

Loon Protocol:

Did you know what to do when you get that call about a loon needing help? Now you do. Thanks to Dr. Nina Schoch, Wildlife Veterinarian, *BRI's Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation*, we have guidance to follow:

1. **Calls about distressed loons:** Need to decide if it's really a distressed loon or not – most commonly confused with a loon taking a bath (often for ~1 hr or more) or a bird with a colored band on the leg that someone has mistaken for a bobber.
 - a. **If it's really a distressed loon**, then get the phone # of a contact person & ask if the people can keep an eye on it until a rescue can be arranged (*see #3 below to arrange a rescue*).

2. **Loon that is beaching itself or landed on a road (i.e.: loon that is sick & easy to catch on land):** This bird can be caught and should be placed in a **PADDED** (very important) box or kennel. **Please notify DEC and myself about this bird and its disposition.**
 - a. ***If it is dying or dead***, please contact DEC (see contact info below) to arrange getting the bird to the Wildlife Pathology Unit for necropsy. Please double-bag it in a garbage bag, and label it with the info about the bird (date, location found, species, who found it, circumstances it was found in...), and store it in a freezer until it can be transported to NYS DEC (Ray Brook or Warrensburg).

 - b. ***If it is truly sick, but may be releasable after rehabilitation:*** This bird should (ideally) be transported to the **Wildlife Clinic at Tufts Vet School (508-839-7918)** or to **Cornell's Wildlife Clinic** (whichever is closer) after it is stabilized. Please bring it to the vet you work with for diagnostics (x-ray) and/or stabilization (SQ fluids?) prior to transport. To help stabilize the bird, it can be swum in a tub several times a day & offered (or force-fed) food (can use a/d to tube feed if needed). Note that it should be in a **padded** kennel between swims, but should NOT be left in the water all day. These birds are sick and weak and don't have the energy to swim all day. Plus, they may no longer be waterproof & may get chilled in the water.

 - c. ***If it is bright, alert, and responsive, and seems fine, except a little thin:*** This bird could be released right away, ideally on a small lake (WITHOUT a pair with chicks! – VERY IMPORTANT!), where someone can look for it regularly. ***Please contact me BEFORE release to see if I am available to band it & possibly take blood & feather samples for our mercury research.***

3. **Fishing line loon that is acting normally (i.e.: will probably be difficult to catch):** This bird should be caught and the fishing line removed.
 - a. **NOTIFY DEC and/or myself ASAP** about this bird to arrange a capture. **Captures of reasonably healthy birds should ONLY BE DONE BY EXPERIENCED PERSONNEL with appropriate permits, and DEC SHOULD BE NOTIFIED AND/OR INVOLVED WITH ALL SUCH ATTEMPTS.** It is fine to go out and look for/monitor this bird, but DEC or myself should be involved with capture attempts of a bird that is acting reasonably normally. We may ask for your assistance with such captures if you are available.

To contact DEC:

- Ben Tabor, Region 5 Wildlife Technician: (518) 897-1279 = w, (518) 534-0736 = cell, bptabor@gw.dec.state.ny.us
- Andy Preston, Region 5 Seasonal Wildlife Technician: (518) 897-1295 = w, ajpresto@gw.dec.state.ny.us
- John Ozard, Leader, NonGame Unit: 518-402-8905, jwozard@gw.dec.state.ny.us

Please also email me about any fishing line or injured/dead loons (especially if it's a banded one) even if I am not available, as I keep a running log of such birds. Thank you, Nina nina.schoch@briloon.org