



NATIONAL

LOON CENTER

2026

# National Loon Center Foundation Loon Research Fund



*Brandi Grabl*



Dear Friend of the Loon,

Across North America, the haunting call of the common loon is becoming more fragile. Changes in water clarity, climate pressures, habitat disruption, wintering mortality, and gaps in knowledge about migration and genetics all threaten one of our continent's most iconic birds. In 2026, the National Loon Center, in partnership with the Ricketts Conservation Foundation and our Scientific Advisory Council, identified eight high-impact research initiatives spanning the United States and Canada.

YOU can support loon research across North America!



## Now Is the Defining Decade for Loon Conservation

- Climate-driven water changes may affect breeding productivity and chick survival.
- Monitoring gaps in northern breeding regions limit our understanding of range-wide population trends.
- Winter mortality and diet patterns remain insufficiently understood.
- To safeguard loons across North America, we must connect the science across their full life cycle.

# Building the Loon Research Fund: Becoming a Loon Research Ambassador

## LOON RESEARCH AMBASSADOR TIERS

### **\$1,000 - Research Ambassador**

- Contribute to support various projects, such as loon surveys or necropsy exams in 2026
- Opportunity to join a Loon Research Tour on the Whitefish Chain of Lakes for ambassadors.
- Recognition on the National Loon Center's website, in official communications, and within the visitor center, The Nest.

### **\$2,500 - Research Project Ambassador**

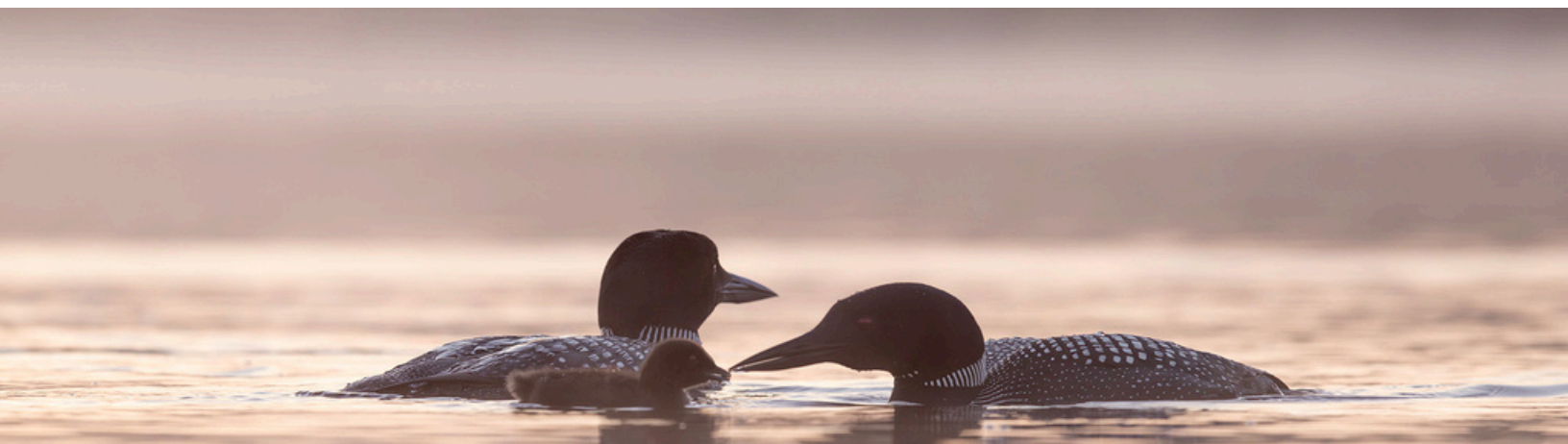
- Direct your investment to the 2026 research project that matters most to you.
- Receive updates on project progress and a free copy of Dr. James Paruk's book *Loon Lessons: Uncommon Encounters with the Great Northern Diver*.
- Opportunity to join a Loon Research Tour on the Whitefish Chain of Lakes for ambassadors.
- Recognition on a Loon Research Ambassador plaque or panel (TBD) in the Center.

### **\$10,000 - Premier Research Ambassador**

- Direct your investment to the 2026 research project that matters most to you.
- Receive updates on project progress and a high-quality framed loon print.
- Recognition on the interior Loon Donor Wall (final name TBD).
- Opportunity to join a Loon Research Tour on the Whitefish Chain of Lakes for ambassadors.

