Loon Program - Restore the Call

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- British Columbia, CA
- Quebec, CA

GSA Contract

RECENT BRI PUBLICATIONS

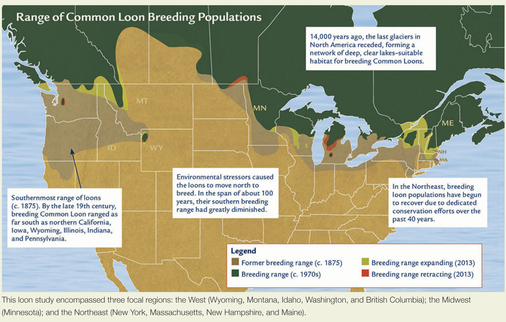
Plasma Biochemistry and Protein Electrophoresis Reference Intervals of the Common Loon (*Gavia immer*) (2020)

Assessing year-round habitat use by migratory sea ducks in a multi-species context reveals seasonal variation in habitat selection and partitioning (2020)

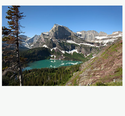
Annual movement patterns of American common eiders Somateria mollissima dresseri (2020)

In 2013, BRI and The Ricketts Conservation Foundation (RCF) worked together to initiate the largest conservation study for the Common Loon, a key bioindicator of aquatic integrity for lakes and near shore marine ecosystems across North America. This scientific initiative laid a strong foundation to help researchers identify major threats to loons and to create solutions that strengthen populations and to restore loons to their former breeding range.

The *Restore the Call* initiative encompassed three major components including population assessments, outreach and conservation efforts, and research and restoration studies. These components were carried out in a number of individual projects within the three main focal regions.



This loon study encompassed three focal regions: the West (Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Washington, and British Columbia); the Midwest (Minnesota); and the Northeast (New York, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine).



Western Region

The entire breeding loon population in the western United States is approximately 100 territorial pairs—most of those (72) are in Montana. In Wyoming, only 14 territorial pairs were found in 2013; in Idaho, just one pair is known. The challenge for Wyoming's breeding loon population to continue is that it is small, declining, and isolated (more than 220 miles distant from Montana's breeding population). In Wyoming, the loon is considered the highest ranked species of conservation need by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Our study investigated current threats to loons, how they might be reversed, and how Montana's breeding population could be used to help support the continuation of Wyoming's struggling population. This project also included studies in Washington and British Columbia.

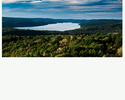
Learn more about Restore the Call and ongoing loon studies in: Montana, Wyoming, Washington, and British Columbia.

Midwestern Region

Minnesota boasts nearly 12,000 lakes that are larger than 10 acres. The 4,600 territorial loon pairs in Minnesota represent 52 percent of all loon pairs in the lower 48 states (there are 8,800 in total). However, about one-third of the loon's former range is still unoccupied in the state.

Translocation efforts continue in Minnesota, including evaluation of the quality of the many lakes in southern Minnesota.

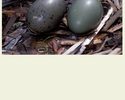
Learn more about Restore the Call and ongoing loon studies in Minnesota.



Northeastern Region

Home to more than 1,100 lakes, Massachusetts offers prime habitat for breeding loons. Extirpated in the early 20th century, Common Loons returned in 1975 as a nesting species. Over the last four decades, loons have made a comeback—in 2013 there were 36 territorial pairs statewide. However, breeding loons remain restricted to only a part of their former Massachusetts range. Larger populations in New Hampshire and Maine continue to be studied to determine how they can best contribute toward restoration efforts in Massachusetts.

Learn more about Restore the Call and ongoing loon studies in Maine and New Hampshire, and Massachusetts.



What We Studied

Population Assessments

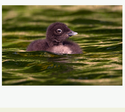
- Conducted surveys to determine the distribution, reproductive success, and threats to breeding populations
- Determined the historical breeding range
- Evaluated existing habitat conditions of the former range

Outreach and Conservation

- Updated and enacted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Conservation and Management Plan
- Developed state-specific working groups to create Conservation and Management Plans
- Conveyed important threats to the general public through outreach efforts
- Created scientifically-based management solutions

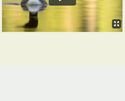
Research and Restoration

- Developed techniques and methodologies for translocating loons
- Designed and built rearing facilities that met existing husbandry standards
- Released and monitored loon chicks in target areas to supplement and expand existing breeding populations
- Beyond the first five years--develop a program to monitor the new breeding populations in our initial target regions



Translocation and Captive Rearing

Translocation involves multiple teams conducting source population surveys, capture and transport, and the difficult task of safely rearing the chicks, with numerous steps and processes in between. Learn more about our safe and replicable approach for translocation and captive rearing of loon chicks here.



Media Library

Our Loon Program Media Library contains a collection of project videos, Common Loon Status Reports by state, project publications, links to media coverage, and images available for the press. Learn more

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ABOUT BRI

BRI IN THE NEWS

BRI Featured in Discover Magazine Online
June 22, 2021

New BRI-IPEN Study Shows High Mercury Levels in Indigenous Latin American Women
June 15, 2021

BRI Loon Biologist Awarded NSF Grant
June 11, 2021

BRI Climate Change Program in the News
April 21, 2021

BRI Launches BRI Environmental
April 12, 2021

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