will enjoy learning about all of the excellent loon research, conservation, and education efforts you made possible through your support.



## Yes! I Would Like to Become a Friend of the Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation!

**I would like to support the Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation at the following level:**

☐ Nesting Loon = \$50    ☐ Loon Chick\* = \$250    ☐ Flying Loon\*\*\* = \$1,000

☐ Loon Egg\* = \$100    ☐ Swimming Loon\*\* = \$500    ☐ Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I have enclosed a check payable to *Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation*.

☐ I will charge my donation to my credit card online at [www.adkloon.org/support](http://www.adkloon.org/support).

☐ I would also like to become a member of the Adirondack Loon Legacy Society to help support Adirondack loon conservation efforts long into the future! Enclosed is my additional gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_, payable to the "Adirondack Loon Legacy Fund at the Adirondack Foundation," or I will pay online at [www.adirondackfoundation.org/funds/adirondack-loon-legacy-fund](http://www.adirondackfoundation.org/funds/adirondack-loon-legacy-fund).

☐ I would like my donation to remain anonymous.

\* Donors at the \$100 level (or more) will receive a 8x10" photograph of one of our Adirondack study loons.

\*\* Donors at the \$500 level (or more) will receive a Kip Taylor out-of-print "Loon" book.

\*\*\* Donors at the \$1000 level (or more) are invited to join our staff for a field trip to observe our Adirondack study loons.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO: Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation  
P.O. Box 195, Ray Brook, NY 12977**

*Your tax-deductible donation payable to the Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, supports our scientific research and education programs focused on Common Loons.*

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT!**





ADIRONDACK CENTER  
FOR LOON CONSERVATION  
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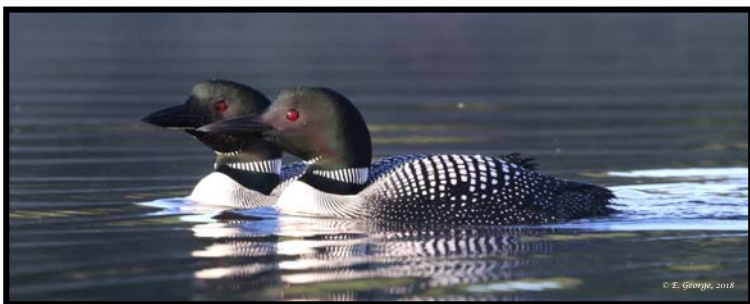
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## SPONSOR AN ADIRONDACK LOON!

Do you want to give back to the Adirondacks? Looking for a meaningful gift? Fill the bill (*so to speak...*) by sponsoring an Adirondack study loon!

Every loon sponsorship comes with a personalized certificate that describes your loon's history from when we first captured and banded it, including information about the number of chicks it has raised over the years, as well as a beautiful loon photograph, the 2018 Loon Appreciation Week poster, an ACLC sticker, bookmark, and a fact sheet about loons.

Monitoring individual color-banded birds over many years provides valuable information that helps deepen our understanding of loon ecology. The Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation's loon sponsorship program greatly expands our ability to conduct this important research on New York's loon population.



## ~ TREMOLO BY E-MAIL! ~

If you wish you could see the beautiful photos in *The Adirondack Tremolo* in color, you must be reading a hard copy. If so, **please go green by emailing us at [info@adkloon.org](mailto:info@adkloon.org) to get our e-newsletter** and you'll receive:

- A color version of *The Tremolo* that you can easily share with your friends and family; and
- Periodic updates about our research and upcoming events

*Note: Because of increasing costs and a limited budget, we are reducing the number of printed copies we disperse. We realize some people don't have access to computers, so **if you would like to continue to receive a printed Tremolo, please confirm this by sending us a note, or calling 518-354-8636.***

Please also **remember to give us your new address or email** if you move, or change your e-mail address, so you will continue to receive *The Tremolo*. ***Thank you!***

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***Like what we do?*** Learn the latest all year long on our field research, loon rescues, and what's going on at the Adirondack Loon Center. ***Stay up to date about our work by liking us on Facebook or following us on Instagram or Twitter.***