

How to make Lake Windermere more loon friendly

From across the lake or high up on Mount Swansea, it is this time of year that we can still hear the mournful wail of the Common Loon as they return to the Columbia Valley and Lake Windermere from their coastal wintering grounds. These birds are true symbols of the great Canadian wilderness.

The Common Loon however is in jeopardy. Populations have declined significantly over the past 150 years. Their nesting and breeding habitats are vulnerable to human influences. Loons and their chicks are exposed to pollution caused by synthetic pesticide and fertilizer runoff. Shoreline development displaces loon nests, and watercraft frighten chicks and create wakes that can wash away loon eggs.

There are steps you can take to support a loon-friendly lake.

Keep your shoreline natural, vegetated shorelines provide shelter for loons and other wildlife.

Use sensitive boating practices and limit your wake around shallow areas and wetlands where loons prefer to nest.

Use non-lead sinkers and jigs when fishing and properly discard fishing line and hooks. Lacking teeth, loons grind their food with small pebbles from the bottom of the lake and can mistakenly pick up a lead sinker, which can be absorbed into their blood poisoning them.

Get involved, watch over nesting areas and help ensure the Common Loon remains one of the oldest surviving groups of birds.

For more information contact the Lake Windermere Project at 341-6898. You can also visit the Project office located in the old District of Invermere office beside the Invermere Community Centre. The Lake Windermere Project is a long-term comprehensive stewardship program dedicated to safeguarding the health of our lake. The Lake Windermere Project is made possible by generous support from Wildsight, Environment Canada, Columbia Basin Trust and the Real estate Foundation of B.C.