

July 13, 2021. Banding operation by the Loon Preservation Committee at the beach front of the home of Pat and Bill Mannion. Pat observed the banding operation and shared the following notes.

By Pat Mannion

Last night Tuesday, July 13, I had the pleasure of observing the banding of a loon here at Halfmoon Lake. Bill received an invitation from the Loon Preservation Committee to observe the banding of our loon pair. Bill was unable to participate and I enthusiastically accepted.

From LPC Caroline Hughes, Olivia Fortuna, Jayden Jech, and Emma Purinton arrived by boat at dusk and met me at our dock. Introductions, pleasantries and a plan of action were discussed. The four had already located the loon pair and chick near the Hollywood beach area. The four left me on our beach as they left and waited for darkness before a capture could take place. Around 9:30 pm the boat returned to our dock with the addition of one loon. Bill was observing from our house deck. The loon was held in the lap of biologist Caroline with a towel placed over its eyes and handed it off to another to carry to beach shore. One person held the loon in a gentle but controlled manner for the following procedure.

The loon's legs' width and length were measured. A feather, not one needed for flight, was carefully clipped from right and left wing and three or four feathers also clipped from the tail feathers. Blood was taken from the vein of the right leg. Two bands one metal and one colored hard plastic were placed onto each leg. These will identify the loon's sex and location of banding.

The band combination is: Orange over white with a black dot on the left leg, and green with a white stripe over silver on the right leg.

The loon was placed in a netted like sack and the weight was taken. The loon was then carried into the water by two LPC people and released. The loon made a quick retreat away in to the darkness of the night.

Every procedure was carefully noted and charted as specimens were placed into a safe container. Careful consideration was to see that the loon was not stressed, total time not to exceed 25 minutes, temperature of the loon was not elevated, and the loon was made as comfortable and yet held securely as possible.

I had the great pleasure of sitting next to the captured loon during this procedure. Did I say this was the female loon? And how was this known? After capture, they heard the other loon yodel. Only male loons yodel. <https://loon.org/> The Voice of the Loon.

Wait, the story isn't over! The four from LPC returned to their boat to try to retrieve the male loon along with the chick. After a long time they actually got the male in the net, but he escaped, and after that he was on to them and that was the end for the night. At approximately 11:30 PM the women returned to our dock to tell of the adventure of the male and then they returned to their loading sight of their boat at the other end of the lake.

What a night; I had an experience I enjoyed immensely.