

Loon Preservation Committee

“We can never have enough of nature.”

– Henry David Thoreau

Common Loon: *Gavia immer*

Family: *Gaviidae*

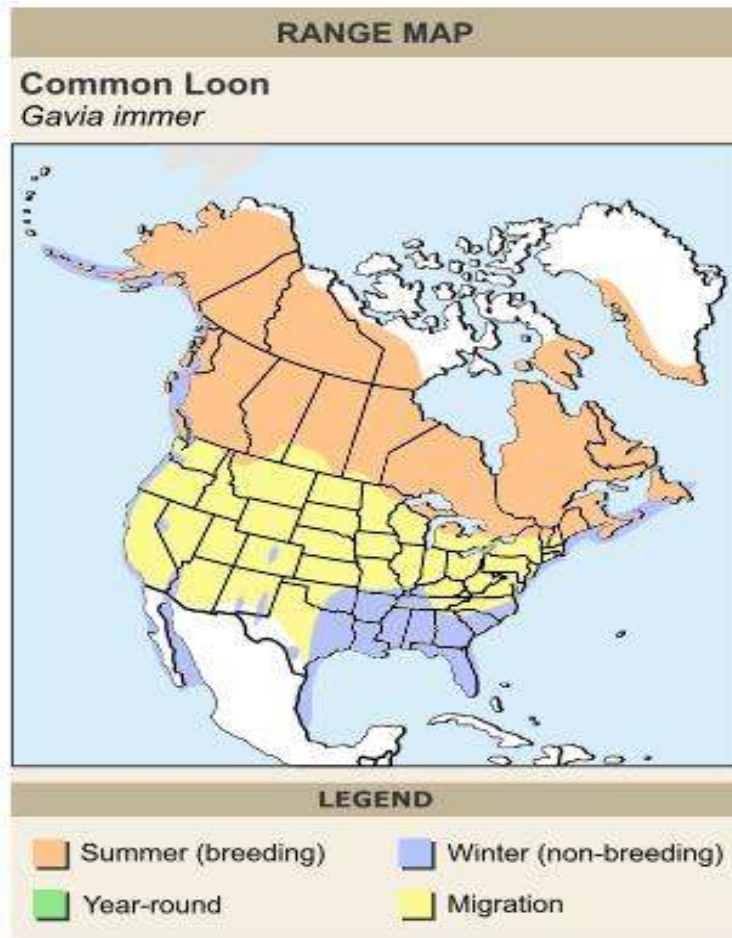
Description: 24" in length, up to 5 – foot wingspan. Black head and neck. Band of white patches on throat.

Status: Threatened in NH

Range: Breed in North America from Alaska south to Massachusetts. Winter off the Atlantic Coast, from Maine to Long Island Sound.



Common Loon Range Map



Loons are related to the Penguin



The Five Species of Loons

- Common Loon
- Yellow-billed Loon
- Red-throated Loon
- Pacific Loon
- Artic Loon



Common Loon



Yellow-billed Loon



Red-throated Loon



Pacific Loon and Artic Loon

Loons have solid bones



Loons have red eyes



Loon Migration



Migration:

Most of the population shifts from freshwater inland breeding locations to coastal marine wintering locations.

Feeding:

Primarily live fish and crayfish.

Loon Calls

- **Loons have four different calls.**
 - Wail
 - Tremolo
 - Yodel
 - Hoot



Loon Flight



Loons are unable
to take
off from land.

Territoriality

- Fights are common during territorial defense. Loons defend their territory for all activities: nesting, chick-rearing, and feeding.



I saw her first!!!



Mating



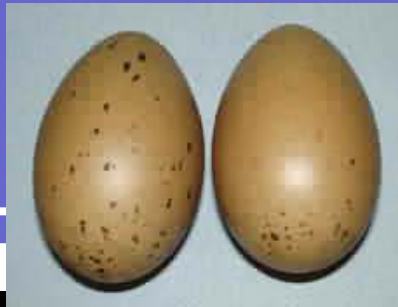
- Loons are mainly monogamous on breeding grounds, but will replace a mate if lost. Copulation always occurs on land.

Nest-Building

- Loons build nests in May and June, immediately before laying eggs. A late nest may be built in early July. The male or female may select the nest site. They prefer sheltered sides of islands facing mainland, or floating bog hummocks with screened view to open territory.



Clutch Size



- **Clutch size:** Generally two eggs. Loons begin laying eggs shortly after nest is completed.
- **Incubation period:** The period from laying of the first eggs to hatching of second eggs is approximately 27- 32 days. Both parents incubate the eggs.

