



## Bird Studies Canada

# Making Nova Scotia's Lakes Loon Friendly

## Progress Report 2002 - Year 2

### Goals and Objectives

The goal of this project is to educate lake users about how their actions affect loon breeding and foraging habitat through existing programs (BSC's *Canadian Lakes Loon Survey (CCLS)* and *Loon Friendly Lakes Campaign*, and EHJV's *Loon Stewards*), and through a newly-established Loon Ambassadors Program in NS.

Our objectives for 2002 were to: 1) Promote loon and lake conservation through the management of a Loon Ambassadors Program in Nova Scotia; and 2) Gather additional data on loons, loon habitat, and the threats they face by continuing to promote the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey in Nova Scotia.

### Results

#### **Objective 1 - Promote loon and lake conservation through Loon Ambassadors Program**

Our Loon Ambassadors (Etta Parker, Sara Jane Snook & Elizabeth Dixon in Halifax; Judy Beaton in Stillwater Lake; Stephen & Sharon Hawboldt in Granville Ferry; and Faye Singleton in Hantsport) began making presentations to the public in April 2002, and accomplished the following:

- Etta Parker and Judy Beaton, along with BSC's Ambassador Coordinator Beth Flanigan attended the NS Federation of Naturalists Annual General Meeting on May 31-June 2 to promote the Loon Friendly Lakes program and distribute brochures and copies of *The State of Nova Scotia's Loons*. Etta promoted the Loon Friendly Lakes program in Kejimikujik National Park and elsewhere. She also made presentations to two schools along the eastern shore (Grades 1-6) and also spoke to parents in the evening. She spoke to many different cottage owners about loons and the CLLS. She distributed flyers to sport fishermen groups and gave nature walks at two lake association picnics.
- Sara Jane Snook and her daughter Elizabeth Dixon made a presentation to Elizabeth's Girl Guide unit (14 guides and 3 leaders) in April 2002. The presentation went very well. Sara Jane and Elizabeth were also interviewed by the Bridgewater Bulletin, resulting in a full page article (see attached). Sara Jane and Elizabeth are working on developing a Girl Guide craft related to loons.

- Judy Beaton made presentations to two libraries: Tantallon Public Library and J. D. Shatford Library in Hubbards. The presentation at Tantallon included many children as day camp was cancelled that day due to bad weather. Many people at both presentations had never seen loons or gone fishing before. More recently, Judy has questioned the libraries at Tantallon, Hubbards and Halifax to determine if they would be interested in having her make this presentation again (i.e. as part of their school program). However, there was apparently not enough interest from the school system, perhaps because the topic is too specific. Judy also attended BSC's Public Consultation Meeting in Sackville on Nov. 16 2002, as a representative of the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey, where she offered to give a talk to any local naturalists' club about loons and CLLS.
- Steve Hawboldt has been handing out Loon Friendly Lakes brochures at various events, and will continue to do so. The Royal Spectator (local paper in Annapolis Valley) did a feature article on Sharon (Steve's wife) who has been a loon surveyor for many years. Sharon fielded various phone calls from interested participants as a result.
- All ambassadors have distributed at least 500 *Loon Friendly Lakes* brochures.
- Faye Singleton, the Ambassador from Hantsport, NS, decided to retire from this program as she felt she could not contribute adequately to its goals. She did, however, put BSC in touch with the president of the Black River Lake Association (John McLaughlin) who offered to put Loon Friendly Lakes and Canadian Lakes Loon Survey brochures in the lake association newsletter in May. Brochures were sent to Mr. McLaughlin for this purpose in March 2003.

A new Loon Ambassador, Jack Stone, was recruited for 2003-2004. Jack is a retired elementary school teacher who has lived on Moody Lake between Sambro and Harrietsfield for 29 years.

Loon Ambassadors met for their Annual Meeting on Saturday, March 29, 2003 in Halifax. Minutes of this meeting are attached.

The loon awareness poster was displayed at the following events:

- The Colchester Historical Museum in Truro as part of a display entitled, "People looking after wildlife" (running from January-March 2003). This was arranged through Regional Biologist Ross Hall.
- *For the Birds* conference at White Point Beach in late February 2003.
- The Nova Scotia Museum on March 29 as part of a "Family Bird Day".

## **Objective II - Canadian Lakes Loon Survey Recruitment Drive**

Despite considerable effort by both BSC staff and Loon Ambassadors, the number of participants in the CLLS dropped from 50 to 43 in 2002-2003. BSC's efforts included a drive for all current BSC members, given that BSC's new membership structure allows members to participate in any and all BSC programs for one membership fee (\$25).

Previously, participants in the CLLS and Project FeederWatch had to pay the \$25 fee twice in order to participate in both of these programs. Many new people signed up for the CLLS across the rest of Canada as a result of this initiative; however, numbers in Nova Scotia did not increase. In Nova Scotia, BSC distributed a press release on "The State of Nova Scotia's Loons" in July 2002 which was picked up by the Halifax Chronicle Herald and which also led to several local papers doing stories on Loon Ambassadors (Sara Jane Snook and Elizabeth Dixon, as well as Sharon Hawboldt; see attached).

### **Plans for 2003-2004**

Loon Ambassadors will continue to give presentations and distribute brochures, with particular emphasis on:

- Elementary schools in the Halifax Regional Municipality. We are attempting to develop a 40-50 minute school program that Ambassadors could make to schools in the Halifax Region beginning in Fall 2003.
- Canoe/Kayak Clubs. We will contact these clubs to distribute brochures and make Ambassadors available to speak at meetings.
- Lake Associations. We will attempt to create a database of lake associations (contact name, address) in Nova Scotia which will be used to distribute information on Loon Friendly Lakes across the region.
- Corner stores. Ambassadors will be distributing brochures to corner stores in cottage country in Spring 2003; in particular, stores which sell fishing licenses and stores which are heavily used during the cottage season will be targeted.
- Loon Nesting Signs. We will attempt to produce and distribute additional loon nesting signs in 2003-2004, to replace signs that have been lost since originally distributed several years ago.

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