### **\$25,000 - Legacy Research Ambassador (Only 3 Available)**

- Create a lasting impact through a five-year sponsorship of an interactive research exhibit at the future National Loon Center.
- Direct your investment to the 2026 research project that matters most to you.
- Receive updates on project progress and a high-quality framed loon print.
- Recognition on the interior Loon Donor Wall (final name TBD).
- Invitation to a grand opening event for the future National Loon Center facility.



# 2026 Research Projects



## **Common Loon Translocation Assessment - Minnesota | National Loon Center**

This project will assess the effectiveness of Common Loon chick translocations to restore breeding adults in southern Minnesota via surveys in southern and northern MN counties.

## **Common Loon Genoscape | Bird Genoscape Lab, Colorado State University**

The genoscape lab uses cutting-edge genomic tools to analyze genetic variation across individual loons from across their range, connecting breeding and wintering populations.

## **Addressing key knowledge gaps in a potential source (or sink) population of Common Loon populations East of the Continental Divide in Montana | Glacier National Park**

The park will test methods to extract genetic information from egg membranes within Glacier National Park and the adjacent Blackfeet Tribal Lands, expanding partnerships with the Blackfeet Nation.

## **Investigating the effects of water clarity on Common Loon productivity across the breeding range | Birds Canada**

A scientific publication will examine the indirect effects of climate change on Common Loons by investigating the impacts of declining water clarity from rain events across their southern range.

## **Engaging Northern Québec Communities in Loon Conservation and Lake Stewardship | QuébecOiseaux**

Expand monitoring coverage by recruiting new volunteers, especially First Nations communities, in northern Québec in the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey.

## **How Wintering Strategy Affects Diet and Causes of Mortality in Common Loons | Tulane University**

This innovative research will develop ways to test loons' feathers to determine wintering habitats (marine vs. freshwater) and diet.

## **Developing improved tools for understanding Common Loon anatomy and performing necropsies | Tufts University**

The development of an e-book and video on Common Loon anatomy and necropsy techniques will aid the international loon research & educational communities.

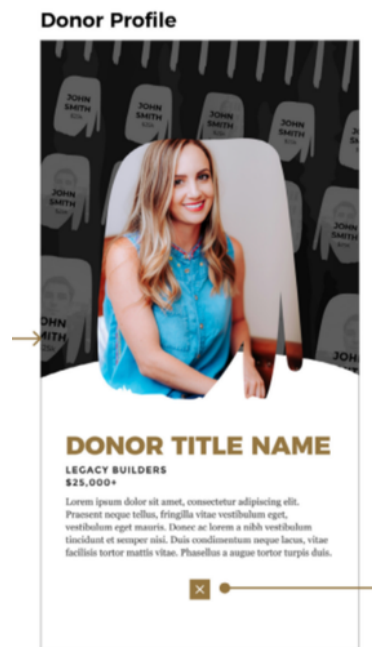
## **“Dark of the Loon”: Nonbreeding Life-History, Ecology, and Mortality | Independent Biologist**

A scientific publication will pull together data from a 5-year intermittent study of Common Loon northern migration over the Florida Gulf Coast.

# Loons of a Feather: Donor Wall

The Loon Donor Wall (final name TBD) is the interior location where all donors of \$10,000 or more will be prominently displayed in the center's lobby. The design is intended to mimic the beautiful checkered pattern on the feathers of the loon. This space is near one of the first interactive displays welcoming guests into the center.

All donors at this level are featured on a graphic display panel at the center of the wall. The graphic display is interactive, enabling visitors to view a photo and learn the story of our key supporters!



# Loon Research and Learning Stations

The third floor of the center leads guests into an exploration of loon flight and avian migration. Among these exhibits are the loon research stations, an inviting space for visitors to take a deeper dive into ongoing research, and the National Loon Center’s scientific partners. After exploring projects in community science, loon health, conservation, ecosystem shifts, and genetics, guests may follow doors out to the outdoor patio, where they may just hear the loons calling from nearby Cross Lake.



Learning Stations



Learning Stations

# Thank you!

Your generosity today helps drive international loon research, expand educational programming, and advance conservation projects that will be brought to life at the Center. We are truly grateful for your commitment and are excited to involve our Loon Research Ambassadors in shaping the future of loon science. We welcome your questions at any time.

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