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Questions? contact: Eric Hanson, VLRP Coordinator, (802) 586-8064  
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[www.vtcostudies.org](http://www.vtcostudies.org)

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## Instructions:

### 1) How often to survey and report sightings to Eric Hanson via phone, email, or mail?

#### A) Lakes with breeding and territorial loons:

Pre-hatching: at least once every 2 weeks

Post-hatching: about every 3-4 weeks through August

**IMPORTANT:** - When loons first observed on nest or chicks hatch, call or send note to Eric right away.

*If only surveying every 2 weeks or so, it is often best to send email or make quick phone call after each survey, so that Eric does not duplicate survey efforts. If Eric does not hear from you, he will be conducting surveys when he is in the area.*

#### B) Lakes with loon activity but no breeding history: at least **3 to 6 surveys**

(e.g., mid-May, mid-June, mid-July).

### 2) What to survey

**'A) Lakes with breeding and territorial loons:** You can focus on finding the loon pair.

However, if the pair is not in usual area on large lakes, you would have to survey other parts of lake before counting as negative survey.

**B) Lakes with loon activity but no breeding history:** survey the entire lake before entering

"0" loons. Make comments on partial (p) surveys (e.g., from your cabin or roadside),

but please indicate what you did and did not survey

(e.g., "pair at S. end of pond, did not check N. end")

### 3) Record important changes and significant events including:

- 1st observation of adults
- 1st observation of nesting
- 1st observation of adults w/ young
- # of visiting adults and their behavior
- aggressive behavior between loons
- evidence of human disturbance
- nest location, if known (written description, sketch a map)
- confirmed abandonment of nest and possible causes
- confirmed disappearance of a chick and possible causes
- presence of possible nest or chick predators
- (gulls, eagles, otters, crows, ravens, raccoons, etc.)
- water level changes

### 4) Observation etiquette: watch from a distance....do not agitate or disturb the loons.

- Do not search actively for the loon nest....knowing the general location is adequate.
- Watching loon behavior can confirm nesting (e.g., observing male and female exchange positions on nest).
- **You are too close when: a) a loon "crouches" down on the nest or in the water, b) tremolos at your presence.**

### 5) Dead or injured loons and abandoned nests

- If you come across a dead or injured loon, call the local game warden and Eric immediately.
  - If possible, place the dead loon in a clean plastic bag and store in a freezer so an necropsy can be performed.
  - If you observe a nesting pair off the nest for several days, and there is an unhatched egg still on the nest, call Eric.
- We will want to retrieve the egg and store it in a freezer for analysis later.

### \*\*\*\* 6) When to call the VLRP Coordinator: **IMPORTANT**

- Call if you cannot visit a breeding lake during your pre-arranged survey schedule (e.g., bi-weekly)
- Call when you first observe loons nesting, chicks, or an abandoned nest.
- Call if you observe major changes in water levels.

**\*\* Call the local game warden and Eric immediately if you observe any intentional harassment.**

Please send in observation updates every 2 weeks pre-hatching and every 3-4 weeks post-hatching, so that Eric knows the lake is being surveyed (unless you've made other arrangements)

**Adopt-a-Lake Data Form \*\*\* Vermont Loon Recovery Project**

Lake/Pond: \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteers: Use this form and instructions as a guide on what to report to Eric Hanson by phone or email or fill out regularly

**Breeding / Territorial Loons: Please report your sightings to Eric Hanson about every 2 weeks so he knows the lake is being monitored (phone, email, mail).**

**Summary of Loon Activity** (fill in as information becomes available) **Volunteer Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

- ( ) Breeding pair      **Nest success -**      **Nest type -**      Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ( ) Territorial pair      # hatched: \_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) shoreline **Nest or chick loss -** Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ( ) Resident / visitors      # survived (>6 wks of age): \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) island      Cause (suspected or known): \_\_\_\_\_  
 ( ) raft \_\_\_\_\_

Forms available at [www.vtecostudies.org](http://www.vtecostudies.org)

\* chick size: 1/4, 1/2, 3/4 size of adult

\* chick color: black, brown, gray and white

Date	Extent of survey complete survey (c) or partial survey (e.g., from camp, north bay only, from road)	# of adults	# of chicks	# of subadults	Size and color of chicks *	Comments  (behaviors, interactions, nesting, chicks, weather)

**Send updates at least every other week (postcards, phone, e-mail) for lakes with breeding or territorial loons**

Return by August 30.

\*\*\*\*\* VOLUNTEER HOURS FORM: Please mail in by August 30th. \*\*\*\*\*

mail to: Eric Hanson, PO Box 22, Craftsbury, VT 05826    [ehanson@vtecostudies.org](mailto:ehanson@vtecostudies.org)    (802) 586-8064