

## What to Look For

**Be aware of loons!** Be aware that if you see a loon from late June to September, chances are that one or two chicks will be close by.

**Keep your distance!**

**Listen to Loons!** If you approach a loon and hear it start to call, this means you are too close.

**Move away!**

**Watch what loons do!** If you see a loon 'dancing' straight up out of the water and slapping with its wings, it is alarmed by your presence.

**Move away!**

## What Everyone Can Do

**View loons from a distance!**

Enjoy their lovely haunting calls. Give loons their space—they need solitude to breed and raise their young.

## Report Harassment

**Harassment of wildlife is against the law!**

If you see a loon being harassed, report this to your local MNR office, local police or OPP, or contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS.

Videotaping the event and/or recording the vessel's registration number is helpful.

## SALMON LAKE RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

**Help to Support Salmon Lake**

**Consider a membership in the Salmon Lake Ratepayers' Association**

[www.salmonlake.ca](http://www.salmonlake.ca)

**For more information contact us at:**

[info@salmonlake.ca](mailto:info@salmonlake.ca)



Photo by Duane Cross

**Common Loon feeding its young**

For more information check out the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey, a program of [Bird Studies Canada](http://BirdStudiesCanada.org) ([www.bsc-eoc.org](http://www.bsc-eoc.org))

This brochure has been adapted from brochures produced by the Otter Lake Ratepayers' Association, [www.olra.ca](http://www.olra.ca), Friends of the Rideau, [www.rideaufriends.com](http://www.rideaufriends.com), the Michigan Loon Preservation Association, [www.michiganloons.org](http://www.michiganloons.org) and the Montana Loon Society, [www.montanaloons.org](http://www.montanaloons.org).

**BE  
LOON  
AWARE!**

## Boaters and Loons

A Salmon Lake treasure is the loon with its beautiful plumage and haunting calls.

Loons make Salmon Lake their summer home and nesting area.

Loon chicks hatch in late June to mid-July, which coincides with the start of the busy boating season.

Loon awareness and responsible watercraft use will help reduce the conflicts that can occur between boaters and loons.

# The Common Loon

## Ontario's Official Bird

Common loons are large diving birds that spend their summers on open, fresh water lakes and their winters on the seacoast.

During the summer they sport distinctive black and white breeding plumage. They are 0.6 to 1 metre long, weigh 4 to 5 kilograms and have a wingspan of 1.2 to 1.5 metres.

**Keep it wild!**

**Watch your Wake!**

**Preserve the wild parts  
of the lake!**

**Keep your shoreline natural!**

## Watercraft & Loons

There are many ways that watercraft can have a negative effect on loons:

- Power boats can send waves crashing into shorelines, drowning nests.
- Fishing boats, particularly bass and pike anglers, frequent areas preferred for loon nest sites.
- Canoes can slip quietly into loon nesting areas and startle loons off their nests.
- Personal Watercraft (PWC's) can speed in shallow water and run over chicks.
- Boats pulling wake boarders, skiers and tubers may speed near shorelines and run over chicks.

## Nesting Loons

On Salmon Lake most loons start to nest from the middle to the end of May. They generally lay two eggs which will hatch 27 to 29 days later (late June). Nests are usually on small islands or the back end of bays and inlets.

Since loons only have one or two chicks per year, every chick counts. The survival of loons on Salmon Lake depends on these chicks staying healthy until they are strong enough to fly south (late October to November).

In Ontario, reproduction success has declined over the past 10 years. This pattern of decline suggests that while many adult loons may still be present on lakes, fewer and fewer of them are raising young.

## Boat traffic can cause loss of eggs!

Loon parents **will leave the nest** if a watercraft comes within 150 metres of the nest. This leaves the eggs without warmth or protection.

Loon parents **may abandon the nest** if disturbed too often. If they try to re-nest later in the season, the likelihood of chicks hatching and surviving is very low.



## Loon Chicks

### Boats can easily kill chicks!

**Young chicks are not waterproof!** They need to be able to climb on their parents' backs to stay warm and dry. When watercraft comes close, parents leave their chick to defend their territory.

**Young chicks can't dive!** Young chicks are very buoyant and can't dive very quickly or very deep. This makes them particularly vulnerable to being run over by watercraft, particularly from June to September.

**Chicks tire easily!** The presence of watercraft causes chicks to keep swimming instead of feeding and resting. This can weaken them, affecting their ability to survive.

**Chicks frequent open water!** It is the habit of loon parents to move the chicks away from the small bay nesting environment, out into deeper water along more open shorelines to avoid natural predators. Unfortunately, this puts them into direct conflict with watercraft, particularly PWC's and boats pulling wake boarders, water-skiers and tubers.

## BE LOON AWARE!

## Get the Lead Out!

To help digestion, loons ingest small pebbles (grit) from the bottom of the lake. Loons often have as many as 20-30 pebbles in their gizzard at one time. Unfortunately, if this material contains lead, which can be in the form of small sinkers, jigs or shotgun shot, poisoning of the loon will occur.

Non-toxic alternatives such as steel and bismuth are now readily available. So — get the lead out!