

Arctic Loon

Gavia arctica

Class: Aves

Order: Gaviiformes

Review Status: Peer-reviewed

Version Date: 18 February 2020

Note: Previously considered conspecific with the Pacific loon, *Gavia pacifica*. As currently applied, *G. arctica* refers to populations breeding in Eurasia, with a small population in northwestern Alaska, while the Pacific loon is widely distributed throughout much of Alaska.

Conservation Status

Table 1 Conservation status according to state, national, and international organizations and agencies.

Organization	Rank
NatureServe	G5/S1S2B
ADF&G	Species of Greatest Conservation Need
IUCN	Least Concern

Final Rank

Conservation Category: **IV. Orange**

Unknown status and high biological vulnerability and action need

Table 2 ASRS categorical scores. Higher numerical scores denote greater concern.

Category	Range	Score
Status	-20 to 20	0
Biological	-50 to 50	-10
Action	-40 to 40	20

Status

Variables measure the trend in a taxon's population status or distribution. Higher status scores denote taxa with known declining trends. Status scores range from -20 (increasing) to 20 (decreasing).

Population Trend in Alaska (-10 to 10)

Limited information exists for this species in North America. Population trends in Alaska are unknown.

Score: 0

Distribution Trend in Alaska (-10 to 10)

Unknown.

Score: 0

Status Total: 0

Biological

Variables measure aspects of a taxon's distribution, abundance and life history. Higher biological scores suggest greater vulnerability to extirpation. Biological scores range from -50 (least vulnerable) to 50 (most vulnerable).

Population Size in Alaska (-10 to 10)

Unknown in Alaska but suspected small (Russell 2020). Global population estimated to be between 275,000 - 1,500,000 individuals (Russell 2020).

Score: 6

Range Size in Alaska (-10 to 10)

Confirmed breeder at the tip of the Seward Peninsula at Cape Prince of Wales and the north side of Kotzebue Sound (Douglas and Sowl 1993; Russell 2020). Unconfirmed, but suspected to breed in Nome, Kotzebue, Wales, Bering Land Bridge National Preserve, and Cape Krusenstern National Monument (Russell 2020). Estimated breeding range size is approximately 28,000 sq. km., based on range map from ACCS (2017a).

Score: -2

Population Concentration in Alaska (-10 to 10)

Breeding area in North America is limited to northwestern Alaska but does not concentrate (Russell 2020).

Score: -10

Reproductive Potential in Alaska

Age of First Reproduction (-5 to 5)

Reaches sexual maturity in 2 to 3 years (Sjölander 1978).

Score: -3

Number of Young (-5 to 5)

Lays 1-2 eggs per year (Götmark et al. 1989; Mudge and Talbot 1993).

Score: 3

Ecological Specialization in Alaska

Dietary (-5 to 5)

Unknown in Alaska. May be similar to Pacific Loons which feeds on fish, insect larvae, and aquatic invertebrates including mollusks and shrimp (Petersen 1989; Russell 2020). During the breeding season in Europe, typically feed on salmonid and cyprinid fish (Eriksson and Sundberg 1991; Jackson 2003).

Score: -5

Habitat (-5 to 5)

Few habitat observations exist for this species, but habitat preferences are similar to Pacific loons. During breeding season, they nest near lakes and ponds and feed in freshwater lakes (Bergman and Derksen 1977; Douglas and Sowl 1993). Unlike the Pacific loon, they tend to inhabit taiga and boreal habitats, rather than arctic tundra (Russell 2020). In the winter, they inhabit coastal and offshore waters (Russell 2020).

Score: 1

Biological Total: -10

Action

Variables measure current state of knowledge or extent of conservation efforts directed toward a given taxon. Higher action scores denote greater information needs due to lack of knowledge or conservation action. Action scores range from -40 (lower needs) to 40 (greater needs).

Management Plans and Regulations in Alaska (-10 to 10)

Protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA 1918). Subsistence harvest is permitted but subjected to closed seasons (AMBCC 2019).

Score: -10

Knowledge of Distribution and Habitat in Alaska (-10 to 10)

Limited information about distribution and habitat associations in Alaska. Studies are complicated by the recent taxonomic split between Arctic and Pacific loons, and ongoing misidentification between the two species.

Score: 10

Knowledge of Population Trends in Alaska (-10 to 10)

Not currently monitored.

Score: 10

Knowledge of Factors Limiting Populations in Alaska (-10 to 10)

Little is known about the ecology of this species and the factors that limit its population or distribution in Alaska.

Score: 10

Action Total: 20

Supplemental Information

Variables do not receive numerical scores. Instead, they are used to sort taxa to answer specific biological or management questions.

Harvest: Substantial, regulations

Seasonal Occurrence: Breeding

Taxonomic Significance: Monotypic species

% Global Range in Alaska: <10%

% Global Population in Alaska: <25%

Peripheral: Yes

References

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