

Voice of a Loon

East Bay Township Inland Lakes Loons

It is estimated that Michigan has fewer than 500 nesting pairs of Common Loons remaining in the state. The Common Loon is threatened in Michigan. They are especially vulnerable to personal watercraft entering into critical areas such as small islands, inlets, coves and quiet bays.

THE NESTING SEASON IN MAY AND JUNE IS THE LOON'S MOST CRITICAL TIME. LOONS ONLY LAY TWO EGGS.

Boat Traffic Can Cause Loss of Eggs:

Loon parents leave if watercraft comes within 150 yards of the nest

(1 ½ football fields), leaving the eggs without warmth or protection and vulnerable to predators. If disturbed often, loons abandon the nest. A pair may re-nest if it isn't too late, BUT they only have TWO CHANCES. If loons are together near inlets, marshy shorelines, or backwaters in May or June, a nest site may have been disturbed.

Boat Traffic Can Cause Loss of Chicks:

Young chicks need to be able to climb up on their parents' backs to stay warm and dry. When watercraft comes close, parents leave their chicks to defend the territory.

Young chicks can't dive quickly to get out of the way. They can be run over.

Young chicks tire easily. The presence of watercraft causes them to swimming instead of feeding and resting. This can weaken them, affecting their ability to survive.

Boats Affect Loons:

Canoes, Kayaks can slip quietly into nesting areas and can startle loons off nests. Fishing Boats, especially pike and bass anglers spend lots of time in waters perfect for nest sites. Speed Boats send waves crashing into the shoreline. Personal Watercraft can speed in shallow water and may run over chicks.

What Everyone Can Do:

Enjoy loons from a distance. Loons give a warning call, which sounds like a laugh. If a loon is "dancing" straight up out of the water, and slapping its wings, it is urgent you move away. You are in their territory. Loons need solitude to breed and raise their young.

Once the loons are gone...your solitude might be slipping away too.

Please respect the loons and other residents when you are out in the lakes of East Bay Township!

Special credit to The Michigan Loon Preservation Association.