

## Wilton students' loon study continues

By **Nancy Prince** • Apr 20th, 2009 • Category: **Features**, **News**

WILTON – Academy Hill School third-grade students recently had the opportunity to be up close and personal with loons.

The educational outreach program on loons and loon research was presented last week by the BioDiversity Research Institute under the sponsorship of Friends of Wilson Lake.

This is the third year that FOWL, a non-profit group, has funded a scholastic loon project in an attempt to raise children's awareness of the value of this waterfowl breed that inhabits the lake. The group's membership believes that educating children about loons will reinforce protection of these remarkable birds.



Students from Mrs. Benton's third-grade class at Academy Hill School observe features of an adult male loon specimen exhibited by BRI outreach educator, Patrick Keenan. (Nancy Prince photo)

BRI outreach educator Patrick Keenan introduced a creative, interactive classroom presentation that personalized wildlife issues for the children. Students listened to recorded loon calls, observed the physical features of an adult male specimen in a glass case, measured loon wings,

and learned how loons are banded. They learned to identify the loons'

tremolo call that shows when the birds feel threatened. Keenan stressed the sensitivity of the loon nesting period that begins each spring after ice-out, and the need to keep away from nests and young loons.

At the end of the day Keenan expressed his gratification in helping kids to recognize the role that scientific information has in promoting conservation efforts, asserting that "research leads to understanding."

FOWL members and the third-grade teaching staff agree that the Wilton students' enthusiasm and desire to help protect loons demonstrates the positive results that can occur when community organizations collaborate to safeguard our natural resources.



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