2026 LOON REPORT — August 1, 2026

LOON CAM BACK IN SERVICE TO WILD ACCLAIM

After a shortened 2025 loon cam year due to cable damage, Sean and Doug laid a new underwater cable in a protected housing (garden hose). Within minutes of the looncam coming back online, our stalwart followers showed up ready to post round-the-clock observations. The number of subscribers to our YouTube channel more than doubled from just under 700 this past year to almost 1700 as of today. We are still the only looncam in Vermont and just one of three in all of New England. Our thanks to the LFA for launching the looncam four years ago and funding the repair.

LOONS RETURN EAGER TO NEST BUT FAIL TO LAY ANY EGGS

This marks the tenth year for the loon nesting raft anchored at the northern end of Lake Fairlee. As Sean and Doug launched the nest on May 2, the loon pair accompanied them while being filmed for a documentary in production to mark the fiftieth year of the Vermont Loon Conservation Project in 2027. Unfortunately, beavers from the nearby bank lodge at Treasure Island treated our verdant raft as a snack bar, requiring repeated refoliation. Undaunted, the loons created a nest there and engaged in all of the necessary x-rated acts to produce an egg, but to no avail. This inability to create an egg occurred once before in 2023. So unfortunately we have no chicks to report this year. Nature is fickle, as evidenced by the fact that the two eggs laid by the loons on Lake Morey this year never even hatched, despite 50 days of their loons sitting on them. We speculate that inter-species pressure from beavers and the ever-present eagles may be partly to blame (see Sean's video excerpts on the LFA website of an eagle landing on the nest and of the so-called beaver-saurus regularly climbing onto the nest). Eric Hanson has offered to install a hoop roof for the nesting raft later this summer. This would protect the loons from eagles, provide shade, and decrease the amount of foliage that seems to attract the beavers.

NO NESTING BY SECOND LOON PAIR NEAR MIDDLE BROOK THIS YEAR

Last year we discovered a second loon nest near the mouth of Middle Brook, but it was abandoned within a week. No second nesting attempt occurred this year, though I observed this loon pair during the annual loon count two weeks ago. It would be helpful to have someone from the southern end of the lake doing regular monitoring of the shoreline and coves south of Passumpsic Point from late April through the summer. We could be better prepared if this loon pair decides to nest again. This observer could also help conduct the annual loon count that takes place across the state the third Saturday of July. Anyone interested should talk to me after the meeting.

NEW BOOK "LOONS OF LAKE MOREY" INCLUDES SECTION ON LAKE FAIRLEE

Bill and Sue Minard are my loon-watching counterparts on Lake Morey. They have just published a heavily illustrated book titled LOONS OF LAKE MOREY, which includes a short section written by me on the Lake Fairlee loons. While focusing on our two lakes, it is very informative about loons in general and the photos are stunning. A copy is at the sign-in desk for you to look through. Bill has placed copies for sale at Chapman's and the Fairlee Public Library.