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Yellow-billed Loon (YBLO)– *Gavia adamsii* (G.R.Gray).

Status. III category. Rare, sporadically distributed species.

**Distribution.** Breeds in the tundra from Kola Peninsula to Chukotka, only in Taimyr it penetrates into the belt of forest-tundra. Occurs also on Chukotka shore of the Bering Sea. Probably, separate concentrations also remain in northern part of the shore of Sea of Okhotsk (1-5). On Wrangel Island it occurs episodically and probably does not breed (4,6). Outside the USSR the YBLO is distributed on the northern shore of Alaska and Canada (2).

Perimeter changes of the breeding range are not registered.

The most typical nesting habitat includes relatively large tundra lakes. For nest location the Loons frequently choose lowland capes or islands, where quite often it settles from year to year. YBLOs' wintering grounds are located on shores of the Barents and Bering Seas – to the west and to the east from their nesting range (2).

**Population Numbers.** Total number is not determined. In the identified nesting area of the species its population density is usually 1 pair per 100-200 sq km, only sometimes reaching 12-16 pairs per 100 sq km (7,8).

**Limiting factors.** As a result of a long reproductive cycle the Yellow-billed Loon is forced to begin breeding earlier than other Loon species, that makes their nests more vulnerable to sudden water level raises, ice movements and other unfavourable factors. In addition, in spite of the strength and aggression of adult birds the YBLO clutches often become the victims of Arctic foxes (7). Quite often the Yellow-billed Loons together with other loon species fall victims in the fishing nets or get shot by hunters.

**Conservation measures.** More information on population and reproduction status is necessary, directed towards conservation of this rare bird.

Information sources: 1. Portenko, 1939; 2. Dement'yev, 1951; 3. Kishchinskiy, 1968; 4. Portenko, 1972; 5. Krechmar, 1966; 6. Krechmar et al., 1979; 7. Krechmar, Andreev, Kondrat'yev, 1978; 8. Kondrat'yev A.Ya. (pers. comm.).

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