Fishing With Lead Poisons

Wildlife

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?
Every year, many birds die from lead poisoning after swallowing lead sinkers and jigs.

Many anglers use lead weights (sinkers) and jigs to get their fishing lines to sink. These weights may come off of a line and fall into the water or get left in the water after a hook is snagged or the line is broken.

Birds such as loons, ducks, and herons sometimes consume lead materials mistaking them for pebbles or grit. These birds naturally ingest these items to help grind their food. When lead is eaten, it usually leads to poisoning of the animal.

YOU CAN HELP!
Sinkers and jigs do not have to be made of lead. Inexpensive and safe alternatives to lead fishing weights are made from non-toxic materials like tin, bismuth, steel, and ceramic, and are available in many retail stores. Though slightly larger in size for a given weight, the alternatives work just as well as lead.

WHAT YOU CAN DO
- Switch to non-lead fishing weights available in many tackle shops and retail stores.
- Discard old lead sinkers and jigs properly. Take them to your household hazardous waste facility.
- Patronize local sporting goods stores and encourage them to expand their stock of non-lead alternatives.

SPREAD THE WORD!
Tell other anglers about the problem. Refer them to the HawkWatch International website: www.hawkwatch.org/lead_site

Pass this important knowledge onto your children and grandchildren. Let’s leave the future of wildlife in good hands.

Loon Ingested Lead Sinkers
Wildlife Without Lead

WHAT HAPPENS TO BIRDS WITH LEAD POISONING?

In many birds, the ingestion of a single lead sinker can be lethal. Birds with lead poisoning act strangely. They often have tremors and difficulty flying. Once weakened by the effects of lead, birds are more vulnerable to predators and the elements. They have trouble feeding, mating, nesting, and caring for young. There is no way to cure a bird that has ingested lead, and they face certain death, often in a matter of weeks.

THE PROBLEM & THE SOLUTIONS

HOW IS LEAD AFFECTING RAPTORS?

Raptors feed on water birds and are routinely exposed to the effects of lead poisoning.

Raptors, like humans, are especially susceptible to the lethal and sub-lethal effects of lead poisoning because they are at the top of the food chain. As a toxic substance moves up the food chain, each organism experiences more concentrated levels of toxicity than the organism below it. This increase in concentration is referred to as bioaccumulation. Acute lead poisoning is documented in Bald and Golden Eagles, California Condors, Ospreys, Peregrine Falcons and several accipiter species.

Purchase Lead-Free Lures & Sinkers!

To learn more about how to help ensure healthy wildlife populations while enjoying fishing and other outdoor sports, talk to your local retailers or contact one of these programs or national vendors.

Big Ten Tackle  www.bigtentackle.com
Cabela’s  www.cabelas.com
Quarry Lakes Lead Tackle Exchange Program  www.acwd.org
Project Gutpile  www.projectgutpile.org
Water Gremlin’s Gremlin Green Sinkers  www.watergremlin.com
Rocky Ledge Bass Tackle  www.rockyledge.com
BulletWeights  www.bulletweights.com

MISSION

Anglers Helping to Conserve Wildlife

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HawkWatch International monitors and protects hawks, eagles, other birds of prey and their environments through research, education and conservation.

OTHER BIRD SPECIES VULNERABLE TO LEAD CONTAMINATION