



## *Little Loon and Papa Teaching Guide*

by Toni Buzzeo, MA, MLIS

You can meet many Science standards as well as Common Core English Language Arts standards when you share *Little Loon and Papa* in your classroom or library. In addition, many of the activities, particularly *Field Guide to Little Loon's North Woods Home*, address Information Literacy standards as outlined by the American Association of School Librarians in *AASL Standards for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learner*. **Note: For a full chapter of standards based curriculum activities for *Little Loon and Papa*, see the book *Toni Buzzeo and YOU*.**

### SCIENCE ACTIVITIES



#### Book Pairing

When it came to spelling Papa's long wail, I found the answer -- "AHA-OOO-OOOO'OOOO-OOO-AHHHI!"-- in a book you may like to read yourself as a teacher. *Loon Magic* by Tom Klein (Northword Press, 1996). The text of this lovely in-depth book is written for adults but the beautiful photographs should be shared with children, too. Students, on the other hand, will find the clear text of Klein's children's title, *Loon Magic for Kids* (Northword Press, 1991) much easier to understand.



#### Loon Talk

Just as humans have many different ways of expressing ourselves, the Common Loon has four distinct calls: the hoot, the yodel, the tremolo, and the wail.

- ❖ The hoot is used between members of a family group or flock when they are maintaining close contact. In *Little Loon and Papa*, Papa Loon hoots at Little Loon.
- ❖ The yodel is a call used only by males who are setting borders or when they are involved in confrontations.
- ❖ The tremolo is used by either a male or female loon who is frightened or has been disturbed or when one loon is being chased away by another. In addition, this is the only call they ever use in flight.
- ❖ Finally, the wail is used when loons are trying to maintain contact at a distance or trying to locate a mate or chick. In *Little Loon and Papa*, Papa Loon wails when Little Loon is lost.

Loon chicks have only one call, which is a peent. Little Loon peents throughout the book. Invite students to listen to the four loon calls at the [Loon Preservation Committee](http://www.loonpreservationcommittee.org) website. Ask them to imagine what the loon might say in words each time it uses one of its calls.



### ***Field Guide to Little Loon's North Woods Home***

Little Loon encounters three north woods mammals along the shore when he is separated from his papa. Discuss the particular ecosystem where Little Loon lives. What other mammals might he have encountered?

Support students as they research the mammals that live in Little Loon's north woods habitat. I grew up in Michigan and then moved to Maine, so I am especially familiar with this ecosystem but depending on the location of your school, your students may not be. In the library, use reference books (*Wildlife and Plants of the World*, published by Marshall Cavendish, 1999, is an excellent reference set for use by primary students), field guides, and online resources to conduct research.

The three mammals that appear in the book are moose, bear, and beaver. Other mammals they might include in their field guide are: otter, squirrel, chipmunk, porcupine, raccoon, opossum, muskrat, weasel, fisher, mink, pine marten, skunk, cotton tail rabbit, hare, woodchuck, mouse, vole, gray wolf, red fox, wolverine, coyote, lynx, bobcat, mountain lion, and white-tail deer.

Encourage them to create a field guide to the area where Little Loon lives. Each entry will include a student drawing of the animals found in the north woods with notation of a few physical characteristics, one or two behaviors, and its habitat.



### ***Adopt a Loon***

As part of your study of loons, consider asking your students if they would like to adopt a loon. [BioDiversity Research Institute](#) in Gorham, Maine, which bands and monitors Common Loons throughout North America as part of ongoing protection and preservation efforts, sponsors an Adopt-a-Loon program for classes who will receive a packet including a description of the loon's personal history (how old it is, its size and weight, what lake it resides on, and how many offspring the Loon has parented), an Adopt-A-Loon certificate, a fact sheet on Common Loons and how mercury and lead affect loons, and a color loon poster.