

BE LOON AWARE:

Boaters and Loons

A Minnesota treasure is the Loon with its beautiful plumage and haunting calls. The loon became our state bird in 1961. Loons make many of Minnesota's lakes their summer home and nesting area. Upper South Long Lake is very fortunate to be one of those lakes! We must remember and respect that we share the lake with the Loons and all wildlife.

Loon chicks hatch in late June, 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. There are many ways that watercraft can have a negative effect of loons:

Power boats can send waves crashing into shorelines and loon platforms, drowning nests.

Jet skis can speed in shallow water or near a loon nest and run over chicks.

Boats pulling water skiers and tubers may speed near the loon nest or shorelines where baby loons may be

swimming and run over chicks. Don't forget that the long rope attached to a tube or water skier has the potential

to get close to a loon nest, tipping it over, soaking the babies or knocking the babies out of the nest.

KEEP A SAFE DISTANCE!

LISTEN TO LOONS ~ If you approach a loon and hear it start to call, it is distressed or scared and means you are too close. MOVE AWAY IMMEDIATELY! If the danger is still present after the parents have called a few times, the adults will sink into the water and swim away. They'll pop up far away and call to their babies to follow them, but it may be too late. Young chicks don't dive! Eagles and gulls that heard the distress call (tremolo call) often fly over in hopes of finding an unprotected baby loon. During the time the little loons are scrambling to find their parents again, they can get eaten.

WATCH WHAT LOONS DO ~ If you see a loon "dancing" straight up out of the water and slapping with its wings, it is stressed and alarmed by your presence. MOVE AWAY IMMEDIATELY!

GIVE LOONS PLENTY OF SPACE and enjoy watching them from a distance! They need solitude to breed and raise their young. Approaching too closely can inadvertently cause adult loons to leave their nests, potentially for long periods of time, causing chilling of the eggs and failure of the nest! When fishing, do not cast towards a loon or a loon platform.

Upper South Long Lake has not had a totally successful hatch for some time now! They come back if they are successful in their hatch but can choose to go elsewhere if they are not! The biggest danger they face is from humans and human actions.

**It takes all of us to watch out for the loons! Harassment of wildlife is against the law! If you see loons being harassed, report it to the Conservation Officer, Paul Kuske, for Upper South Long Lake. His office number is: 320-745-2023 or he can be dispatched through the Minnesota State Patrol at 218-828-2400
(Record these numbers in your lake directory or other handy place)**

Supply him with as much information as possible, videotaping, taking a picture of the event and/or recording the vessel's registration number, vehicle and/or boat trailer license number and the name of person involved in incident if known.

We ALL must be vigilant! Be loon aware now and always!