

# Tips for Loon-Safe Boating Near Nesting Loons



## May and June

The Common Loon is Minnesota's state bird. We have many nesting pairs on the Gull Chain of Lakes. Loons typically return to their nesting territories as soon as the ice is out and they are on the nest in May and June. While you are boating, we hope you enjoy observing the loons.

Please follow these loon-safe boating tips to protect our loons while you enjoy your day on the lake!



Natural nest



Man-made nest

- **Please stay at least 150 feet away from nesting loons.**  
Nesting is a vulnerable time for loons.
- **Please keep your watercraft speed slow to keep wakes to a minimum near nesting sites.**  
Loons nest on natural nests which look like grassy mounds close to the water's edge or on artificial loon nesting platforms. Nests can be washed out by wave action from boats or jetskis.
- **Please immediately back away if you see a loon in a head-down position.**  
Normally a loon sits on the nest in a relaxed position with its head upright. A loon with its head craned forward or down senses a threat and may abandon the nest, leaving the eggs to be taken by a predator or destroyed by chilling or overheating. Loons need to incubate their eggs for 26 to 29 days.

If you see a sick, injured, or dead loon please call conservation Officer Tim Collette or Jim Guida 888-646-6367.

Thank you for protecting our loons! Please share this information with other boaters. For more information about loons go to [www.gcola.org](http://www.gcola.org).



# Tips for Loon-Safe Boating

*Death from collision with a watercraft is one of the most common causes of loon deaths.*

- Please stay at least 150 feet away from loons, if possible.
- Young chicks are unable to dive or get out of the way of boats. If struck by a boat, they will die.
- **SPEED KILLS!** Please keep your speed down near adult loons and chicks, especially outside no wake zones where loons rear their chicks.
- Do not separate loon families by boating between them. Loon parents are not able to protect their chicks when separated.
- Do not pursue loons. Let them decide how close they wish to come to your watercraft.
- Do not circle loons with your watercraft. This is harassment and is subject to a fine from the MN DNR.
- When pulling tubers, wake-boarders, or skiers do not allow them to get close to or separate loon families.
- Do not feed loons! Loons will start chasing baited hooks and this will endanger their lives.
- Do not cast towards loons.

Remember, the best way to observe loons is at a distance with binoculars.



When threatened, adults will lift their body out of the water, flap their wings, and issue a tremolo call. This means, “Stay away!” If you see this display, please immediately leave the area.