



Division of Ecological and Water Resources
Nongame Wildlife Program
1601 Minnesota Drive
Brainerd, MN 56401

Hello Volunteer Loon Watchers,

Welcome to the 44th year of the Volunteer Loon Watcher Survey! As we dive into another year of loon monitoring, I would like to begin by thanking all previous participants for their efforts in supporting this ongoing community science effort. Your continued support and efforts provide important information to the Nongame Wildlife Program regarding the conservation of Minnesota's state bird, the common loon!

In 2023, over 120 volunteers monitored lakes across 23 Minnesota counties. Observations included detailed information related to loon behavior, nesting, chicks hatched, chick survival, and more! These observations contributed to our large database and will allow program staff and partners to track changes over time.

Human disturbances were reported during several instances this past year. To increase awareness, the Nongame Wildlife Program has created "**Be Loon Aware!**" educational brochures. These brochures highlight important information on responsible watercraft use in an effort to decrease watercraft related disturbances. Please contact the MN DNR Loon Specialist if you are interested in helping distribute these brochures.

The Nongame Wildlife Program is also supporting loon restoration and conservation efforts in the state through the Minnesota Loon Restoration Project. Data from the Loon Watcher Survey was fundamental in development of this project. The goal of the project is to reduce mortality and increase productivity of loons in Minnesota. To do so, we are working with project partners to accomplish our primary objectives of acquisition of shoreland to protect loon nesting habitat, deployment of Artificial Nesting Platforms (ANPs) in targeted locations, promoting stewardship through outreach, and monitoring project outcomes. To learn more, please email project staff at MLRP.DNR@state.mn.us.

The goal of the Volunteer Loon Watcher Survey is to capture valuable information on loon phenology, nesting behavior, breeding productivity, unique behavior occurrences, and potential threats to loons. To do so, we ask you to observe loons on their lake at least once per month from May (possibly April this year!) through August and closely follow the protocol detailed on the survey form. Reported observations with limited consistency and variance from survey form decreases the utility of the data. Please note, the Volunteer Loon Watcher Survey and its protocol is different than the Minnesota Loon Monitoring Program. Each survey provides different information essential in better understanding the species on Minnesota's lakes.

Don't forget to "Look for the Loon" on your Minnesota income and property tax forms. It's your opportunity to make a tax-deductible donation to help loons and other nongame wildlife. You can also donate to the Nongame Wildlife Program at the website listed below.

Volunteer Loon Watcher Survey 2024 Packet Contents

- Survey form for your lake(s)- to summarize your observations throughout the season.
- Map of your lake(s)- to record nesting locations and survey area.
- Survey instructions and tips- to assist with observations and utility of collected data.
- Be Loon Aware – educational brochure
- Volunteer agreement- one time form to be signed by new volunteers.

PLEASE NOTE: Electronic survey forms and lake maps can be provided upon request. Please contact the Loon Watcher Survey Coordinator via the contact information below to request electronic forms. If you have interest in “loon watching” multiple lakes, a survey form and map will need to be completed for each lake surveyed. We encourage you to coordinate efforts with other residents and your lake association.

Happy loon watching,



Jayden Jech
Loon Specialist

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