

Senator Dill, Representative Landry and distinguished IF&W committee members,

My name is Lee Attix. I am the Director of Loon Conservation Associates (LCA), based in Portland, ME. I have been studying common loons in New England since 1997. I currently work exclusively in Maine. LCA's mission is dedicated to the protection and welfare of loons and their lakes through collaboration, education, and the implementation of successful conservation actions.

For a moment I would like to focus on the word; *conservation*. Merriam Webster defines conservation in part as ***“planned management of a natural resource to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect”***. As this applies to wildlife management in the state of Maine, as overseen by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W), current law provides no capacity for consideration of impacts to wildlife when issuing a permit for high speed boat races on Maine lakes.

Consider this excerpt I found on the IF&W website;

**“Wildlife management.** The management of the wildlife resources in the State for their preservation, protection, enhancement and use”

In examining the current law, I would argue that's it's more than just inadequate. I believe it actually prevents IF&W from carrying out their primary duties and responsibilities as they relate to wildlife management.

Let's look at how this flawed law could negatively impact the management and protection of common loons. Loons inhabit Maine lakes for breeding purposes, generally occupying territories between April/May and October/November. Loons are fiercely territorial. They are usually very reluctant to leave their territory for any reason. This means loons will likely remain in their territory even when high speed boat races are held, with multiple boats racing simultaneously at speeds up to 70 MPH, resulting in a much higher risk of serious injuries to loons, including fatalities, directly attributable to high speed boat races.

One regrettable incident we are aware of is when a breeding male loon was killed by a boat strike in 2018, at the same time a high speed boat race was being held. This loon was captured and banded in 2014. The bands inform us that this individual was the resident male, and a highly successful breeder, who was occupying his territory at the time of his demise. As a loon expert, it is my professional opinion that high speed boat races should never be allowed on any Maine lake if the location is within an occupied loon territory.

LD 394 will give IF&W the tools it needs to protect Maine's precious wildlife resources. It will have no impact on recreational boating, except perhaps to enhance the enjoyment of Maine's resident wildlife by recreational boaters.

I ask that you support this important legislation to Protect Maine's Loons and Other Wildlife during state-sanctioned Regattas, Races, and Boat or Water-ski Exhibitions.

Thank you,

Lee Attix  
Director  
Loon Conservation Associates