

Minnesota's Square Dancing Loons

“Friendship Set to Music” uses lots of segments to keep the viewers and dancers entertained. The latest, the release of three Minnesota loons who love traveling and going to square dances, began at the August tapings.

You can follow the three loons on their own website: www.squaredanceloons.com; each also has her own e-mail address. Their names are Alice, Lottie and Lola. Each has a tag attached that includes instructions for her hosts to update her travels so everyone knows where she is and what's she's doing.

In her travel segments on FSTM, Jane Simpson released them into the “wild” world of square dancing. Alice went off dancing with Pat and Gary. Lola left with Andy and Mary, and Lottie went with Linda. At the Mid-Summer Magic dance, Linda passed Lottie to Tom and Sandra Eason from Georgia.

Pictures of the releases were taken and a short story was written for each release; all are posted on the “loony” website. When they are passed on to other dancers, more photos and stories will be posted. Visitors to the website can also leave comments.

On their departure, each was carrying along her “looney” family history which reads as follows: The loon is Minnesota's state bird. We are known for our incredible diving skills and for our loud and mournful calls, which are often described as crazy laughter. For this reason, we are sometimes referred to as “spirits of the wilderness.”

When we're adults, we mate for life and return to the same area every year to breed. Loons lay two eggs in May or June, and Mom and Dad both take turns to incubate them during the next month. Our chicks leave their nest within a day or two and ride on our backs so they keep their soft, downy feathers warm and dry. We both feed them until they are two or three months old, at which time they learn to fly and are able to fend for themselves.

Our bones are solid so the extra weight helps us dive as deep as 250' to search for food, and we can stay underwater for up to five minutes; the red in our eyes helps us to see underwater. We can fly more than 75 mph and can live for 30 years.

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