

February 27, 2021

Dear MDIFW Committee Members,

My name is Diane Winn. I am the Executive Director of Avian Haven, a wild bird rehabilitation center located in Freedom, Maine. For those of you not already familiar our work, our mission statement is reproduced on the second page of this letter. Avian Haven has permits issued by MDIFW and by USFWS to rehabilitate wild birds. In 2020, our total caseload was approximately 3,600 birds from more than 100 species; we are the largest rehabilitation practice for birds in northern New England.

I am writing in support of LD 394: An Act to Protect Maine's Loons and Other Wildlife in the Issuance of a Permit to Hold a Regatta, Race, Boat or Water-Ski Exhibition.

One of the many species cared for at Avian Haven is the Common Loon, with 30-40 typically admitted annually in recent years. In addition to our rehabilitation activities, we cooperate with Dr. Mark Pokras, MDIFW, and others, in providing radiographs (x-rays) for loons to be necropsied as part of a longstanding and ongoing loon mortality assessment project. Although lead poisoning remains a leading cause of death for loons in Maine, blunt force trauma is not far behind.

Loons are heavy-bodied birds with wings that are narrow and short relative to the lengths of their bodies. In order to gain enough speed for lift-off from water, they require a long "runway" along the surface and, ideally, a headwind. They cannot suddenly and swiftly take flight to avoid oncoming danger, so diving is the only way to avoid rapidly approaching motor boats. But loons may be struck by boats while attempting to dive or when they resurface. Young chicks are particularly vulnerable, as they are not as adept at diving as their parents.

Granting MDIFW the authority to deny a permit for a high-speed boat race on a lake or river where there is danger to loons or other wildlife is consistent with our mission as well as the mission of MDIFW. I hope the committee will support LD 394!

Thank you for your consideration,

Diane Winn

Avian Haven Mission Statement

Recognizing that fauna, flora, and ecosystems contribute ecologically, economically, culturally, spiritually, and aesthetically to our lives,

Understanding that a considerate, educated, and thoughtfully formed relationship between natural and human environments is essential for the harmonious co-existence of all species,

Acknowledging that the activities of people impact the natural world, sometimes adversely,

Believing that we can make an effort to remedy the unfavorable effects of humanity's actions, promote tolerance for the needs of all life, and contribute to balance on earth,

AVIAN HAVEN was founded as a non-profit wild bird rehabilitation center dedicated to the return of injured and orphaned wild birds of all species to their natural roles in the wild.

In practice, the rehabilitation and repatriation of wildlife is a medical, ecological, geographical, cultural, and educational endeavor. In fulfilling these facets, Avian Haven provides:

- comprehensive medical care in a modern, well-equipped clinic;
- rehabilitation in an environment designed to simulate natural conditions;
- research and education to other wildlife rehabilitators and wildlife professionals on local, state, and national levels;
- opportunities for enhanced awareness and education to the general public and academic institutions.