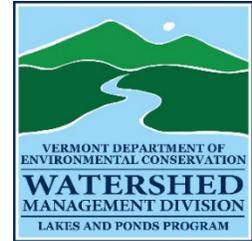


# Great Hosmer Pond Fact Sheet Series

## Factors Affecting Loon Populations

Prepared by Katie Parrish



### Loons on Great Hosmer Pond

According to Eric Hanson, Loon Biologist for the Vermont Loon Conservation Project, seven new breeding pairs of loons have been observed on Vermont lakes this year. On Great Hosmer, a new nesting site was observed on the north end, bringing the total number of breeding pairs to two for this lake.<sup>1</sup>

### Threats to Nesting Loons

John Buck, a Nongame Bird Biologist for the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department, says there are numerous factors that determine the ability for loons to inhabit and successfully breed on a waterbody. Significant threats to nesting loons include:

- **Fluctuating water levels.** Loons build nests on the shoreline, very close to the water. Waterbodies that are routinely flooded by natural or artificial events and boat wakes will result in nest failure.
- **Consistent close encounters with humans.** Routine interference by humans may cause loons to abandon their nest.
- **Competition between wildlife.** Predation by other animals and even competition between loons may reduce the number of surviving eggs.



image by Petra Vogel

Even though we are unable to control natural factors that impact nesting sites, we can control how humans interact with loon populations. Close encounters with motorized vessels as well as low impact recreational activities such as swimming and kayaking can threaten loon populations. Even casual wildlife-watchers who inadvertently step too close may cause loons to abandon their nests. The State of Vermont restricts activities in loon nesting areas during the time of year when the young loons are most vulnerable.

The [Vermont Use of Public Waters Rules](#) Section 3.6 states:

*Between May 1 and July 31 all persons and vessels are prohibited from public waters within 300 feet of any loon nesting site that the Secretary or his/her authorized representative has identified by signs and buoys or other clear on-site markings.*

### For more information

John Buck, Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department [john.buck@vermont.gov](mailto:john.buck@vermont.gov)

Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department [Common Loon Fact Sheet](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Hanson, Eric (2016) Vermont Center for Ecostudies [update](#). Accessed 9 August 2016.