

Fun facts about our state bird

Photo story by **BRENDA HADRICH**

The call of the Minnesota state bird, the Common Loon, is one of the many signs of summer in Minnesota. In addition to their unique cries, yodels and wails, loons have many characteristics.

GETTING INTO THE NEST:

(Above) Loons weigh about 8-12 pounds and are clumsy on land. However, they are excellent swimmers able to stay under water up to five minutes and go up to a depth of 250 feet.

EGGS IN NEST: (Below) A loon pair will build their nest on the edge of the water and for about a month they will share incubating the one or two eggs laid by the female.

BABY LOONS: (Right) Baby loons are unable to fly for about two months and are often kept warm and safe by hitching a ride on the back of a parent.



CATCHING A MEAL: Loons eat all kinds of fish, frogs, leeches and more. It is believed that loons may live up to 30 years.



RED EYES: (Above) A loon's characteristic red eye helps the loon navigate under water.



WINTER COAT: Loons put on a "winter coat" in the fall featuring a muted plumage.