

Written by Thom Townsend

28 Days on a Nest

Section 3 of 4

The next few days started a little quieter, as we went about our business and the loons, taking turns, did their duty of sitting on the nest. I suspect we only checked on them about 60 or 70 times a day. And we warded off another human intruder or two. Early mornings were another story however, as for three days we were awakened at about 5am with the sitting loon calling out in obvious distress. As the sun arose, we couldn't see any problem and after about 30 minutes he/she quieted down. However when the pattern repeated the 2nd day, using our 60X scope we spotted two beavers (or possibly muskrats) fishing within feet of the nest. The loon bravely stayed on the nest and again after 30 minutes, things quieted down as the intruders moved on. My e-mail that day was: **Day 25 -Beaver! What next?**

On July 24, Jan & I somewhat reluctantly left the Lake to attend a family wedding in Massachusetts. Steve and Mary pledged to keep a watchful eye, as did our friends the Davis's, and also the Vye's and Steltenpohls on the far shoreline.

Chics

"We've got chics!" That was what the emotional and excited voice on the phone was saying, as we were getting ready to pack and head back from Massachusetts to Province Lake on Monday the 27th. After a noisy night that Sunday, and a quick discussion with loon biologist Maya on Monday, Steve and Mary went down the shoreline, saw an empty nest ...and then surprisingly saw the parents and not one, but two little fuzz balls. Mary had called us with this incredibly delightful news. The belief is that, based on the noises heard by the Craigs, the first egg hatched late Sunday night and the second a few hours later in the pre-dawn hours of Monday morning.

Our trip back that evening was filled with anticipation and the desire for photographic and personal sighting. Upon arrival after 10pm, we heard frequent loon wailing and yodding and at midnight while nervous about all the ruckus, tried to sleep.

We were up early Tuesday morning, scanning the Lake without success. Then, coming down the shoreline from the Craigs, I saw first one adult loon, then another. I jumped into my kayak and paddled to the middle of the lake to be out of the way they were heading.

It was then that we got our reward:



Two chicks riding on the back of one of the parents.



One chick on the back and one in tow.



Cruising this way seems to be a favorite way of theirs.

As I write this summary the chicks are now in day 3 and all is going well. Days are quiet, nights quite noisy as they seem to need to be in frequent vocal contact as soon as night falls.

The lake has been thankfully quiet of most boat traffic, and the loon family has stayed in the area, usually near shorelines, but are now venturing further into the lake. People are keeping their distance. The neighbors on Lake Shore Drive were entertained by an all afternoon visit on Tuesday.

Steve and I have posted some "Loon chicks" signs and will post more as soon as we get them from the Loon Preservation Committee on Thursday.

