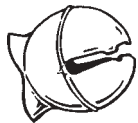


What You Can Do

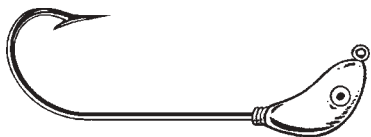
- Use non-lead fishing weights. You could save the life of a loon, swan, or other waterbird.
- Ask your local sporting goods store to stock non-lead fishing tackle.
- Spread the word. Tell other anglers about the problem with lead and tell them to switch to non-lead sinkers and jigs – it's the law!
- Remove these lead sinkers and jigs from your tackle box:



Split shot



Egg sinker



Lead-headed jig

For more information, please contact:



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
70 Commercial Street, Suite 300
Concord, NH 03301
603-223-2541
www.fws.gov



New Hampshire
Fish and Game Department
11 Hazen Drive
Concord, NH 03301
603-271-3211
www.wildlife.state.nh.us



Loon Preservation Committee
PO Box 604
Lee's Mills Road
Moultonborough, NH 03254
603-476-LOON (5666)
www.loon.org

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the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
Additional information was included by
New Hampshire Fish and Game Department.*



The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department joins with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and private industry in a partnership to conserve our aquatic resources. This department's conservation activity is supported by fishing license revenue and Sportfish Restoration funds.

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Let's Get the Lead Out



New Hampshire
Fish and Game Department

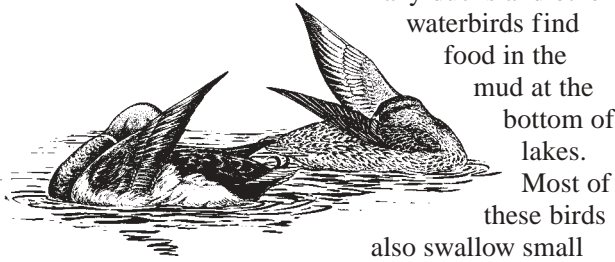
Photo by Kristin Bremmer, Audubon Society of New Hampshire.

Let's Get the Lead Out!

Loons, swans, cranes and other waterbirds can die from lead poisoning after swallowing lead fishing sinkers and jigs lost by anglers.

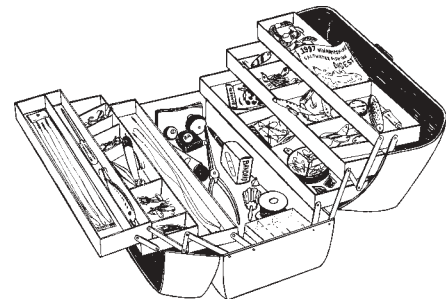
Anglers attach lead weights to fishing lines to sink the hook, bait, or lure into the water. Some anglers use lead-weighted hooks, called jigs. A sinker or jig may accidentally detach from a line and fall into the water, or the hook or line may become tangled and the line may break or be cut.

Many ducks and other waterbirds find food in the mud at the bottom of lakes. Most of these birds



also swallow small stones and grit that aid in grinding up their food. Some of the grit may contain lead from anglers' equipment.

Biologists have studied the effects of lead sinkers and jigs on waterbirds, such as loons and swans, since the 1970s. Their ongoing research has documented that, in the northeast United States and Canada where loons breed, lead sinkers or jigs can account for 10 to 50 percent of dead adult loons found by researchers. Research in New England suggests that lead poisoning is the single greatest cause of mortality for retrieved loons.



Lead Poisoning

A bird with lead poisoning will have physical and behavioral changes, including loss of balance, gasping, tremors, and impaired ability to fly. The weakened bird is more vulnerable to predators, and it may have trouble feeding, mating, nesting, and caring for its young. It becomes emaciated and often dies within two to three weeks after eating the lead.

Safer Fishing Tackle

Lead poisoning does not have to happen. Sinkers do not have to be made of lead. Inexpensive and ecologically sound alternatives to lead fishing weights are available. Anglers can use sinkers made from non-poisonous materials such as tin, bismuth, steel, brass and recycled glass.

It's the Law

To help protect waterbirds from getting lead poisoning, Great Britain banned the use of lead sinkers in 1987. In Canada, it is illegal to use lead fishing sinkers and jigs in national parks and national wildlife areas. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has banned the use of lead sinkers and jigs on some National Wildlife Refuges where loons and trumpeter swans breed, and is considering bans in additional areas.

