Loon Research in British Columbia

Objectives.

The primary objective of this study is to conduct an independent survey and demographic study of Common Loons in British Columbia, with the specific objectives to:

1. Collect and analyze data on the abundance and distribution of Common Loons in British Columbia.
2. Identify patterns of productivity and survival in Common Loons in British Columbia.
3. Investigate the potential effects of mercury pollution on Common Loons in British Columbia.

Study Region.

Breeding Lakes in British Columbia will be targeted for Common Loon surveys in 2014. In order to accomplish this first demographic objective, a pre-survey will be performed on all lakes that supported loons during the initial survey. This survey will occur during the spring months, when lakes are at their maximum extent and loons are most active. Lakes will be observed using binoculars or a spotting scope to determine the presence or absence of loons. If loons are observed, surveys to determine loon occupancy rates will commence in mid-May, when most loons are breeding.

Methods of Gathering Data.

Surveying.

Lakes targeted for Common Loon surveys in British Columbia in 2014.

Study Goals.

Surveying.

Lakes will be observed using binoculars or a spotting scope to determine the presence or absence of loons. If loons are observed, surveys to determine loon occupancy rates will commence in mid-May, when most loons are breeding. Surveying methods will be developed based on the size and shape of the lake, with one or two observers scanning a lake with binoculars or spotting scopes for a period of time. The survey will be repeated at least once over a period of weeks, and the results will be compared to other regions (i.e., Washington, Montana, Wyoming, Minnesota, etc.).

Expected Deliverables/Outcomes.

The results of this study will be published in scientific journals and presented at conferences and workshops. The data collected will be used to inform management and conservation efforts for Common Loons in British Columbia. The results will also be used to inform policy decisions related to mercury pollution in the region.

Collaborators.

Lead Investigator:

Ken Wright

Study Region.

Breeding Lakes in British Columbia

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