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PRESS RELEASE

NATIONAL LOON CENTER TO BEGIN POPULATION STUDY OF LOONS IN MINNESOTA'S BRAINERD LAKES AREA

NEW NATIONAL LOON CENTER SCIENTIST DR. WALTER PIPER WILL LEAD RESEARCH EFFORT

Crosslake, MN, March 25, 2021: The National Loon Center (NLC) has engaged leading loon biologist Dr. Walter Piper to begin a scientific investigation of loons in Minnesota's Brainerd Lakes area beginning this summer. Dr. Piper, a professor at Chapman University in Orange, California, has studied loons in northern Wisconsin since 1993, where he has recently documented alarming declines in breeding success and in the adult population.

Under a National Loon Center grant awarded to Chapman University, Piper will establish a new study population of loons in central Minnesota. Together, the Minnesota and Wisconsin investigations will provide an early-warning system to identify worrisome patterns in loon populations.

"The new support from the National Loon Center is a great step forward for my efforts to learn about loons in the Upper Midwest," said Piper. "With the substantial support from this partnership, we will have a powerful study system that will allow us to compare and contrast loon survival, breeding success, and behavior across two regions that are crucial to loon conservation."

The Wisconsin study population consists of 120 breeding loon pairs whose territorial behavior, breeding ecology, and habitat selection Piper has studied for 28 years. The Minnesota study population will comprise loon pairs on and around the Whitefish Chain of Lakes near Crosslake, Minnesota, some of which were banded several years ago by Kevin Kenow of the United States Geological Survey. Kenow is also a member of the National Loon Center's Scientific Loon Council.

As part of this partnership, Piper will serve as a National Loon Center Scientist while also chairing its Scientific Loon Council. According to the National Loon Center's Executive Director Jon Mobeck, the partnership will

enable the Center to catalyze important scientific research as it continues to plan for the building and opening of its world-class facility in Crosslake, Minnesota.

"The National Loon Center is honored and excited to partner with Dr. Piper and Chapman University," said Mobeck. "He will work with many outstanding scientists to position the Center as a national leader in loon research and education."

In addition to leading the Center's loon research, Piper will provide scientific guidance for a series of interactive outdoor exhibits at the Center's site in Crosslake, and work with the Center's Scientific Loon Council to set and achieve other research goals. An exhibit to be unveiled this spring will link to a video where Piper describes the fascinating meanings behind the loon's unforgettable calls.

"One of the most appealing aspects of the partnership for me is the opportunity to share cutting-edge loon science with the public directly and in real time through the NLC website, exhibits, and outreach," Piper added.

The National Loon Center Foundation in Crosslake, Minnesota aims to restore and protect loon breeding habitats, enhance responsible recreation, and serve as a national leader in advancing loon and freshwater research and education. The National Loon Center's world-class facility, slated to open to the public in the spring of 2024, will be an interactive and family-friendly educational destination that transforms visitors into champions for loons and freshwater everywhere. To learn more about the National Loon Center, please visit www.nationallooncenter.org.

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