

Loons from page 30

of predators and little human disturbance, for example – the pair will usually produce one or two chicks by July. Except when nesting, loons live their entire lives in the water, feeding on fish, crayfish, and occasionally invertebrates and some plant matter.

Loons have a special place in the memories of generations of New Hampshire's lakeside residents and visitors. It is the sounds they make – the long, eerie wails and tremolos – that set them apart from other birds. In Cooley quotes Thoreau as saying, the loon's calls are 'perhaps the wildest sound that is ever heard.' And in the words of a modern ornithologist, Oliver Austin, 'No one who has ever heard the Diver's music – the mournful far-carrying call-notes – can ever forget it."

Human behavior

How should people behave around loons? Three main rules:

1. Keep your distance from loons, their nests and their young. Observing from several hundred feet (at least the distance of a football field) with a good pair of binoculars is best.

2. Learn to read signs of loon behavior. Your presence begins to be a problem when it causes the loon to change its behavior. If the loon's brow is square in profile, if it sinks low in the water, or if a nesting loon lowers its head, you are too close. A loon that is calling and splashing in response to a human intruder is showing obvious alarm; back off. Occasionally, loons will approach a boat or kayak closely of their own accord. As long as the loon is not pursued or forced to change its use of the lake, this curiosity on the loon's part may not be a problem.

3. Fish with non-lead sinkers and jigs, and retrieve all broken fishing line and tackle. Entanglement and lead poi-

soning from sinkers and jigs are leading causes of mortality in New Hampshire's loons.

Additional Information

The Loon Preservation Committee, a subsidiary of the New Hampshire Audubon Society, was created in 1975 in response to concerns about a dramatically declining loon population and the effects of human activities on loons. Its mission is to restore and maintain a healthy population of loons throughout New Hampshire; to monitor the health and productivity of loon populations as sentinels of environmental quality; and to promote a greater understanding of loons and the larger natural world.

The LPC maintains a Loon Center in Moultonborough. Open to the public year-round, it offers an exhibit area, a gift shop and bookstore, an area for viewing videos, and a nature trail. It also maintains a comprehensive Web site at Loon.org.

LOONS AND LEAD

Among the hazards loons face, lead is a leading enemy. Lead weights and jigs used by anglers and lost in lakes sink to the bottom, where loons mistake them for small stones and swallow them to aid in grinding up their food. Because lead is toxic – no longer used in gasoline, paint, or plumbing – its effect on a loon can be lethal. Although lead sinkers and jigs are banned in New Hampshire, they're still around in old tackle boxes and on old fishing gear. The message from the Loon Preservation Committee: Properly dispose of the old sinkers and jigs, and use substitutes made from non-toxic materials, including steel, tin, brass, tungsten and bismuth – all readily available in sporting-goods stores.

of October 9, 10, and 11 this year and also showing some nice antique vintage snowmobiles in the New Hampshire Snowmobile Museum Association tent.

If you do get to attend, please stop by and get some history of where the sport of snowmobiling came from. We will have a good range of machines from the early days of snowmobiling. Hope to see you there.

New Hampshire distributed pedometers, The Webster Lake Association passed out apples, Staples of Tilton donated the printing, BJs of Tilton offered granola bars, and Hannafords of Franklin contributed balloons and bars. Many thanks to them and to ribbon-cutting assistants Pacey Hosmer, 9, and Sapphira Hosmer, 6, who did their jobs spotlessly.

Trail maps are available at the Potter Place kiosk, at the cafe in East Andover on Route 11 and Highland Lake, or downloadable online at FNRT.org. Come out and enjoy this lovely, new addition to the impressive variety of recreational choices in our area!

FNRT from page 30

And there is reason to celebrate. The finished rail trail extends from Webster Lake in Franklin to Potter Place in Andover, offering 10 miles of recreational and alternative transportation routes for bikers, walkers, stroller pushers, dog walkers, horseback riders, skiers, and snowmobilers. The natural beauty and history of the old railroad corridor, plus the average two-percent grade, make it possible for people of all abilities and interests to enjoy it year-round.

Local businesses and organizations contributed to the good time. HEAL-



Bill Bardsley and his son Nils hiked to the top of Mount Katahdin in Maine to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the first time Bill climbed Katahdin. He has been up it many times since his first climb in 1949, but this latest one was made special by the group of young Appalachian Trail through-hikers who wanted their pictures taken with him.

Volunteer!

The Beacon is a non-profit organization that relies on volunteers for almost everything. Please do your part to keep our community newspaper going strong. To find a role that's right for you, call Charlie at 735-6099.

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