

# Support LD 394: An Act to Protect Maine's Loons and Other Wildlife in the Issuance of a Permit to Hold a Regatta, Race or Boat or Water-ski Exhibition

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**Summary:** Requires permittees to provide protection, as prescribed by the Commissioner of IFW, for wildlife, wildlife habitat and water quality.

**Public Hearing:** Mar. 1 at 10 a.m., Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee

**Boat race permits are currently issued without consideration of impact to wildlife or water quality resources.**

- Permittees may request a permit for an event on any internal waters of the state from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) with the date, time, and location of the event.
- Permittees must provide 60-day notice to the relevant municipality.
- Permittees are required to “safeguard persons and property” with appropriate warning flags during the event.
- There are no permit conditions relating to the protection of wildlife or water resources.

**Lakes differ in their capacity to host race and other events in a way that is protective of water quality and wildlife habitat.**

- Small, shallow lakes will feel greater impacts to water quality from high-speed race events that have the potential to repeatedly stir up sediments.
- Small lakes are also vulnerable to greater wake size and velocity repeatedly reaching the shore and causing erosion and sedimentation.

**Loons are particularly at risk when boat races take place within their breeding territories.**

- Loon pairs defend territories averaging about 100 acres, where they nest and raise their chicks from May to September.
- Unlike ducks or other waterbirds that can fly away from disturbance, loons are heavy and need time and space to take off. Their main escape route is to dive in the water to escape danger.
- Boat racers may exceed 70 m.p.h. and ride four abreast, giving no escape route for loons should they surface in the path of oncoming boats.
- A banded loon is suspected to have been killed by a race boat on Watchic Pond in the summer of 2018. The bird should have been collected for necropsy but was instead disposed of, so there was no confirmation of the cause of death.

**MDIFW's mission is to protect and manage Maine's fish and wildlife and their habitats, promote Maine's outdoor heritage, and safely connects people with nature through responsible recreation, sport, and science.**

- That mission is hindered when the agency is unable to deny permits for races on lakes where water quality and wildlife may be put at risk.
- Maine has many hundreds of large, deep lakes where race events can occur without putting water quality and wildlife at risk.



**Giving MDIFW the opportunity to consider wildlife and water quality impacts, and to either deny permits based on unnecessary risk or add permit conditions when appropriate aligns boat races and other events with the MDIFW mission of promoting responsible recreation and protecting fish and wildlife habitat.**

## You can help pass this important bill!

Committees need to hear from you! Because of the COVID pandemic, all public hearings in 2021 are remote. Testimony can be submitted online prior to the hearing date or delivered in person via Zoom (see instructions below). Telling a personal story about your experiences or the reason that you feel passionately about this issue will be the most compelling way to engage committee members. The committee will get facts and statistics from organizations and agencies. Focus instead on a personal story that connects you to the value of wildlife and water quality of Maine's lakes and ponds. The same advice applies to written testimony. For tips on writing compelling testimony, visit [www.lakes.me/take-action#Testify](http://www.lakes.me/take-action#Testify)

**To either speak at the hearing or submit written testimony:** Visit [www.legislature.maine.gov](http://www.legislature.maine.gov), and click on the "Testimony Submission" button (bottom, right). At the next screen select the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee, then the date (Mar. 1). Check the box for LD 394. Then:

- **To submit written testimony**, upload your document (Word or PDF). You can also type text directly into the submission box. Below that, add your full name, town or organization in Maine (either full time or part time/seasonal residence), email and phone.
- **To speak at the public hearing**, fill out the contact information as above but also click the box that says "I would like to present my testimony live". You'll then see an added box to indicate if you support, oppose or are neutral on the bill. Although written testimony is not required, feel free to upload testimony at this time if you'd like the committee to have a written record of your comments. NOTE: At this time, clicking that you want to present testimony live will delete anything in writing you have submitted. You will have to re-upload your document after clicking this button.

**To listen to or watch public hearings**, visit [www.legislature.maine.gov](http://www.legislature.maine.gov) and click on the links at the top center of the page.

**For updates**, including changes in bill status, newly printed lake bills coming before the legislature, and other lake advocacy news and legislative alerts, please visit [lakes.me/advocacy](http://lakes.me/advocacy).

***Your voice makes a big difference.  
Thank you for speaking up on behalf of Maine's lakes!***