

# Sabbathday Lake News

November 2006

## In My View

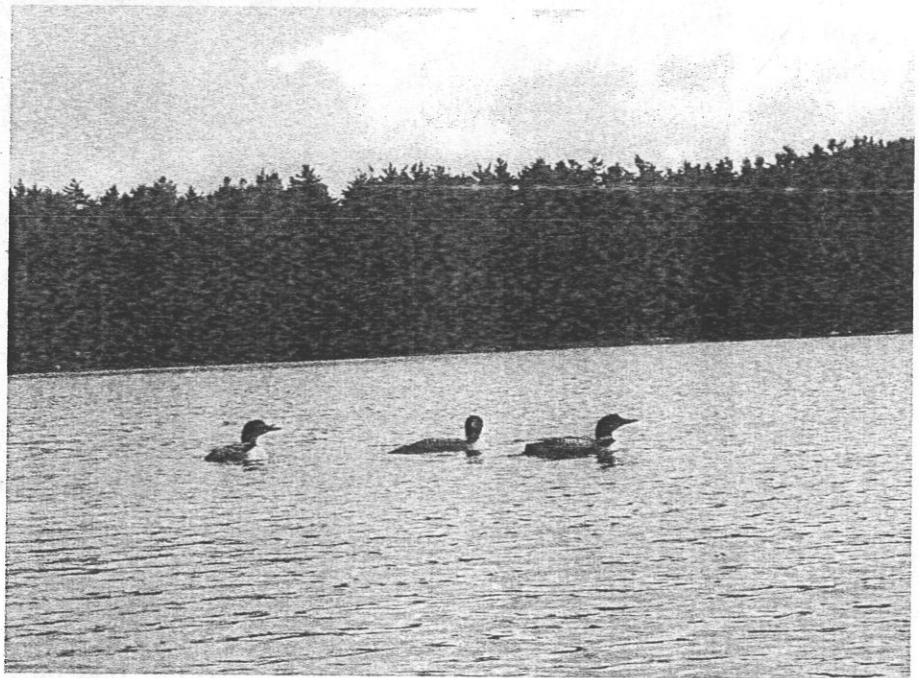
Mike Cloutier, President  
Sabbathday Lake Association

Can it be? All the signs are here. Where there was only the color green, now there is red, orange and yellow. The change of seasons is upon us in a dramatic way. The sun is as bright and warm as usual, however the wind carries an unmistakable chill. For those of us that are "summer people" it can mean only one thing. It's time to close up the camp. And as if to say good-bye, we were visited by a loon which sang its familiar song, a muskrat working a frenzied pace and a fly by from a spectacular bald eagle. What a send off.

The Sabbathday Lake Association has had a busy and fruitful year. We sponsored the milfoil inspections at the Outlet Beach with no positive identifications noted. Thank you to all the members that participated in this most important initiative. The Royal River Youth Conservation Corps was active again this summer with several projects around the lake and they have done an outstanding job as usual. If you want to work with them on a project around your property next year, please contact board member Lori Fowler. We have continued with our water testing and will be adding additional tests for next

summer. I will be reporting on the results in the spring news letter in greater detail. We are still selling the beautiful tee shirts at the Shaker Store at the Shaker Community on Shaker Road. They make great gifts and provide much needed funding for the lake association.

I would also like to thank Janet Lambert for her many years of service to the lake association.



Loons on Sabbathday Lake

photo by Paula Gauthier

Janet is stepping down this year and her participation has been most appreciated. And on that note, I would like to welcome two new board members, Munira Naqui and David Becker. They will add new perspective to the ongoing efforts of the lake association.

described the water testing procedures which his firm is providing. Jennifer Melville, project manager of the Trust for Public Land, discussed the current project she is working on with the Shaker Community. Our keynote speaker

**View** cont. p. 4

# LOONS

by Chris Ricardi

One of the things I enjoy the most about living on Sabbathday Lake is the return of loons each spring. Some time around May their haunting calls come rolling across the lake to remind us that they are back. Their calls are sounds unique to the north lands, and they revive memories for me of time spent exploring and fishing in northern Maine and New Hampshire. To hear their yodels and wails outside my door each year is a special treat.

