LOON MAGIC

Author: Tom Klein  
Publisher: Paper Birch Press, Inc., Ashland, WI,  
1985. (\$49.95)  
Reviewed by: Toni Harting

This excellent, most informative book on the world of the common loon provides answers to each canoeist's many questions that always come up when paddling loon country and hearing the haunting call of this magnificent bird. The writer discusses in great detail the life cycle of the loon through the seasons, its various behavior patterns, the problems of chick rearing, the bird's past, present, and future, etc. Dozens of often superb color and black-and-white photographs form one of the finest collections of loon photography ever published. Some information is also presented on the other three species of loon: arctic, red-throated, and yellow-billed.

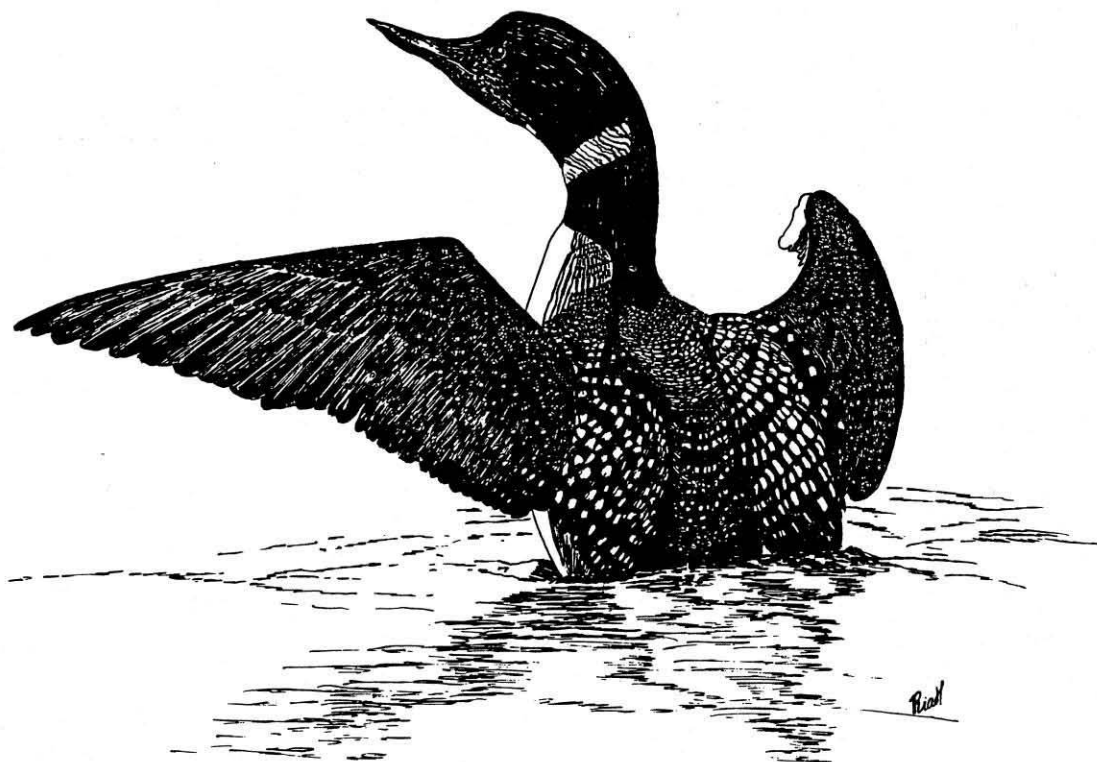
A particularly interesting chapter is the one dedicated to loon language, where much attention is paid to the four basic calls: tremolo, wail, yodel, and hoot. The study of loon distribution is unfortunately limited mainly to the USA. Canada is hardly mentioned, and the existence of the "great northern diver" in other parts of the world is ignored.

This well-written, -illustrated, and -produced book is indeed a must for every lover of the outdoors who is enchanted by the magic of the loon.

THE LOON - VOICE OF THE WILDERNESS

Author: Joan Dunning  
Publisher: Yankee Publishing Inc., Dublin, NH, 1985.  
(\$20.95)  
Reviewed by: Toni Harting

A considerably smaller book than the one reviewed at left, this publication consequently does not offer as much information. The excellent text, written in a very personal style, is supported and enlivened by numerous black-and-white drawings as well as several watercolors, all done by the author herself. Although some of the drawings are of rather mediocre quality, the artwork helps the reader in getting good insight into typical loon behavior such as diving, nest building, and courtship display. Welcome attention is also given to the environment in which the loon lives. Sketches and descriptions of the loon's neighbors (birds, fish, insects, animals, plants, etc.) are spread throughout this charming and informative book.

WILDERNESS VISIONARIES

Author: Jim Dale Vickery  
Publisher: ICS Books, Inc., Merrillville, IN, 1986.  
(US \$19.95)  
Reviewed by: Toni Harting

To love and appreciate the wilderness, one must try to understand it, visit the wild places personally as often as possible, and truly respect the fragile beauty of our natural environment. The six naturalists profiled in this book (Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Robert W. Service, Bob Marshall, Calvin Rutstrum, and Sigurd F. Olson) have done that and much more. They dedicated their lives to the study of nature, opening many doors to a better understanding and appreciation of the North American wilderness and therefore ourselves.

The author, who is an experienced woodsman, canoeist, and writer, provides us with much thought-provoking insight into the lives and philosophies of these visionary men. He explains not only what they did in their adventurous lives, but also why they acted the way they did. A tremendous amount of research has gone into the making of this quite comprehensive publication. An impressive bibliography as well as extensive source notes are given, making the book also a most useful reference guide to find further information about the movement to protect and preserve the wilderness.

It would have been nice to see more drawings than just the one of the howling wolf. But this minor criticism aside, this intelligently written book makes compelling reading for everyone carrying the love of wilderness in her or his heart.