

The Sampler

September 30, 2016

The Sampler is a monthly e-newsletter produced by the Volunteer Lake Assessment Program.

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Web Highlights

This month's featured lake website is the [Winnisquam Watershed Network](#)

[N.H. Lakes are Feeling the Effects of This Year's Drought](#)

[Slimy Stuff All Over Your Favorite Pond? This is a Job for Bloomwatch!](#)

[Poisonous Algae Blooms Threaten People, Ecosystems Across U.S.](#)

[Calculating the Role of Lake in Global Warming](#)

[Harmful Algal Blooms, Everything You Need to Know](#)

[Acidity in Atmosphere Minimized to Preindustrial Levels](#)

Upcoming Events

[NHACC Annual Conference](#)
Saturday November 12, 2016
Pembroke Academy
Pembroke, NH 03275

[Timber Harvest, Trees and Water Quality](#)

Wintering Common Loons: Locations and Behaviors

Article by Kate Taylor adapted from the Loon Preservation Committee's Spring 2004 Newsletter

Loons on New Hampshire's lakes begin molting as early as mid-July (for adults without young) and as late as early October. All feathers are molted except the primary and secondary flight feathers and migration is undertaken on these feathers. By fall, pair bonds have broken down and loons migrate independently of each other. Most adults have left for the wintering grounds by November, followed by the young of the year. These immature loons will spend at least the next three years on the ocean before acquiring adult breeding plumage and making their journey back to natal waters. Although 17% of the fall migrating population is comprised of immature loons, little over half of these young survive to make the return trip as adults.

Common Loons are primarily found along the Pacific and Atlantic coastlines during the winter months. Loons from New England are among the populations wintering off the Atlantic coast, along with loons from Manitoba, North Dakota, and Minnesota. Data collected from Christmas Bird Counts shows that the greatest density of loons along the Atlantic seaboard can be found from the Gulf of Maine south to North Carolina and into the Gulf of Mexico (Florida and Alabama coastlines).

Figure 1. New Hampshire Banded Loons Winter Recovery Sites

Squam Speaker Series
October 26, 2016
7:00 p.m.
Squam Lakes Association
Holderness, NH 03245

Grants

[2017 Watershed Assistance Grants](#)

Request for Pre-Proposal
Deadline: October 21, 2016

[2017 Local Source Water Protection Grants](#)

Deadline: November 1, 2016

[Upper Connecticut River Mitigation and Enhancement Fund](#)

Deadline: January 6, 2017

Limno Lingo

Low Impact Development (LID): Stormwater management design that uses small, decentralized methods to treat stormwater close to the source instead of piping stormwater to a large centralized treatment area. LID focuses on minimizing disturbance while maintaining and restoring natural buffers. Examples of LID practices include rain gardens, dry wells, vegetated swales, buffers and strips, and green roofs.

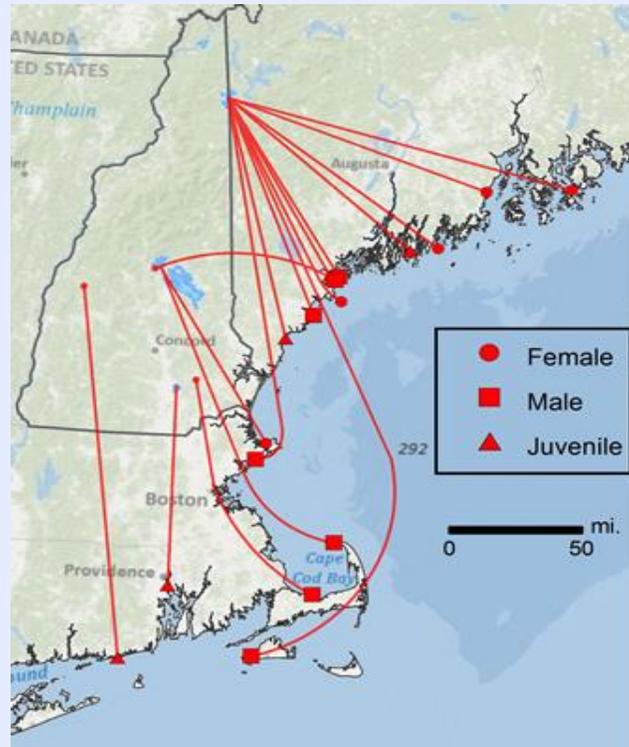
Wintering loons are mostly found along inland coastal waters including channels, coves, and bays as opposed to deeper water locations. Research on wintering loons has shown marine locations are based on prey availability which is dictated by salinity gradients, clarity, tides, and depth. Banded loons from New Hampshire suggest a tendency for our loons to remain off the coast of Maine, south along coastal Massachusetts and into Long Island Sound (Figure 1).

Although there is no evidence of pairing on the wintering grounds, loons have been observed in some territorial behavior. This is likely the result of individual loons returning to a fixed location and delineating loosely defined feeding areas. Daily activities center around feeding, with loons employing one of two foraging strategies: 1) flock-feeding on schools of fish, such as menhaden or gulf silversides, or 2) solitary feeding where prey items are more evenly dispersed. Inshore larger prey, such as crabs and flounder are ingested above water. In the evenings, wintering loons have been sighted congregating and spending the night in larger flocks. Loons do vocalize in the winter, though to a lesser degree.

The black and white breeding plumage, also known as alternate plumage, of our summer loons has been replaced by the gray-brown of winter or basic plumage. The eyes in adult birds remain red year around. By mid-April, loons have molted back into breeding plumage and begin migrating back to their traditional freshwater breeding grounds.

State Announces Its 2016 Fall Drawdown of Lakes

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) has released the annual fall drawdown of lakes and ponds controlled by dams owned by NHDES. The complete list can be



accessed [here](#).

The depth of the drawdown is not from the current level, but is from the normal full pond level. Depending on ice and hydrologic conditions, these levels can vary throughout the winter. Since the hydrologic conditions and recreational uses of these water bodies vary, the degree and date of the start of drawdown for each lake vary and could be affected by the amount of rainfall during the period. In addition, the actual date at which the drawdown will begin could vary by a few days based on operational constraints. However, at two dams, the drawdowns will be initiated on a specific Saturday in October to provide recreational opportunities for canoeists and kayakers in the rivers below these dams. The schedule can for the recreational opportunities can be found [here](#).

Lake drawdowns are conducted each fall to reduce winter ice damage to shoreline properties and to reduce spring flooding. Drawdowns also give property owners an opportunity to conduct any necessary repairs to their waterfront property, provided they first secure a permit from the NHDES Wetlands Bureau at (603) 271-2147. Check out the NHDES fact sheet [WD-DB-16 Why Lake Drawdowns](#) are Conducted for more information.

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