The loons that visit our lake are

Common Loons. During the spring and summer they are in their summer plumage with a distinctive black head, red eyes, pointed bill, and white and black bodies that distinguish them from other water birds, although they are sometimes confused with the common merganser. Young loons lack these colors and have a dull gray appearance. Loons take about 3 years to mature and get their adult coloration. However, we rarely see the young gray colored loons because they spend most of their first three years on the ocean without returning to fresh water. There are other species of loons that live in North America including the Yellow-Billed loon, Red-Throated loon, and

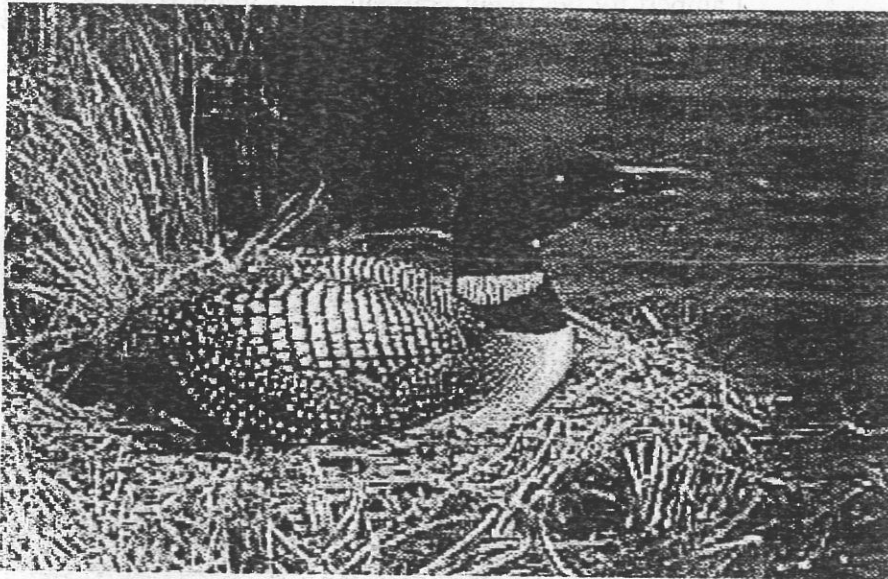
Pacific loons, but they live in the arctic and are rarely seen on inland waters as far south as New England.

Loons are birds designed for life in the water. The name loon actually comes from Icelandic and Swedish words for awkward or clumsy which is how they appear on land. They are divers. Their legs sit far back on their bodies and are designed only for swimming. Their wings are short and strong and help propel them when swimming and chasing fish. They literally fly underwater. They are more closely related to penguins and other diving sea birds than to ducks. Unlike most other birds which have hollow bones and light bodies, loons have solid bones and heavy bodies that are better for swimming. They cannot jump up in the air when they take to flight like a duck. They take off more like a plane and need a long runway to get

enough speed to take to the wing. They need up to a quarter mile to get off the water. When they land they glide across the surface on their bodies until they come to rest. But they are powerful fliers with wings that must beat constantly when in flight. There is no gliding for this big heavy bird.

In lakes they dive and catch fish, frogs, salamanders, crayfish,

insects, and even eat clams and other shellfish. On the ocean they add crabs, lobster, and shrimp to their menu. Like other birds, they eat small pebbles and stones to help grind up their food during digestion. One of the greatest threats to loons is ingestion of small lead fishing weights such as split shots. Loon research has shown that lead poisoning from fishing sinkers is the leading cause of death for loons in New England. The states of Maine, New Hampshire, and New York have banned the sale of lead sinkers smaller than one ounce. Massachusetts and Vermont are considering similar laws.





Conservation minded fishermen who care about loons (and over 20 other species of water birds that are at risk for lead ingestion) should clean out their lead weights (throwing them in the trash) and replace them with less toxic alternatives that are widely available.

Another threat to loons is mercury poisoning, and this is especially true in the northeast. Mercury pollution which comes primarily from the burning of coal to produce electricity travels on the winds from areas west of New England. It is washed into the lake when it rains. Bacteria have the ability to transform it to a toxic form of organic mercury. It then becomes soluble in the lake water and it slowly bioaccumulates in fish. Loons eat a lot of fish, and they sometimes suffer toxic effects from an overdose of mercury.

