

FEEL AROUND TOWN

FEEL's Haliburton Native Plant Sale

Place online orders from
Thanksgiving - May Day.

www.haliburtonstewardship.ca

Look for FEEL's Rain Barrels throughout
Haliburton County.

Order them online and pick them up
during the spring and summer.

www.rainbarrel.ca/feel

Register teams of up to 5 members for
FEEL's annual **CHIC 2B GEEK** quiz
night.

Register teams for the June event at
ecoenvirolearn@gmail.com
\$5 per person

Volunteers needed for the
HMK Children's Water Festival
a free two day curriculum-based event
held annually at
Kinark Outdoor Centre
www.hmwaterfestival.ca

FEEL's MISSION is to advance the
public's awareness, understanding,
and appreciation of ecosystems
through accessible education.

f.e.e.l

www.ecoenvirolearn.org
ecoenvirolearn@gmail.com



TAKE A CLOSER LOOK! TOOLS FOR LEARNING MORE

Great tools that will help you learn more
about the Common Loon

.....

Volunteer with the Canadian Lakes
Loon Survey to help scientists gather
important information about when
loons arrive on your lake and whether
they have eggs and chicks.

www.bsc-eoc.org/volunteer/clls/index.jsp?lang=EN&targetpg=index

Bird Studies Canada:

www.bsc-eoc.org

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology:

www.allaboutbirds.org

Roger Tory Peterson. 2002. Birds of
Eastern and Central North America,
5th Ed. Houghton Mifflin Company,
New York, New York, Pg. 26.

Remember, Loons increase the life
value of a lake!



FRIENDS OF ECOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING

F.E.E.L

THE SPRITE



A Publication for Kids and Their Families

Vol. 1, No. 3

June 12, 2015

THE GREAT NORTHERN DIVER

Andrea Storm-Suke

Perhaps one of the most
recognizable sounds echoing across
the misty northern lakes of Ontario is
the beautiful and haunting call of the
Common Loon (*Gavia immer*).

While easily recognized in the
summer as a strikingly handsome bird
on the water with a long dark pointed
bill, a white necklace, and a stylishly
worn black and white-flecked cloak, few
people are aware of the loon's life-cycle
and how important shorelines, lake
quality and stable lake water levels are
for its continued survival. As Ontarians,
we are fortunate to have more breeding



A nearly mature chick still prefers to
hitch a thermal ride on mom's back.

Kevin K. Pepper

The Sprite is published by FEEL (Friends of Ecological and Environmental Learning)
as a service and tool for children and their families.

For information about participation, memberships, and other publications, please visit

www.ecoenvirolearn.org.



Kevin K. Pepper

A perfect catch, head first!

Loon Signals: Are you driving them loony?

- A loon is splashing across the water and appearing to stand up: **YES**
- A loon is vocalizing at you: **YES**
- A loon is lying very flat on the shoreline with its head down. The loon is on its nest, and if approached, may slide into the water, leaving the eggs exposed to predators: **YES**

pairs of Common Loons than any other province in the country. However, this means that as citizens of this province, we have a great responsibility to ensure that important loon habitat is protected and available.

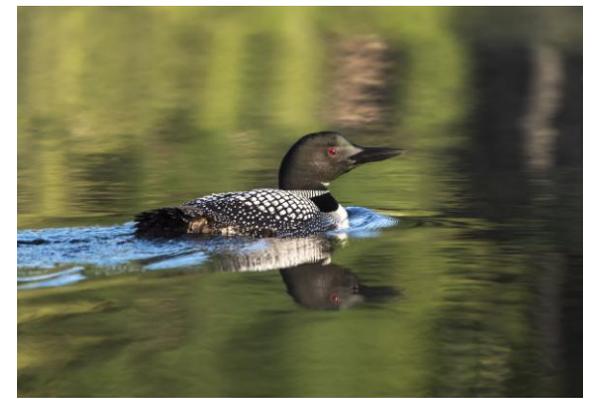
One of the best ways to protect loons and their habitat is to first learn a little more about how loons live and interact with their environment and with

humans. This allows us to identify the important resources required by loons to survive and to apply this information to our conservation plans.

As illustrated on Canada's one dollar coin, the 'loonie', most of the life of a Common Loon is spent on the water. In the summer, loons spend their time on freshwater inland lakes across Canada, like Head Lake in

Haliburton. In the winter, loons head to the east and west coasts of Canada and the United States to spend their time in the salt water oceans of the Pacific and Atlantic. The loon's love for water is no surprise since their favorite food is fish, especially yellow perch in the summer. Loons hunt for fish using their red-coloured eyes to scan underwater. They depend so heavily on their eyesight for finding food that they need clear water, free from the cloudiness of suspended sediment, in order to survive. Once a fish is spied, the loon expertly dives under the waves and catches it using their bill, and gobbles it down head first and entirely whole!

In addition to having fantastic eyes for spotting fish, the legs of a loon are specially placed and act like a propeller at the back of a boat, allowing for a fast pursuit of prey. Unlike most birds, a loon's legs are placed so far back on their bodies that walking on land is a very cumbersome affair. To move around, loons must use their chests like a sled, pushed forward by their legs. Fortunately, loons spend little time on land. In fact, the only time a loon chooses to venture onto land is when it is time to make a nest. Since walking on land is no easy feat, their nests are located on the very edge of lakeshores. To prevent waves from washing away their nests, loons select shorelines that are sheltered from the



Kevin K. Pepper

prevailing winds. Unfortunately, as cautious as they are in choosing an elemental sheltered site, man-made waves caused by boats and other motorized water vehicles can easily destroy loon nests regardless of their specified placement around the lake.

It is imperative that people take special care when navigating Ontario's lakes during late June and July. Several easy ways to help protect loon nests includes reducing watercraft speed to a level where the wake is minimal and where the bow of the boat is level, especially when travelling past islands and keeping as far a distance as possible from the shore while enjoying watercraft activities.

By understanding more about our feathered friends and their requirements for survival, we can join together to keep our impacts as small as possible so that the loon's beautiful call can continue to grace our lakes for many decades to come.