



Our Loon Project Mentor, Lee Attix, has just completed the attached **2024 Belgrade Lakes Common Loon Monitoring Summary Report**.

As you will read the biggest takeaways are:

- 1. The 2024 overall productivity of 0.26 CS/TP (chick productivity per territorial pair) remains very low when compared to the established sustainable population threshold of 0.48 CS/TP. Looking at 2019 (0.35), 2020 (0.17), 2021 (0.35), 2022 (0.30), 2023 (0.26) productivity, no single year approaches 0.48 CS/TP. These consistently low productivity numbers over a six-year period are concerning.*
- 2. For populations to thrive, long-term survival and mate fidelity are critical factors. Early findings raise concerns about loon fidelity in the study area. While return/survival rates are strong, mate fidelity is low. Only two of seven pairs banded in 2023 remained together in 2024 (29%) despite all the adults returning. Overall, only five of 14 pairs since 2020 have remained together (36%). Four years of (banded) data collection is a beginning.*
- 3. Three of the six man-made floating rafts were used for nesting (50%), and two of the three nests were successful (67%). Comparatively, there were a total of 15 natural nest attempts on the two lakes, and six nests were successful (40%). Rafts can be an excellent option where natural nests consistently fail.*
- 4. Thirty of 36 banded adult loons returned (83%) to their territory.*
- 5. Nesting was confirmed for the first time in the Great Pond's, Otter Island territory. The male resident was originally banded in Snake Point Cove in 2008. The nesting pair hatched and fledged one chick.*
- 6. We had just one chick from Long Pond and four chicks from Great Pond that we assumed made the Great Fly-off this fall.*
- 7. Progress recruiting new citizen volunteers in the community has been slow, however. Our Colby Internship program is a start but does not assure the necessary sustainability. Further study and evaluation of population trends is warranted to help better understand the low productivity and determine if there are additional conservation measures which could be implemented to enhance loon chick productivity.*