Loons breed only in the northern reaches of the US and throughout Canada. In that respect they are truly a northern bird. They lay one or two eggs that are dull green to gray. Often the dominant chick in a nest will kill the smaller sibling. For that reason it is rare to see more than one chick. Each fall the adults molt and lose the black and white feathers which are replaced with a dull gray plumage similar to young birds. They then migrate to the Atlantic or Pacific coast and spend the winter on the ocean. In the spring they molt again and regain their summer colors.

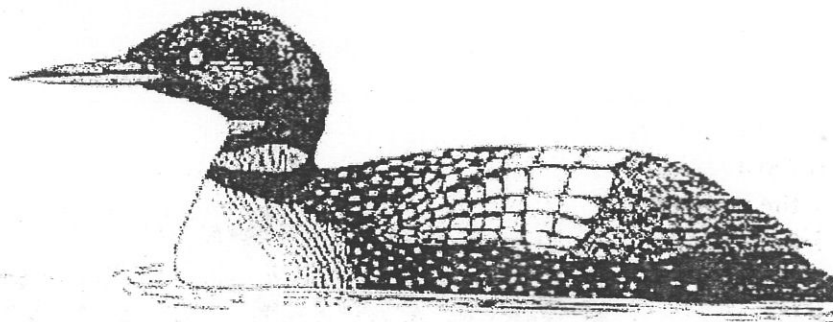
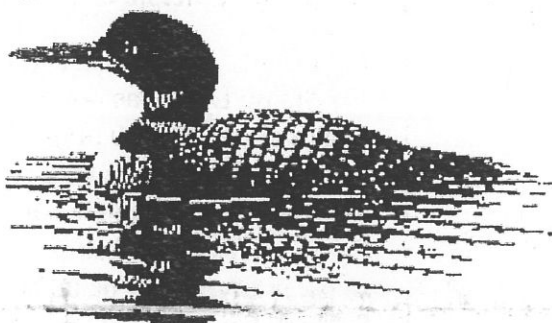
The loons that visit Sabbathday in the early spring and late fall are likely just passing through southern Maine on their annual migrations. The loons we see during the summer are likely non-breeding adults. They come to Sabbathday to dine on the abundant

bass, smelt, stocked trout, and other forage that is in the lake. In the 15 years that I have lived on Sabbathday Lake I have not observed chicks on the lake, and I do not expect to. The type of nesting habitat that loons require is just not found on Sabbathday. Loons prefer to nest on the back sides of small islands, protected shorelines of secluded coves, or lake inlets and outlets. They build their nests directly at the water line because they can not walk on land. They need to be able to slide their bodies from the water up onto the nest. They require a nesting area free of activities such as boating, fishing, or other human activities and often abandon a nest site that is disturbed. These habitats and undisturbed conditions just do not exist on Sabbathday Lake, and it is very unlikely that successful loon nesting will occur naturally.

In many areas of the US, artificial loon nesting islands have been used to create nesting opportunities for loons on lakes that have limited natural habitat. These islands are just a small wooden or PVC framed float that is covered with mud and grass. Loons readily use them

if placed in the right locations such as secluded coves. Use of these islands usually requires that steps be taken

to keep people away from the nests. Following drops in loon populations that occurred in the middle to late 1900s, conservation groups over the past 30 years have had great success using artificial islands to increase nesting success of loons in New England and reverse the decline of loon populations. Having loons visiting our lake as often as they have in the past few years is a very good sign that loons are indeed doing well.



## View cont. from p.1

was Maggie Shannon, Executive Director of the Congress of Lake Associations (COLA). During her excellent presentation she commented on how thrilled she was to see such an active lake association. It was a fine tribute to all who have participated in the objectives of the lake association. As the title of her presentation suggests, "We all have a stake in Maine lakes."

Now that our 501 (3) C has been formalized we have set an objective of finding future funding for additional watershed work around the lake. We have formed a grant writing committee with that goal in mind. The committee consists of Paula Gauthier, Don O'Malley, Lori Fowler, Munira Naqui and Paul Gillis. If you have interest in participating on this committee please let Paula Gauthier know. We will be having a meeting sometime this fall.

