Spring/Summer 2019

Dear Adopt-a-Lake Volunteers,

The 2019 loon season is upon us. Pairs are back checking nest sites, dealing with intruder loons, and probably experiencing some territorial challenges. I'm hoping you can monitor loons again this summer, whether it's just a day here and there, or throughout the entire summer season. Just a reminder that my old loon phone number changed last year to my home phone 802-586-8065 (586-8064 no longer works). VCE interns for 2019 will be Jake and Rose; if you see them out and about be sure to introduce yourself! They will help primarily with loon work and Mountain Birdwatch.

If you cannot participate this year please [email me](mailto:). It helps me keep my records updated. If you'd rather not be on this email list, please let me know. If I have not heard from you in year or so, I'll be culling my volunteer list. Only active volunteers and people who make donations should receive the Loon Caller and VCE Field Notes. If you have helpers who'd like to receive the newsletters, have them contact me with their mailing address.

Volunteer Hour Forms: Directions for filling out the form are at the end of this email. Please print TWO copies and fill out 1) for surveys through June 30 and 2) after July 1. These hours match the state wildlife grant we receive from the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department Nongame Program. Please scan and email completed forms, with signature and email address, or mail in to me by August 15.

LoonWatch Day is July 20 this year (the annual statewide one-day survey) – for those that help with that please save the date; not all of you do, as we share the monitoring duties with as many as possible. Details for LoonWatch day will be emailed in June.

Wish List
- **NEED blue foam blocks:** does anyone have blue foam leftover from a floating dock? These come in 2' x 6' x 8" big sections. For those of you connected to lake associations, maybe a note could be sent out on a blog post. We use them under the loon nesting rafts to keep them going for many years even after the logs are waterlogged.
- **12' fishing boat for loon rescues.** I can slide a boat this size into by truck bed and use a trolling motor on it.
- **Still looking for photographs of volunteers in action:** please pick 2 or 3 of the best ones and email them to ehanson@vtecostudies.org. The best size is 1500-2000 pixels (1 mb or bigger) so VCE can use them in publications, the website, and other outreach. Thanks.

Loon Surveys for 2019
Surveys of pairs and nest sites can begin anytime but can wait until after May 20-25, since most nesting occurs between May 20 and June 15. There is a chance there will be slight delay with late ice-out, but not substantial. Ice just went out on Newark Pond on May 6 and Little Averill May 9.

Reporting in surveys:
For breeding lakes, please send in updates every 2-4 weeks and especially when loons
1) start nesting,

2) have possible failed nest,
3) re-nests,
4) chicks hatch,
5) LoonWatch day,
6) early August update, and
7) chick survival at end of August.

How often you check your lake is up to you (e.g., once a month, twice a month, part of the summer only). Just let me know how often you'll be checking, so I know if I should also survey the lake to complement your surveys. If nothing changes in a month, send in a note so I know the lake is being watched (e.g., no nesting 5/25, no nesting 6/10 –send in note then). If I don't hear from you, I'll likely make a visit myself or pester you with an email.

Submit your observations on VT eBird and "share" your observation with me (there is a spot to add my email) OR just send me a quick note occasionally (email or call). It'd be really great if people started using eBird. It's a little intimidating at first, but once you learn, it's kind of fun. The key is to add my email to the "share with others in your party" so that I also receive the update.

You'll need the following forms, which you can find on the VCE website at
https://vtecostudies.org/projects/lakes-ponds/common-loon-conservation/loonwatch/participate/.
(Or to navigate, find the VLCP page, go to the LoonWatch page, then hit the "participate" link.)

·   *Adopt-a-lake Loon Surveys* (instructions on what to look for and place to record data – optional, sending in observations to eBird or me after visits might be easier)
·   *Volunteer Hours Form* (important for our state grant)
·   *Loon Casual Surveys* (lakes that need more surveys anytime – an excuse to go boat on a lake or two that need more surveys)
·   *Reporting Loon Observations - eBird Instructions*

Volunteer Hour Form: Please print TWO copies or ask me to mail you one.
     -**THIS IS THE ONE PIECE OF PAPERWORK THAT DOES NEED FILLING OUT and mailed. One form through June 30 and second form for hours after July 1.**
     -**EACH DAY OF OBSERVATION NEEDS TO BE LISTED SEPARATELY; one form per person.**
     -**Scan and email or MAIL signed form back to me by August 15** (even if you will still be monitoring chicks later).

Reports and past Loon Callers – go to the Vermont Loon Conservation Project page at the VCE website and look for the results link (or click here).

Lakes that need more surveys
If you don't have a regular pair to follow, please visit lakes with less or no volunteer help (see Loon Casual Survey lake list). Some target lakes we'd like to obtain more surveys of include: Waterbury Reservoir, Carmi, Willoughby, Salem, Memphremagog, Clyde Reservoir, South Bay, Center, Comerford and Moore Res., Nelson, Halls, Morey, all the lakes between Hortonia and St. Catherine, including Bomoseen, and further south Gale Meadows, and Harriman Res.

Some breeding lakes where we could use help monitoring pairs include: Peacham –south, Maidstone North and SE, Elligo, Hardwick, Wolcott – early season, Mollys Falls, Joe's, Mollys, Osmore, Stiles, Moore, Ticklenaked, Great Averill, Little Averill, Derby, Island Pond, Bald Hill, Jobs. For those that like to hike, we could always use more surveys on Wallingford and Bourn ponds.

Have a fun season on the water and thanks for making this program such a success. We could not do it without you. Happy boating!

Eric Hanson

VLCP Coordinator and VCE Conservation Biologist
PO Box 22, Craftsbury, VT 05826
(802) 586-8065 ehanson@vtecostudies.org

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Donations to support loon conservation in Vermont can be sent to VT Center for Ecostudies.
VCE, PO Box 420, Norwich, VT 05055.

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