

Common Loon (*Gavia immer*) Conservation Status Rank Summary

January 31, 2025

For details on assessment and ranking methodology, see: [Conservation Status Assessment Definitions, Process, Rank Factors, and Calculation of State Ranks for Montana Species](#)

Rarity and Trends

Rank Factor	Date Assessed	Value	Score	Data Source	Comments
Rarity					
Range Extent	2024-12-04	S: 35137.0 km ²	None	MTNHP Range Maps	None
Area of Occupancy	2024-12-04	198 4km ² cells	None	MTNHP Modeling	None
Number of Occurrences	2024-12-04		None	MTNHP Databases	155 occurrences, but each is not occupied annually. Approximately 60-75 breeding pairs in the state
Population Size	2024-12-04		None	Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks	72 pairs are reported by MTFWP
# of Occurrences in Good Condition			-		Factor not used in ranking.
% of Area Occupied in Good Condition			-		Factor not used in ranking.
Environmental Specificity	2009-01-21	Very narrow	-	MTNHP Species Rank Data Table	Factor not used in ranking. Species is dependent on very specialized nesting habitat (floating islands). Methodology: NS (2003) Original Score: A
Rarity is calculated by averaging weighted factor scores: None					
Trends					
Short-term Trend	2009-01-21		None	MTNHP Species Rank Data Table	Montana Common Loon Management Plan has a short term lambda = 1.04 per year or 48% increase over 10 years. This is probably best regarded as a stable trend because all suitable lakes seem to be occupied. Methodology: NS (2003) Original Score: E
Long-term Trend	2009-01-21		None	MTNHP Species Rank Data Table	Lake and floating island habitats relatively stable since European arrival, but loons have been excluded from a number of lakes by human activities. Methodology: NS (2003) Original Score: E
Trends score is calculated by summing weighted short and long-term trend scores: None					

Threats

Rank Factor	Date Assessed	Value	Score	Data Source	Comments
Threats					
Overall Threat Impact		Low/No Threats	None		Nest site disturbance, mortality on coasts, pollution are the threats that have been identified.
Intrinsic Vulnerability	2009-01-21	Highly vulnerable	-	MTNHP Species Rank Data Table	Factor not used in ranking. Methodology: NS (2003) Original Score: A
Threat score is calculated from Overall Threat Impact when available or Intrinsic Vulnerability if not: None					

Individual Threats Data

Threat Category	Date Assessed	Impact Score	Scope	Severity	Immediacy	Comments
Human Intrusions & Disturbance	2025-01-31	Low	Large	Slight	High	Disturbance of nest sites. Currently programs are in place to mitigate this, so severity is low.
Threat Tally: 0 - Very High, 0 - High, 0 - Medium, 1 - Low Overall Threat Impact* = Low/No Threats						

*See [Conservation Status Assessment Definitions, Process, Rank Factors, and Calculation of State Ranks for Montana Species](#) for calculation of Overall Threat Impact based on the number and impact of individual threats.

Conservation Status Rank Calculation

Raw score

Due to Rarity (AOO or Pop_Size), species is automatically classified as S1

Calculated Rank: S1

Accepted Rank	S3B
Date Approved	Date Unknown
Approval Authority	Legacy Assessment: MTNHP Staff
Rank Justification	Species is an uncommon to rare breeding resident across parts of western Montana. It appears stable and faces low level threats.

Supplementary Information

Montana Natural Heritage Program. 2021. Conservation Status Assessment Definitions, Process, Rank Factors, and Calculation of State Ranks for Montana Species. 18 p.

https://mtnhp.mt.gov/docs/Montana_State_Rank_Criteria_20211201.pdf

Montana Field Guide Species Account:

<https://fieldguide.mt.gov/speciesDetail.aspx?elcode=ABNBA01030>

Predicted Suitable Habitat Model:

<https://mtnhp.mt.gov/resources/models/?elcode=ABNBA01030>

Information Needs

Information needs are assessed by considering the availability of factors used to assess species status as well as the quality of these assessments. Current information availability and quality to inform Conservation Status Rank for this species are highlighted.

Rank Factor	Assessment Category	Value	Criteria
General Status	Status Quality	Adequate	Calculated rank has low uncertainty and is represented by a single rank (e.g. S3); accepted rank may be adjusted to a range rank (e.g. S2S3)
		Poor	Rank assessed as SU or calculated rank has notable uncertainty and corresponds to a range rank with 2 or more values (e.g. S2?, S1S3, or S4S5)
Rarity	Range Quality	Adequate	Range polygon adequately represents area of probable occupancy and does not include substantial unoccupied areas; range may be adequately defined and still include areas of unsuitable habitat (e.g. mountain ranges for plains species)
		Marginal	Range polygon defined, but may include or exclude notable areas where the species may or may not occur on the landscape
		Poor	Range polygon not defined
	Habitat Quality	Adequate	Species-habitat relationship is well-defined (e.g. relevant literature or robust habitat model available)
		Marginal	Understanding of species-habitat relationship is adequate among some but not all habitats (e.g. literature covers similar habitats outside of Montana or habitat model performance is only somewhat adequate)
		Poor	Species-habitat relationship is not well understood
Threats	Threat Quality	Adequate	Threat Impact is a single value (including "Unthreatened")
		Marginal	Threat Impact assessed at more than one value (e.g. "High - Medium")
		Poor	Threat Impact is Unknown but Intrinsic Vulnerability is assessed
		Unknown	Threat Impact is Unknown and Intrinsic Vulnerability is not assessed
Trends	Recency	Current	Short-term Trend assessment date less than 10 years old
		Out of Date but Adequate	Short-term Trend assessment date is more than 10 years old or Unknown, but species is Unthreatened
		Out of Date	Short-term Trend assessment date more than 10 years old
		Not Available	Short-term Trend data are not available
	Trend Quality	Sufficient	Short-term Trend assessed at a single value or multiple values with a minimum trend greater than -10% (stable or increasing)
		Unknown but Sufficient	Short-term Trend is Unknown, but species is Unthreatened
		Poor	Short-term Trend is less than -10% (in decline) with two or more values selected
		Unknown	Short-term Trend is Unknown

Summary of Information Availability

Information to assess status is available.

Summary of Information Needs

No further information is needed but given the species rarity, monitoring through should continue.

Additional Threat Details

The table below contains the complete threats assessment for this species. While the Conservation Status Rank Calculation is based on cumulative, broadly categorized (Level 1) threats data, threats are assessed and tracked for more specifically categorized (Level 2) threats when available.

Threat Category	Date Assessed	Assessed By	Data Source	Scope	Severity	Immediacy	Comments
Human Intrusions & Disturbance - 6.1 - Recreational Activities	2025-01-31	Dan Bachen	MTFWP, expert opinion.	Large	Slight	High	Disturbance of nest sites. Currently programs are in place to mitigate this, so severity is low.