Brooding

- Both parents feed the chicks. Regular feeding occurs by day two or three. Initially both parents stay with chicks and both feed chicks; one parent remains on the surface while the other dives for food. Chicks are dependent on parents but capture about 50% of their food by week eight.



Loon Hatchlings

- Chicks usually leave the nest with parents within a day of hatching, weather permitting. Chicks are covered with dense down; sooty black except for white belly.



Are we there yet?



Loon Teenagers



Don't talk to strangers.



Fish again!



Yummy!



Loon Predators



Bald Eagle, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*

Raccoons



Northern Raccoon, *Procyon lotor*

Skunks



Striped Skunk, *Mephitis mephitis*

American Crow



American Crow, *Corvus brachyrhynchos*

Mink



Mink, *Mustela vison*

Gulls



Yes, I'm Big!



Snapping Turtle, *Chelydra serpentina*

MJA

Snapping Turtles

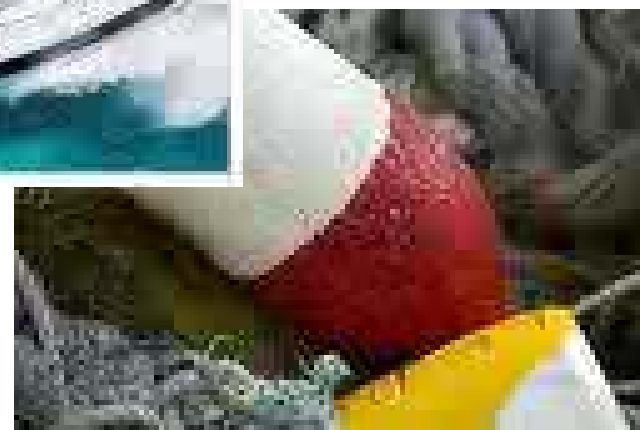


Jill Rolph

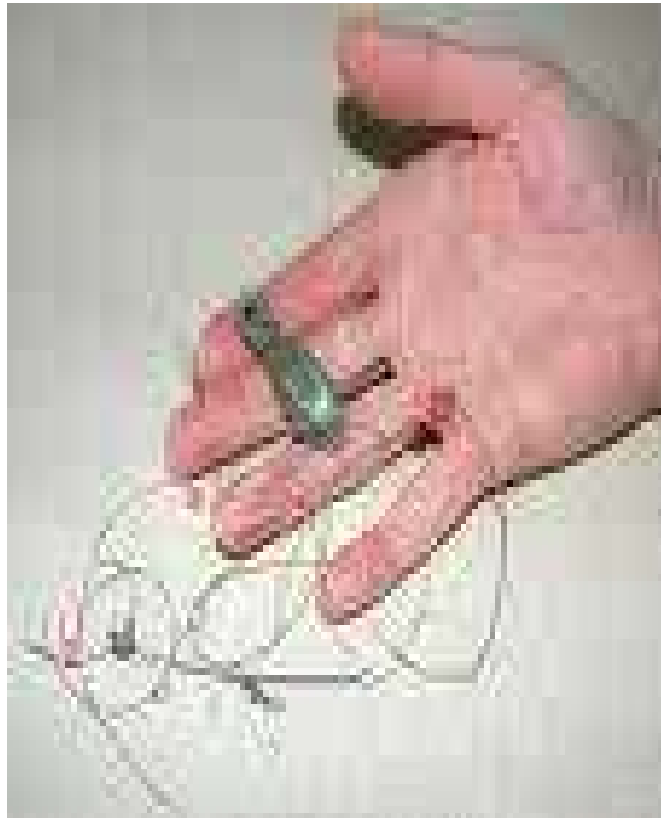
Pillsbury State Park

Conservation and Management

- Pesticides and other contaminants/toxics.
- Fishing nets and traps.
- Fishing line, hooks and lead sinkers.
- Degradation of habitat.
- Human disturbance at nest and nursery sites.



Fishing Line and Lead Sinkers



People in kayaks



What you can do to avoid disturbing loons:

- You can avoid disturbing nesting loons or loons with hatchlings by keeping your distance. It is best to stay 200-400 feet or more away from nest sites, or from loons that are showing signs of distress.



Loons are stressed if you see any of the following behaviors...



- The loon rises upright on the water, while flapping wings.
- The loons neck and body are stretched out low on the nest or on the water.
- The bird calls out with a 'tremolo' (laughing sound) or 'yodel' call.
- If the loon looks alert and nervous.
- If the loon is carrying chicks on their back, please keep your distance. If chicks get separated from their parents they will perish.
- Please don't chase loon for the perfect picture.

