

2012 Loon Ranger Report

During the summer of 2012, Lake Ann was lucky to have one nesting pair of loons on the lake. Even though we had no reports of eagle attacks this spring, the loons were unsuccessful at having any chicks. The loons finally abandoned their nest in early July leaving one egg un-hatched on the nest.

Assuming we are lucky enough to have a pair of loons again this year, we will be putting the loon nesting buoys out again in the spring. The loons have been nesting consistently in Mud Bay so we plan on placing the buoys in a similar location as last year. The buoys are usually out by early May. This is usually after the loons have established a nest, and more importantly, after we have a pontoon in the water which makes placing the buoys a simple project. Please advise any guests you have to respect the loons and stay outside the area of the loon buoys.

We did have a "loon alarm" this summer. Several residents contacted me concerned that one of the loons was injured. The loon was exhibiting a behavior unfamiliar to any of us. The loon was continuously preening one side of his body as if a hook or parasite was attached. We observed the loon for several hours until eventually it assumed a normal behavior pattern. We did learn several things as a result of this event.

- First, the Michigan Loon Preservation Association did get back to me and stated that the behavior was normal and has been observed, although infrequent.
- Second, the DNR is not equipped to help with wounded loons. Their response would be to observe and, if necessary, put the loon out of its misery.
- Third, if we needed to capture the loon for medical attention, it would take a village. Or in our case, a large contingent of lake residents. We would need to watch the loon throughout the day so we would know its location at dusk. Then at dusk, we would herd the loon towards the shore where we would then be able to capture it. We would need to find someone to assist in caring for the loon. We currently have no relationship with any vet or protection group to provide this assistance. I will be working on establishing some contacts this summer so any help or assistance would be greatly appreciated.

Submitted by Kathy Garmes Taylor, Loon Ranger and Lake Ann Loon Liaison