



According to Deichmann (1970), over 100 species of birds have been recorded in the park. Some of the more common species are the tree swallow, the robin, the hermit thrush, the evening grosbeak, and the white-throated sparrow.

Mount Carleton Provincial Park's birds are particularly interesting to members of NatureNB's 13 federated nature clubs. NatureNB and its associated clubs promote environmental awareness and stewardship in the province of New Brunswick. For more information about these associations, please see www.naturenb.ca.

Another association interested in keeping an eye on the birds of the park is called [Bird Studies Canada \(BSC\)](#)

. This non-profit organization's goal is to promote the awareness and conservation of wild birds and their habitats.

Since 2001, BSC has been conducting surveys of a rare mountain-dwelling songbird called the Bicknell's Thrush (http://www.ns.ec.gc.ca/wildlife/bicknells_thrush/e/index.html and www.bsc-eoc.org/volunteer/achelp/index.jsp).

Up at 3:00 am on a June morning in 2007, BSC staff climbed Mount Carleton in the dark to see if they could spot or hear this elusive bird. Additional survey routes are run by volunteers, one of whom travels from Moncton in the wee hours of the morning, climbs Mount Sagamook, conducts the survey, then drives back home.

Now that's dedication! Survey results indicate that the Bicknell's Thrush is declining in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Mount Carleton Provincial Park, with the highest elevations in the Maritimes and stunted fir-studded mountain tops, provides a stronghold of habitat for this rare species and its protected status is critical to this bird's survival.

Bird Studies Canada relies heavily on volunteer Citizen Scientists, that is, people like you and me to help with their bird surveys. One such survey is the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey. Participants in this survey are asked to look for loons in one or more lakes three times during the summer and to report their findings to Bird Studies Canada. This involves looking for loon pairs in June, for newly hatched chicks in July, and for young that survive in August.

The goal of this project is to monitor the health of Canada's common loon population and their habitats. Anyone wishing to participate in the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey or who wishes to have additional information is requested to either log-on to <http://www.bsc-eoc.org/volunteer/cls/index.jsp?lang=EN&targetpg=index> or send a note to Canadian Lakes Loon Survey, Bird Studies Canada, P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, ON, N0E 1M0. The phone number is 1-888-448-2473 and their email address is aqsurvey@bsc-eoc.org

Please note that to offset the costs of this national survey, there is a \$35.00 tax-creditable membership fee charged to all participants, allowing them to receive the survey materials as well as three issues annually of BSC's national publication, BirdWatch Canada.

The common loon is easily recognizable on the water by its black-and-white checkered back, white belly, glossy black head, long pointed beak, and characteristic white necklace around the throat and has long been recognized as a symbol of the Canadian wilderness.

Its haunting call is memorable. Scientists have described four types of calls which loons use to communicate with members of their families and other loons: tremolo, wail, yodel, and hoot.

The tremolo has been described as a "crazy laugh" and is believed to signal alarm, however, it is also used by loons in flight. The wail is often heard at night when loons attempt to regain contact with their mates. Campers at Franquelin and Williams Brook campgrounds have the luxury of being regaled by the wondrous yodel of the common loon on a midsummer's evening or night. [Listen to some Loon Calls here](#) .

The yodel is a territorial call given by a male to alert other males that this is his territory. The hoot which sounds more like a hoo is a one-note call given by family members to check on each other.

More than 80% of the world's common loon population breeds in Canadian lakes. It is believed

that loons return to the same lake every year to breed. There are a number of breeding pairs at Mount Carleton Provincial Park. Unable to walk very far on land, these birds nest on the edge of the water which makes their nests susceptible to the wake caused by outboard motors.

This is one of the reasons why outboard motors in the park are restricted to 10 horsepower. Two eggs are laid in June. Both parents take turns incubating the eggs which take between 26 to 31 days to hatch.

The hatchlings are often seen riding on the back of one of their parents which allows them to conserve heat, rest, and avoid the talons and/or gaping mouths of predators like eagles, crows, and snapping turtles.

Loons feed primarily on fish, crayfish, frogs, snails, salamanders, and leaches but their preferred food is fish. In 2007, two young fledglings which survived the summer were seen at the western end of Nictau Lake by the Friends of Mount Carleton Provincial Park.

As loons are susceptible to lead poisoning, fishermen have been asked to use lead-free tackle and avoid disposing of their fishing lines where these birds might conceivably get caught in them. When on the water, boaters are advised to stay clear of adults and their chicks.