Volunteer!

- Become a member of the Loon Preservation committee and help our NH loons thrive.



Cool Facts about Loons

- The loon is related to the penguin.
- Loons can live up to 30 years.
- Loons are thought to dive as far down as 150 feet.
- Migrating loons fly from 70 – 80 mph at elevations between 5,000 - 9,000 feet.
- The majority of birds that return to breed in NH are at least 3-5 years old.

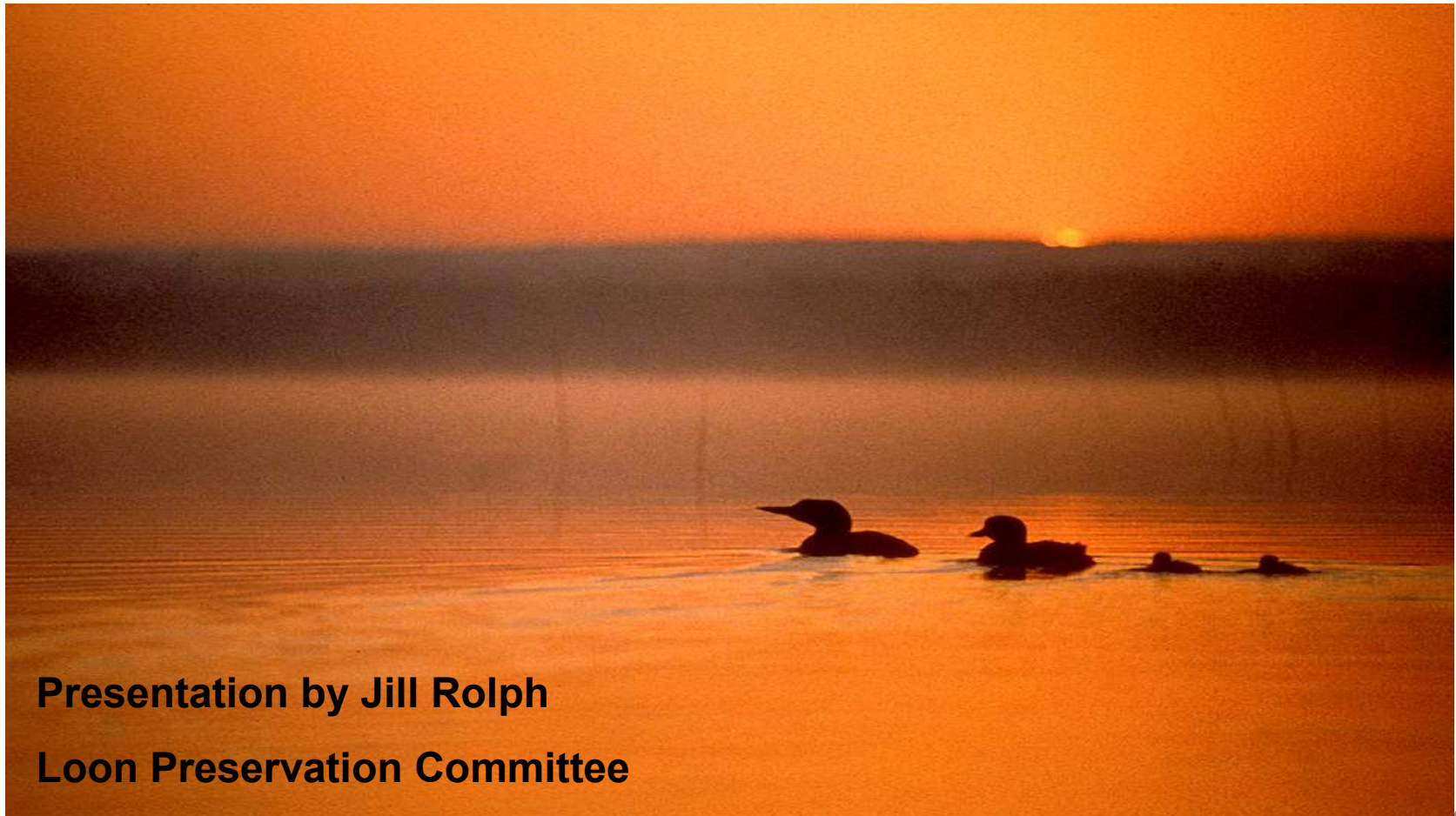
Join our Network of New Hampshire Loon Volunteer Educators



Jill Rolph
Loon Preservation Committee



Protect New Hampshire Ponds and Lakes!



Presentation by Jill Rolph

Loon Preservation Committee

Feel free to ask questions!

