



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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STATE CRANBERRY GROWERS OPEN MARSHES TO U.S LOON SURVEY

U.S. Geological Survey & DNR to study bird's nesting habitats in central WI

WISCONSIN RAPIDS, Wis. - The Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers Association (WSCGA) today announced that its grower members are joining with biologists from the U.S. Geological Survey in La Crosse and the Wisconsin DNR for a national survey of common loon nesting habits. The spring/summer survey will begin the first week in May and focus on nesting habitat requirements and productivity of breeding loons in Wisconsin.

“Our state’s cranberry growers have a long history of being good stewards of the environment and providing habitat for a wide diversity of wildlife,” said Tom Lochner, executive director for Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers Association. “Our growers welcome this important project to central Wisconsin and are excited about working with the biologists to monitor the loons’ activities including chick production and overall nesting success. We’ve had strong initial interest from the growing community and are reaching out to recruit a good group.”

The common nesting loon is best known for its warbling call that echoes across northern and central Wisconsin each year. However, nesting habits of the black and white waterfowl are more elusive, which is what brings the survey project to the marshlands of Wisconsin.

“We are excited about the opportunity to conduct our nesting loon research in central Wisconsin with the help of the many cranberry growers and others here,” said Kevin Kenow, research wildlife biologist with the U.S. Geological Survey. “The cranberry marshes are an important nesting resource for common loons. We’ll be comparing nesting habitat requirements and productivity at the marshes to common loon habitats in northern Wisconsin. We’ll also look at how climate change may be impacting the breeding distribution of loons in this state.”

The DNR has color-banded more than 2,400 loons in Wisconsin since 1991, determining that more than 90 percent return to their habitats. Biologists will use canoes and/or motor boats to study the common loons in up to 90 lakes and reservoirs spread throughout 13 central Wisconsin counties.

WSCGA was founded in 1887 and is committed to developing and implementing programs that will assist growers in doing a better job of growing cranberries and strengthen the public support for the industry in Wisconsin. For more information, please visit www.wiscran.org.

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