

Expert On Loons To Speak

By Larry Chase
For the Beacon

Ever wonder why a loon's eyes are red? Why loon chicks ride on their parents' backs? What loons are saying with those eerie calls in the night?

Hear biologist Harry Vogel talk about this iconic symbol of New Hampshire's wild lakes at 7 PM on Sunday, June 27, at Bluewater Farm on Bradley Lake in Andover. The illustrated talk will be open to the public at no charge. Vogel is senior biologist and executive director of the Loon Preservation Committee (LPC), headquartered in Moultonborough's Loon Center.

Refreshments will be served.

Sponsored by the Andover Conservation Commission, the presentation will focus on the challenges facing loons and the LPC's work to safeguard New Hampshire's threatened loon population. The ability of local lakes to support nesting loons will be emphasized.

Vogel, a resident of Ashland, has been studying loons for nearly 20 years, first with the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey of Bird Studies and since 1997 in his current position. He is the co-chair of the Northeast Loon Study Working Group, a consortium of government and non-governmental organizations from the US and Canada, working on issues affecting loons and other wildlife in the northeast. He holds an MS degree from the University of Guelph in Ontario.

As reported in the *Beacon* last October, the LPC deploys field biologists and volunteer observers on lakes across New Hampshire in order to determine changes in the state's loon population over time. Current volunteers on Bradley Lake are Mary Dowse and Dorothy Skeels. On Highland Lake, the Baker family, including Frank, his daughter Donna, and grandson Sterling are LPC

volunteers. Additional volunteers are always welcome.

The Loon Preservation Committee

The LPC's 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 natural world. Since its creation in 1975 in response to concerns about a dramatically declining loon population and the effects of human activities on loons, LPC has grown to become a leader among environmental organizations working to preserve threatened and endangered species. LPC's success in protecting New Hampshire's loon population has been attributed in large part to the monitoring, research, management, and educational activities of LPC staff, members, and volunteers.

Today, LPC houses the most comprehensive database of loon populations and productivity in the world. Data collected by LPC caused the loon to be added to New Hampshire's list of threatened and endangered species in 1979 and has prompted first-in-the-nation bills to limit lead fishing tackle in our lakes and emissions of mercury and other pollutants from our power plants.

LPC's management efforts have more than doubled New Hampshire's loon population since loons were listed as a state threatened species. Over the past ten years, close to one of every four loon chicks hatched in New Hampshire was hatched on a raft floated by the Loon Preservation Committee. One of every two chicks benefited from LPC's management activities, including floating signs and rope lines, and its work with dam owners to keep water levels stable during critical nesting periods.



Donna Baker-Hartwell (l) and Sarah Davis Baker (r), members of the Highland Lake Protective Association, made a floating loon nest at the New Hampshire Loon Preservation Center (NHLPC) in Wolfboro. Emily Baker and Donna have since anchored it near the south end of the island in Highland Lake. The floating nest design adapts to sudden changes in water levels caused by boating, heavy rain, and wind. They hope a pair of mating loons will take to it and there will be a successful hatching this summer. John Cooley (center) of NHLPC assisted Donna and Sarah in building the platform.

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Garden from page 14

of Illinois are now, thankfully, a distant memory. I continue to find the need for a few tomato plants, some onions, and a few herbs. But mostly my gardening passion has turned to trees, shrubs, and ornamental plants.

One thing I love about New England is that rocks are plentiful. I'm not sure I could, any longer, garden without rocks – they anchor a garden so firmly and securely to the earth.

For at least a quarter century I've dreamed of having a stone collection as the base for a garden ... perhaps an old barn foundation, or a cellar hole. Such a piece of property has never materialized for me, but the Andover Historical Society has recently permitted me to adopt the cellar hole of Richard Potter's home behind the depot in Potter Place.

It's taken two years of work to clean and remove the brush and trash from the cellar hole, and now I have begun doing a little gardening within the old founda-

tion stones. I'm not a "proper" gardener. I've never studied horticulture. I've never developed a garden plan. My approach is to just begin! Stick a plant in the ground. If it grows, it stays. If not, move on and replace it with something else.

The shade garden at Potter Place is in its infancy stage, and I expect it will be an ongoing, evolving process. I have never completed any garden I have begun.

As with all the facilities at the Andover Historical Society, this garden is available for the enjoyment of the community and the public at large. My idea for creating this hidden garden is that somehow in this frantic and worrisome world, visitors may find a quiet moment of peace, beauty, and tranquility.

If anyone has cuttings of shade-loving plants they are willing to share, please contact me, Kenneth Reid, at 735-5512.