

MODULAR LOON RAFT MAINTENANCE CHECKLISTS



SPRING MAINTENANCE

Mid-April to Early May

- Check the lobster trap wire base for damage or corrosion. Use metal clamps known as “hog rings” to secure any part of the base that has come loose.
- Check the attachment of the black mesh covering the front and back of the raft base. If loose, secure with small zip ties.
- Inspect the avian guard if present. Replace if heavily bent or damaged. Make sure the guard is securely attached to the raft base.
- Replace any branches that were woven into the avian guard for shade cover with freshly cut cedar or pine.
- Cut back/remove plants or other materials if blocking access to the nest bowl or making the raft too heavy.
- Add taller plants to the corners of the raft and the planter boxes if last year’s are dead or missing.
- If bare wire or soil is exposed in the center nest bowl area, cover with soil and moss or low-growing groundcover plants.
- Put the raft in the water and then attach the planter boxes with new zip ties.
- Check flotation. Add 11-liter sealed, hard plastic oyster floats if the top of the base is not floating 2 to 4 inches above water.
- Tow the raft to the site where it will be deployed and assess location. Still protected? Enough water? New threats? Still local support?
- Retrieve the anchor line float and check that the carabiners attached to the anchor lines still spring shut.
- Check and tighten the clamps on the anchor lines with a 10mm ratchet head. Replace corroded clamps.
- Clip the carabiner on each anchor line to the raft on diagonally opposite corners to hold it in place. Once the raft is clipped to the anchor lines, make sure the entrance to the raft is facing out to open water (adjust anchor lines if necessary).

SUMMER MONITORING

May to August

- Check on the raft weekly throughout the season to make sure the decking floats 2 to 4 inches above the water, plants are intact, and the anchor lines (and avian guard if present) remain sturdily attached. Fix any issues that arise as long as the loon pair isn’t nesting on or near the raft. If you will be away, please find someone else to help. A raft cannot be left unattended or it is likely to become a hazard.
- Routinely check for, and deal with, goose poop on the raft. Goose poop may deter loons from nesting on rafts, but regularly removing it and ensuring the plants remain intact can help resolve this issue.
- Submit observations to maineaudubon.org/loonmonitoring. Printable forms can also be found in the monitoring section of our website: maineaudubon.org/loonrestoration.



END OF SEASON MAINTENANCE

Mid to Late August

Remove raft in mid-August if the pair hatched chick(s) or late August if the nest failed or there was no nesting.

- Unclip raft from anchor lines.
- Clip the carabiner on each anchor line to a buoy, boat bumper, or float.
- Cut zip ties and remove any floats that aren’t tightly secured under the raft.
- Tow raft to shore and move to an approved storage area, unless the raft will remain in the water over the winter.
- If possible, store propped up off ground, such as on cinder blocks.
- If nearshore, secure raft to tree, post, etc.

For more information about maintaining your raft go to the ‘Raft’ section of maineaudubon.org/loonrestoration. Or watch the webinar recording ‘All About Loon Nesting Rafts’ at maineaudubon.org/raftmaintenance

MODULAR LOON RAFT REPLACEMENT SUPPLY LIST

Many of the materials provided with your raft will last for decades without need of replacement. Some supplies, such as carabiners, zip ties and anchor line clamps, may need to be replaced more frequently. Below is a list of supplies we use to outfit our modular rafts and cost estimates. Keep in mind that you may never need to buy many of these supplies. You should be ready to spend up to \$50 in a given year for replacement supplies and/or plants, but most years costs will be minimal.

DESCRIPTION	SIZE	QTY	PER	ESTIMATED COST PER UNIT
Anchor Line Materials				
Stainless steel cable clamp	1/4"	2	Anchor line	\$0.50 Each
Vinyl coated wire rope cable	3/16-1/4" W 6-12 ft L	2	Raft	\$0.50 Per Foot
Stainless steel spring snap hook carabiner	4"	1	Anchor line	\$3.33 Each
Two-cell cinder/concrete block	8"x 8" x 16"	1	Anchor	\$3.50 Each
Ratchet tool	10 mm	1	Raft	\$3-\$15 Each
Flotation				
Sealed, hard plastic oyster floats*	11 liter	4-8	Raft	\$12.00 Each
Extra long heavy duty cable ties/zip ties, UV resistant	36-48" L	2	Float	\$0.80 Each
Structure				
Lobster trap wire Cavatorta 12 Green*	For replacement planter box: two 6"x6" end caps; three 6" x 26" pcs for sides	2	Raft	\$10.00 Each
Stainless steel blunt tip hog rings	1/2-3/4"	Many	Raft	\$7.50 LB
Hog ring pliers	N/A	1	Person	\$20.00 Each
Plastic square mesh oyster bag	3/16" mesh size, 36"L x 24" W	2	Raft	\$6.50
Small UV resistant zip/cable ties to attach mesh to raft frame	4"L x 2.5mm W	approx. 20	Oyster mesh bag	\$5.00 100-count bag
50 lb tensile zip ties to attach planter box to raft	4-6"L x 1/3" W	3-4	Planter box	\$0.03 Each
Landscape cloth to line planter box	4'L x 10"W	1	Planter box	\$1.00 Each
Avian Guard				
Stainless steel blunt tip hog rings	3/4"	Many	Avian Guard	\$7.50 LB
Hog ring pliers	N/A	1	Person	\$20.00 Each
Lobster trap wire Cavatorta 12 Green*	7' x 4' piece, 12 gauge	1	Raft	\$40.00 Each

* Oyster floats and lobster trap wire can be purchased in Maine from companies such as Portland Trap and Brooks Mill Trap Co (in Thomaston) or online from oyster or lobster trap supply companies such as: <https://www.outlawoysters.com/products/11-liter-float/>