

Building Rafts

Some birds build nests right beside the water, sometimes only inches away. If there is a flood, and the lake rises too high, the eggs will be chilled and won't hatch. This problem can be especially devastating in the case of endangered birds, such as loons, leading to dangerously low numbers of chicks being raised each year. So scientists designed and built special rafts, covered them with cattails and other weeds, and then anchored them loosely in sheltered areas. Often, birds will use them for nesting sites. If the lake floods, these rafts will float, keeping the nests and their eggs safe from the water.



In a way, raft-building is something all stewards do. Of course, they are usually not actual rafts. However, they do help others to stay out of harm's way. Starting, running, and donating to a food pantry all help keep away the dangers of malnutrition. This is especially important for children, the sick, and the elderly. Providing school supplies and tutoring helps keep the dangers of ignorance away. In many cases, adults need help with learning just as much as children do.

Building and repairing homes helps keep the dangers of homelessness ... crime, cold, lack of sanitation, to name just a few ... away from people who because of illness, disability, or unemployment, are vulnerable to being on the street. Most importantly of all, maintaining a house of worship helps people keep the dangers of sin away from themselves. Comforting prayers, inspirational sermons, and joyous hymns can and do change lives. The water birds never thank the scientists for the rafts. Stewards may not hear thanks as often as they should, either. But the world is a better, more beautiful place for the birds in it, and likewise for the people who benefit from Christian stewardship.