New for New Hampshire

In New Hampshire, a state law passed in 2004 prohibits the use of certain sizes of lead sinkers and jigs on all fresh waters in the state. N.H. Fish and Game has long encouraged all anglers to safely dispose of old lead sinkers and jigs and replace them with non-lead alternatives. In 2000, New Hampshire was the first state to ban lead sinkers and jigs to protect common loons and other diving birds. That law banned the use of lead sinkers **one ounce or less and jigs less than one inch long** on freshwater lakes and ponds. The 2004 law extends that ban to rivers and streams as of January 2005, and, beginning in January 2006, also prohibits the sale of these particular lead sinkers and jigs statewide.

Facts About Lead and Loons in New Hampshire

How does lead ingestion affect the N.H. loon population?

In 2002, the adult loon population in New Hampshire was 515. Joint research by Tufts University and the Loon Preservation Committee (LPC) shows that seven of 11 dead adult loons studied that year were known to have died from ingesting lead sinkers and jigs. This represented a 1.4 percent loss to the state's total loon population that year directly as a result of eating lead tackle.

What are the long-term trends?

Of 116 dead adult common loons recovered in New Hampshire from 1992 to 2002, 66 died from lead ingestion. That's a 57 percent mortality rate attributed to lead ingestion among known dead adult loons over 11 years, according to the Tufts/LPC studies.

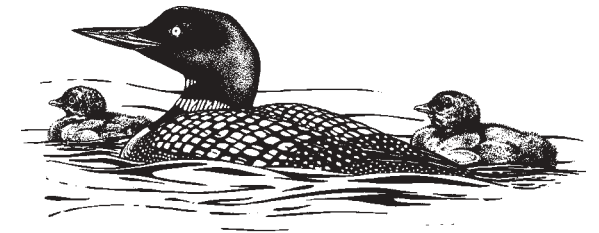
What types of lead tackle cause the problems?

The following categories of lead fishing tackle were recovered from the gizzards of the loons:

- Lead sinkers averaged 1/2 inch measured on any axis (maximum size was 1 inch measured on any axis).
- Lead-headed jigs – Specialized hooks with lead just below the eye of the hook.

What steps can we take to avoid the problem in the future?

New Hampshire's common loon has made tremendous gains during the past three decades. In 1977, there were a total of 62 nesting pairs of loons in the state; by 2003 that number had more than doubled to 151 nesting pairs. Each year, these breeding pairs will lay one to two eggs. Survival for the chicks is usually greater than 70 percent. However no studies exist to tell us about the long-range effects of lead on the loon population in New Hampshire. The actions of New Hampshire's anglers can make a difference for the future of our loons. Anglers should be aware that it is against the law in New Hampshire to use lead sinkers one ounce or less or lead jigs under an inch long on any freshwater pond or



lake in the state, and after January 1, 2005, use of this tackle will be illegal in freshwater rivers and streams as well.

Are there concerns about human health and lead fishing sinkers?

Lead is most harmful to young children and pregnant women. Lead can harm a child's nervous system, and may cause learning and behavior problems. To prevent exposure to lead: (1) Do not allow young children to handle lead sinkers. (2) Never put lead sinkers in your mouth. This includes crimping lead sinkers with your teeth onto fishing lines. (3) Wash your hands with soap after holding or using lead sinkers. For more information, call the N.H. Department of Health and Human Services at (603) 271-4507.

What can you do?

If you are a freshwater angler, switch to non-lead tackle right away. Take advantage of alternative tackle options that can help keep our waterways free of toxic lead that is harmful to loons, fish and other wildlife. Check over your tackle box and remove any lead sinkers and jigs; dispose of them safely at:

- N.H. Fish and Game offices (Concord, Durham, Keene, Lancaster, and New Hampton) and state fish hatcheries (for locations, call 603-271-3211).
- Household Hazardous Waste Collections, held throughout the state from April through June. Call the N.H. Department of Environmental Services at (603) 271-3503, or visit: www.state.nh.us/des/hhw.
- The Loon Preservation Committee's visitor center on Lee's Mills Road in Moultonborough; visit www.loon.org.