

I support LD394 because I feel that it is critical that the safety of wildlife be considered when permitting regattas, races, or water ski exhibitions. As a board member and Director of the Loon Program of the Kezar Lake Watershed Association, I am familiar with the danger that high speed boating poses to loons and other wildlife. Recently, a dead loon was found in the North End of our lake with fatal propeller injuries. Unfortunately, the danger of motor boats is as real as it is lethal to wildlife.

I am not against boat races, but do feel that it is imperative that wildlife safety be considered in the planning stages of a race. As lakes become even more crowded, and pristine habitat gives way to development, resident wildlife is thrust into more populated areas. Boat races provide particularly threatening situations, as boaters' focus is likely on their own speed and strategy, rather than wildlife safety. Even the most astute racer actively scanning for wildlife would have no way of knowing if a diving bird was below his or her boat until after it was struck.

For this reason, it is critical that IF&W be given the ability to use their expertise and judgement to ensure that boat races are planned and conducted in a way that is safe for all inhabitants of a lake. Empowering IF&W to protect Maine's treasure trove of wildlife is a legislation that will benefit all Mainers as well as visitors to our beloved waterways.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Robinson