

# Adopt-a-Lake Monitoring Instructions

Vermont Loon Conservation Project (VLCP)

VLCP is a program of the Vermont Center for Ecostudies and VT Fish and Wildlife Department

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Questions? contact: Eric Hanson, VLCP Coordinator, (802) 586-8064  
PO Box 22, Craftsbury, VT 05826 e-mail: ehanson@vtecostudies.org  
[www.vtecostudies.org](http://www.vtecostudies.org)

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## Instructions:

### 1) How often to survey and report sightings to Eric Hanson

#### A) Lakes with breeding and territorial loons:

Pre-hatching: at least once every 2 weeks

Post-hatching: about every 3-4 weeks through August

**IMPORTANT:** - *When loons first observed on nest or chicks hatch, call or send note to Eric right away.*

*For periodic surveys, often helpful to send note or call after your survey.*

#### B) Lakes with loon activity but no breeding history: at least **3 to 6 surveys**

(e.g., mid-May, mid-June, mid-July or on Loonwatch day 3rd Sat. of July).

### 2) What to survey

**A) Lakes with breeding and territorial loons:** You can focus on finding the loon pair.

**B) Lakes with loon activity but no breeding history:** survey the entire lake before entering "0" loons. Make comments on partial (p) surveys (e.g., from your cabin or roadside),

### 3) Submitting Data

A) Fill out this form and send to Eric Hanson at the end of the summer.

#### B) Use VT ebird to post your results after each survey or every 2 weeks

**VT ebird:** <http://ebird.org/content/vt>

Go to [www.vtecostudies.org](http://www.vtecostudies.org) to obtain detailed instructions about entering data on VT ebird.

C) For nesting and territorial loons, please forward your results to Eric Hanson, VLCP Coordinator so that he knows which lakes need surveys and which do not.

You can forward your ebird entry by "sharing with others" at the end of the data entry.

\* For non-territorial lakes and Loonwatch Day (3rd Sat. of July), you do not need to forward to Eric.

### 4) Observation etiquette: watch from a distance....do not agitate or disturb the loons.

- Do not search actively for the loon nest....knowing the general location is adequate.

### 5) Abandoned nests / adult and chick mortality

- If you observe a nesting pair off the nest for several days, and there is an unhatched egg still on the nest, call Eric.

We will want to retrieve the egg and store it in a freezer for analysis later.

Lake/Pond: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\* Date of nest failure: \_\_\_\_\_ **Chick Loss / Adult Mortality** **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Cause - write comments to explain ( ) chick loss OR ( ) adult mortality

Comments:

### 6) When to contact the VLCP Coordinator:

#### **IMPORTANT**

- if you cannot visit a breeding lake during your pre-arranged survey schedule (e.g., bi-weekly)

- first detection of nesting, chicks hatched, or possible abandoned nest

\*\*\*\*\* VOLUNTEER HOURS FORM - available download at [www.vtecostudies.org](http://www.vtecostudies.org): Please mail in by August 15th

**Adopt-a-Lake Data Form \*\*\* Vermont Loon Conservation Project**

Lake/Pond: \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

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

Town: \_\_\_\_\_

**Nesting / Territorial Loons:** Please report your sightings to Eric Hanson about every 2-3 weeks: ehanson@vtcostudies.org (802) 586-8064 and on VT ebird (see instructions on backside)

**Summary of Loon Activity** (fill in as information becomes available)

- ( ) Breeding pair
- ( ) Territorial pair
- ( ) Resident / visitors (no pair)

**Nest type**

- ( ) bowl
- ( ) hummock
- ( ) scrape

**Nest Topography**

- ( ) shoreline
- ( ) marsh
- ( ) island
- ( ) raft

**Nest success -**

- 1st chick sighting date: \_\_\_\_\_
- # eggs hatched: \_\_\_\_
- # fledged from terr. (>6 wks of age): \_\_\_\_
- Date of final observation: \_\_\_\_\_ (after aug. 15)

**Nest failure causes, chick loss, and adult mortality**

Please fill in data on the adopt-a-lake instructions form.

**Data Form Codes**

**Weather:** (1) clear/partly cloudy (2) cloudy (3) light rain (4) rain

**Waves:** (1) calm (2) ripples (3) chop/swells < 6" (4) white caps

**Boating nearby:** (1) <100m (2) 100-400m (3) >400m

**Response to boat(s):** (1) none (2) alert (3) alert-call (4) crouch (5) swim away (6) flush from nest

**Nest Codes:** (B) nest building, (I) incubating, (H-I) one hatch, still incubating, (FN) fledge from nest, (F) failed, (U) unknown (e.g., possibly off nest, unsure if nesting), re-nest (RN)

More forms and information at Vermont Center for Ecostudies [www.vtcostudies.org](http://www.vtcostudies.org)

Date:							
Start time (use 24 hr time)							
End time							
Survey Effort: complete (C) or partial (P) survey of lake							
Weather (1,2,3,4)							
Waves (1,2,3,4)							
Boating activity (1,2,3)							
Response to boat(s) (1-6)							
# Paired adults (in territorial region) <i>(If not a territory, enter # adults)</i>							
<b>Fill in only if territorial loon(s) present</b>							
# Intruders (interacting with pr.)							
# Off-territory adults							
# Chicks							
# Subadults							
Notes:  (put nest codes here)							