



Loon Etiquette

For so many people who visit or live in the north woods, loons are integral parts of the lake experience. Loons need healthy aquatic ecosystems with good water quality, abundant prey, irregular shaped shorelines or islands with native vegetation, and nursery habitat with little to no human disturbance.

Therefore loons are considered to be an indicator species, meaning that the presence of a loon may indicate that a lake they live on or frequently visit is healthy. Here are some things you can do to help protect the habitat and loons on your lake.

Practice Good Loon Etiquette

- **Watch loons** from at least **200 feet away**. Get a powerful lens for your camera, use binoculars or a spotting scope, and never explore a loon nest site. Close encounters can be deadly for swimming and nesting loons.
- **Avoid exploring or camping** on islands **before July 15** of each year. Loons prefer islands for nesting. **Disturbance** can cause a loon to **abandon its nest**.
- Dispose of household garbage at a collection site. Garbage draws raccoons, foxes, gulls, and eagles, which prey on loon eggs. Trash can also ensnare wildlife, including loons.
- Be an ethical angler. **Never fish or cast near loon nests or swimming loons**, properly dispose of extra bait and trash, and pick up monofilament line.
- **Keep dogs and cats away** from loons and nests. Pets disturb nesting loons and can destroy loon eggs.
- **Be a responsible boater**. Never chase loons or run motorboats or personal watercraft over areas where loons have been seen. Loons and loon chicks have died from being hit by boats and propellers. Boat wakes and waves may also wash eggs off of nests.
- **Practice and teach wildlife stewardship...always!**