We also had two bicycle and kayak tours of the lake this summer. Paula Gauthier provided the tours via kayak and Anne Maurice provide the tours via bicycle. Hopefully these tours will be provided next year as well. What a great way to experience the beauty of the lake and the various plants and wildlife that depend on it.

I would like to thank the board of directors for their support and guidance this year and to all who have volunteered and worked to achieve the goals and objectives of the lake association. Don't forget to check out our website, <http://www.sabbathdaylakeassoc.org/>.

I wish you all a wonderful holiday season and I look forward to seeing you around the lake this winter. So until next spring, be well.



## Watershed Survey Nixed

by Paula Gauthier

In May of this year, the Sabbathday Lake Association in conjunction with the Cumberland Soil and Water Conservation District applied to the Maine DEP for grant funding to complete a watershed survey. In the ten years since our last Sabbathday Lake watershed survey much has happened in the areas surrounding our lake. The largest and most notable change in the watershed, of course, is the "new" Route 26. As stewards of the watershed, the Board of Directors felt that a watershed survey was warranted to evaluate the impact of both road changes and remediation efforts within the watershed.

In late July, the Board learned that the request to the Maine DEP was not funded. The Maine DEP had total of \$40,000 of available funding for watershed survey projects and applications in excess of \$93,000 were submitted. At this time the Board of Directors has not determined what next steps, if any, might be taken to undertake a Sabbathday Lake Watershed Survey.



Anyone happen to spot this small pyramid heading south on Sabbathday Lake during the heat wave this summer? That's Nicole Fortier perched on the shoulders of brothers Mark and Eric Stoesser-Casad. out enjoying the waters on a very hot day.

Towing by ever ready water ski coaches and photographer Janet and Don Lambert.

# Sabbathday Lake Association Annual Membership Dues 2006

**AMOUNT: \$15**

**Additional donations welcome!**

Please send annual dues to: **Anne Maurice, 10 Cushman Drive  
NEW GLOUCESTER, ME 04260**

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: **SABBATHDAY LAKE ASSOCIATION**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

### Benefits of belonging to the Association:

- ◆ News about what's happening around the lake
- ◆ Social gatherings to meet your neighbors
- ◆ Water quality testing
- ◆ Environmental Improvement Activities

### 2006 Membership Lags 2005 by Anne Maurice

Our 2006 membership still lags behind our 2005 membership – see the table below. At our current membership of 66, we are well below our target of 100 members. The Directors are disappointed that our numbers are so low because our Association has been very productive. We successfully changed our status to a 501 (3) c organization. We held a well-attended Saturday meeting in August 2006. We coordinated two bike and kayak rides around the lake. We contracted with Forest Bell for water quality testing and he has provided us with more comprehensive testing and reporting for less money. We had consistent milfoil monitoring all summer. And we established a grant writing committee to apply for applicable grants.

All this and our membership is lower than last year! We could use everyone's help to meet our 100 member goal. Please help us spread the word about the benefits of belonging to the Sabbathday Lake Association.

- Two newsletters per year.
- Water quality testing
- Milfoil prevention activities
- Two summer meetings
- Board of Directors who meet year round
- Other activities as planned

Your \$15 dues go a long way and are tax deductible. We appreciate your continued support.

#### Membership history:

1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006 YTD
106	102	85	87	76	80	84	66

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# Sabbathday Lake News

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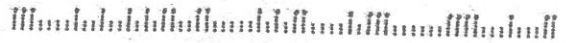
Not Delivered As Addressed  
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 Refused  
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 No Street, Street  
 Vacant  
 No Street Number  
 No ZIP+4  
 Business Reply Order  
 NEW GLOUCESTER ME 04260

ATK



**Jen Blastow**  
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New Gloucester, ME 04060

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## Sabbathday Lake News

The Newsletter of the  
Sabbathday Lake Association

Please send your lake-related news contributions to the Editor  
by email to Cheryl Fortier, [cfortier@maine.rr.com](mailto:cfortier@maine.rr.com)

### SABBATHDAY LAKE ASSOCIATION

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