

## *Patient Tale: A Loony Story of Cooperation*

January 19, 1997 Di Conger, a rehabilitator in Thurmont, MD, received a call from the Hyattstown Emergency Animal Clinics. A citizen had admitted a loon that she had picked up from her show-covered yard because it could not walk or fly. The bird needed to be evaluated and treated. As it happened, Di had to be in Bethesda that day so picked up the bird and dropped it off at SCWC. The bird was a beautiful red-throated loon.

After carefully examining the bird, we felt this was a case of a fish out of water. The bird was perfectly normal; loons are true water birds and are unable to walk or take flight from solid ground. Treatment consisted of observing the loon to be sure no problems were missed and then releasing it as quickly as possible.

When Di completed her business in Bethesda and returned to Thurmont, she called on a friend who is knowledgeable about loons to be sure this one was in the right place at the right time. She was told that these birds were very common along the shore at this time of year. I called on my friends, Teddy and Velvet Kitzmiller at Noah's Ark Wildlife Center in Pasadena to see if they could release the bird. None of us receive loons very often so they were delighted to take part in the release.

I called on my trusty transport volunteer, Cay Ruseau, who picked up the bird from SCWC and drove it to Noah's Ark. Noah's Ark then took the bird to Gibson's Island and set it free, taking pictures and a video of the occasion.

The bird was in captivity for less than three days. Loons usually do not do well in captivity and it is imperative to get them back to their natural habitat as quickly as possible. The cooperation between Hyattstown EAC, Di Conger, SCWC, Cay Ruseau and Noah's Ark made it possible to return this beautiful creature to the wild. Wouldn't the world be a nice place if we all cooperated with each other this well all the time?

*by Chris Montuori*