

Conservation Update on the Great Northern Diver (*Gavia immer*) across North America

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The global population of the Great Northern Diver (Common Loon; *Gavia immer*) is robust population with a total estimated breeding population of 252,000-264,000 territorial pairs. Across their range, in the northern USA and all of Canada, populations are doing mostly well. The non-breeding cohort is estimated at 607,000 to 635,000 individuals. Estimated 94% of the breeding population resides in Canada with the remainder in USA.

Loons are not a species of concern in any Canadian province, although apparent population declines are occurring in Nova Scotia. Breeding productivity appears lower in the eastern provinces compared to the western provinces.

In the western contiguous USA, approximately 100 breeding pairs occur across 4 states: Washington (~15 pairs), Idaho (1-2 pairs), Montana (60-70 pairs) and Wyoming (15-20 pairs). Loons are listed as a Species of Concern in WY and Special Concern in WA and ID. The central USA supports over half of the entire USA loon breeding population (6000 to 7200 territorial pairs), yet it is also the region showing the greatest decline in historical range and currently requiring our greatest conservation efforts. Breeding populations have been extirpated in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa and Ohio, and have retracted from the southern portions of North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan (Species of Concern).

In the eastern USA, populations have rebounded from low levels in the 1970's and are increasing in Massachusetts, upstate New York, Vermont, and New Hampshire, and appear stable in Maine. Currently, loons are still listed as Special Concern in MA and State Threatened in NH, but have recovered sufficiently in VT to no longer be listed. Key threats to loon populations have been identified and steps have been taken to minimize their potential population-level wide impacts.