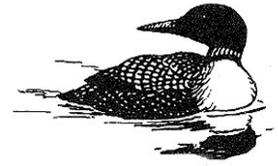




What YOU can do to enjoy and protect Alaska's Loons and Grebes!



As people enjoy outdoor recreation on some Alaska lakes, they often experience the haunting calls of the loon and the bustle of activity as grebes build their floating nests. Loons and grebes are an integral part of Alaska's natural beauty – a living symbol of clean air, clean water, and high level of environmental quality.

Although Alaska has healthy populations of Common and Pacific Loons and Red-necked and Horned Grebes statewide, there are some concerns about the future of loons and grebes in areas that are heavily used by people. Fortunately, studies in other states have shown that loons, grebes, and people can coexist if certain care is taken.

You can help protect loons and grebes by following these suggestions when you find yourself in "Loon and Grebe Country".

Enjoy loons and grebes from a distance!

If you see a loon or grebe rising out of the water, running and splashing across the surface, you are too close. This behavior, known as the "Penguin Dance" for loons, indicates severe stress from your presence and the birds are trying to distract you from its nest or young. If the adult has been scared off its nest, the eggs can chill and die, or be eaten by a predator.

Steer clear of loons and grebes!

While recreating on lakes with motorized watercraft, steer clear of loons, grebes, and their nesting areas. Wakes can destroy nests and drown chicks.

Pick up discarded fishing line and other litter!

Litter, especially fishing line and plastics, can entangle loons and grebes and even kill these birds, fish and other wildlife.

Use non-toxic alternatives to lead sinkers!

Loons may mistakenly ingest discarded lead sinkers on the lake bottom while searching for small pebbles to aid with their digestion. Lead poisoning quickly follows and is likely fatal. The use of non-toxic alternatives to lead is an easy way to protect loons.

Keep dogs leashed!

Keeping your dog on a leash while loons and grebes are nesting and when their young are just born. Confining other domestic animals helps protect loon and grebe eggs and nests from being destroyed along the shoreline.

Spread the word that you care about loons and grebes!

Join the Alaska Citizen Science Program's - Alaska Loon and Grebe Watch - and help protect loons and grebes. Contact Marian Snively with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, Wildlife Diversity Program, at 267-2893 or email marian.snively@alaska.gov for more information.

Dealing with Harassment of Loons and Grebes

Intentional and unintentional harassment of loons and grebes is one of the problems these waterbirds encounter in parts of Alaska. Pairs attempting to nest, raise chicks, and feed can often tolerate some human activities, but repeated disturbance of a loon incubating eggs or tending newly hatched young can result in abandonment of the nest or death of the young.

Most harassment occurs simply out of ignorance. Some people may not realize that they are disturbing loons and are surprised to learn about special needs of this amazing bird. Passing out pamphlets about loons and grebes or posting "Loon Alert" signs at public access points and other areas around a lake can help **prevent problems before they occur**. Signs are available from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (contact Marian Snively @ 267-2893).

There are times when an obvious harassment situation should be reported to the State Trooper's Fish and Wildlife Protection office. You will be able to get a lot farther in these cases if you follow this procedure:

1. Carefully document the actions involved (date, time, location, boat registration number, number and description or identity of people, actions, etc...)
2. Get witnesses or a videotape to support your testimony.
3. Call US Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement at (786-3313), FWP officer (Palmer 745-4247, Soldotna 262-5312, Anchorage 269-5443), or Wildlife Safeguard (1-800-478-3377).
4. Be willing to follow through to a court case.

These cases of obvious harassment tend to be few and far between. Most often, the harassing party doesn't know or care enough about loons to change their behavior. However, in some cases, when people are given a friendly message about loons and grebes, they can become a bird's best friend.