

# IUCN SSC Loon Specialist Group

2020 Report



David Evers

## Chair

David Evers

## Red List Authority Coordinator

BirdLife International (David Evers)

## Location/Affiliation

Biodiversity Research Institute, Portland,  
Maine, US

## Number of members

135

## Social networks

Website:

<https://www.wetlands.org/our-network/specialist-groups/diverloon-specialist-group/>



## Mission statement

The mission of the Loon Specialist Group is to contribute to increase current knowledge on the ecology of all five species across their entire geographic range of distribution and promote long-term conservation.

## Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

By the end of 2020, we envision that the population and distribution of all species of divers/loons will remain strong. Breeding populations are generally in protected areas (although stressors such as mercury pollution and oil drilling may have impacts in some areas), while wintering populations are potentially in conflict with stressors associated with marine ecosystems (e.g. oil spills, cyanobacteria outbreaks, and degraded fisheries). To assess the status of each of the five loon species, an international symposium will occur in late 2020 followed by a 'State of Global Loon Populations' publication in a special issue of a peer-reviewed journal. A global stressor of particular concern for global loon populations is mercury. That concern will be assessed through the international symposium as well as through a new initiative to better understand mercury exposure and effects on loon populations and other IUCN SSC Groups.

## Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

### Act

Conservation actions: establish 1–2 new breeding populations of Common Loons (*Gavia immer*) in Massachusetts, US.

## Network

Synergy: initiate and network with other SSC Groups on the new project called 'The Global Footprint of Mercury: Understanding the patterns of exposure and effects to biota'.

### Communicate

Research activities: generate a scientific publication on research and conservation of loons around the world.

Scientific meetings: complete one international diver/loon conference.

## Activities and results 2020

### Act

#### Conservation actions

**i.** In a new breeding population established in Massachusetts, one Common Loon nested and produced the first chicks in 120 years for the area. (KSR #24, 27)

### Network

#### Synergy

**i.** Initial discussions with the global SSC group have been made on the new project called 'The Global Footprint of Mercury: Understanding the patterns of exposure and effects to biota'. (KSR #7, 16, 18, 21, 23, 32, 36, 37)

### Communicate

#### Research activities

**i.** Meetings have been initiated to generate a scientific publication on research and conservation of loons around the world. (KSR #18, 20, 25, 28, 29)

#### Scientific meetings

**i.** COVID-19 restrictions continue to delay the international diver/loon conference. (KSR #18, 20, 25, 28, 29)



Aquatic pens for captive rearing of loons  
 Photo: WBUR - Jesse Costa

A view of the pens with loon chick inside  
 Photo: WBUR - Jesse Costa



**Acknowledgements**

The Loon Specialist Group would like to acknowledge Biodiversity Research Institute for its support.

**Summary of activities 2020**

Components of Species Conservation Cycle: 3/5

Act **1** |

Network **1** |

Communicate **2** ||

Main KSRs addressed: 7, 16, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 32, 36, 37

KSR: Key Species Result



Biologist feeding loon chicks in the aquatic pen  
 Photo: WBUR - Jesse Costa



Vet Tristan Burgess evaluating a loon  
 Photo: WBUR - Jesse Costa