

WHAT TO DO ABOUT WILDLIFE HARASSMENT AND ABUSE

It has come to LOBA's attention that a dead loon was found on Lake Kawagama. This loon died - not as so many others do from lead poisoning resulting from ingesting fishermen's lures or tangled up in fishing line – but because somebody had used it for target practice. The loon's body was riddled with pellet gun bullets. And there have been other reported incidents of wildlife harassment and cruelty in the area, for example, two tag-teamed snowmobiles chasing a wolf in the deep snow on the lake and then killing it when the animal dropped from exhaustion.

The purpose of this communication is NOT to advise of the need to treat wildlife with respect; that goes without saying. LOBA's environment committee has long preached that biodiversity (plants and animals) is critical to the health of the planet and therefore to human health but ... it goes much deeper than that. The way we treat animals is an indication of our own humanity.

We ALL know better than to use a loon for target practice or to chase down a wolf for sport. Sadly, it takes a very disturbed personality to derive amusement from that kind of activity. But ... those personalities do exist. And so, for the sake of our wildlife and for the health of our watershed but ... perhaps most importantly ... for the sake of our own humanity, we all need to be properly prepared to hold those who harass wildlife accountable. And THAT is the purpose of this communication ... to let you know how to do that.

In the event that you should witness an occurrence like the two cited above, please ... report it.

What to Do:

1. Advise the Bracebridge Ministry of the Natural Resources (our local office is located at High Falls Rd, on the west side of Hwy. 11, just north of 117. MNR has some enforcement responsibilities in this area and they can and will help with injured or orphaned wildlife.

There are all sorts of rules in terms of what is reported where (endangered species go to Environment Canada) but ... the big plus with MNR is that they have conservation officers in the area. (it is a big area ... we are in MNR's Muskoka/Parry Sound district)

The number to call is their TIP line, which is for the express purpose of reporting ANY natural resource infractions (and they are very concerned and helpful) at:

Tel: 1-877-847-7667

2. Contact the Canadian Wildlife Enforcement Services (a division of Environment Canada that has jurisdiction for species at risk wildlife offences) at

Tel.: 1-800-668-6767 (in Canada only) or 819-997-2800

Email: enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca

Be prepared: this is a painfully slow process that requires you to leave a message and wait for a call-back.

3. If the concern is loon specific, call Andrew Bruce in Enforcement for Canadian Wildlife Services for migratory birds at:

Tel: 1-705-336-6410

4. IF ALL ELSE FAILS PLEASE CONTACT:

Deb Cumming (LOBA Environment Chair)

Email: dacumming75@gmail.com (note: I am way better at getting to my email quickly than to my phone)

If you witness a wildlife harassment/abuse situation that should be reported, please do your absolute best to document properly ... picture, video, boat or snowmobile registration numbers, date and time of day, clothing, ... ANYTHING that gives proof of the incident and helps to identify the participants. Conservation and enforcement officers shy away from 'he said, she said'.

If you are concerned about reporting on friends, neighbours etc. – I understand. Email me and I will happily do it!

Drop into casual conversation that wilful killing of a loon can result in a \$50,000 fine and 6 months in jail.