

Hunt Hill Audubon Center Training

Sarona, WI

Saturday, May 9

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

FREE, but registration is required.

[Register online](#) or call 715-682-1220. Registration closes on May 5th

Where: Hunt Hill Audubon Center, N2384 Hunt Hill Road, Sarona, WI 54870-9501 ([directions](#))

North Lakeland Discovery Center Training

Manitowish Waters, WI

Saturday, May 30

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

FREE, but registration is required.

[Register online](#) or call 715-682-1220. Registration closes on May 27th

Where: North Lakeland Discovery Center, 215 County Hwy. W • Manitowish Waters, WI 54545 ([directions](#))

Cable Natural History Museum Training

Cable, WI

Saturday, June 13

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

FREE, but registration is required.

[Register online](#) or call 715-682-1220. Registration closes on June 10th

Where: Cable Natural History Museum, PO Box 416, 13470 County Hwy M, Cable, WI 54821 ([directions](#))

Annual Lakes Monitoring Program

For the past 35 years, LoonWatch has engaged an active volunteer network of "Loon Rangers" as its primary tool to collect critical long-term data on loons in Northern Wisconsin.

Working as population monitors and environmental educators, these volunteers have been the field force that has provided the Institute and WI DNR with data, and contributed to environmental awareness. With threats such as oil spills, mercury and lead poisoning, and habitat loss; long-term monitoring programs are essential to detect changes in loon population, and help develop clever management strategies.

Volunteers attend a Loon Ranger Workshop in the spring to learn how to monitor loons, to hear what's new in the world of loon research, and to meet other loon enthusiasts. Throughout summer, Loon Rangers watch loons on a lake where they live, vacation, or visit often. They record when loons arrive, if they nested, how many chicks were produced, and any potential threats to the nest site. In fall, data is sent to LoonWatch where it is entered into the DNR's SWIMS database and available for management decision-making. Loon Rangers also help protect loons by spreading the word to their neighbors and other lake users to steer clear of loons on nests and on the water.

If you would like to sign up to become a Loon Ranger for your lake, please fill out the online [Loon Ranger](#)

Loon Ranger Frequently Asked Questions

Who can volunteer?

Anyone who lives or vacations on a Wisconsin lake can send us their observations.

How often do I need to monitor the loons?

We recommend that volunteers observe loon activity as often as possible on the lake - the more observations you make, the more confidence you will have in your interpretation of the summer's events. However, useful information can come from as little as one day of observations so don't hesitate to join the Annual Lake Monitoring Program.

What if someone is already monitoring the lake?

We have a number of lakes with multiple observers. This is OK. It helps to ensure that someone will send us information because sometimes people can't get out as often as they plan. We usually allow two volunteers on small and medium sized lakes, and possibly more on very large lakes and flowages. We do encourage volunteers to work together whenever possible to create a more complete picture of loon activity at a lake on one monitoring form.

Is there specific information you're looking for?

Yes. Loon Rangers should download a monitoring form each spring, which asks for information such as when loons first arrived on the lake, if they nested or just visited the lake, if they had chicks, how many chicks they had, and if there are any threats to the loon nest site. This information is gathered throughout spring and summer, and then the volunteer returns the form to us in the fall.

What if I don't know anything about loons, but I still want to help?

We encourage new volunteers to attend a Loon Ranger Workshop to learn about loons, receive training in loon monitoring and to interact with experienced Loon Rangers. If you are not available for one of the workshops, however, you can still participate in the program. Volunteers may download a Loon Ranger Instruction Packet and explore our website for other information about loons to help them learn more about this northern bird.

How do I sign up?

Call or send us an email and tell us what county you are in and what lake you would like to monitor.

LoonWatch is a program of the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute at Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin.

LoonWatch
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