Fishing Wisconsin: Get the lead out - One lead split shot - enough to kill a twelve pound loon!

Lead poisoning from ingested tackle usually occurs in one of two ways, a lead jig head is swallowed by a fish, or lost lead tackle is picked up along with small stones and grit from the bottom of lakes to help digest food. Fish, loons, eagles, trumpeter swans and many other wildlife species are consuming lead in one or both of these ways, and the results can be fatal.

Anglers can tackle lead

Lead fishing tackle has been used by generations of Wisconsin anglers. One of the goals of the Get the Lead Out! Wisconsin campaign is to bring awareness to anglers about lead poisoning in fish and other wildlife from lead tackle ingestion. Inexpensive and ecologically sound alternatives to lead fishing weights are available. Anglers can use sinkers and jigs made from non-poisonous materials such as tin, bismuth, steel and tungsten-nickel alloy.

- Wisconsin anglers: get the lead out [PDF] from the 2008-2009 Fishing Regulations
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency [exit DNR] Non-lead alternatives for fishing tackle
- LoonWatch [exit DNR] - NonLead Fishing Tackle Suppliers

Dispose of lead properly

Dispose of your lead tackle properly— do not throw it in a lake or trash can. Contact your local recycling program to see if they will accept it. If not, take it to your local household hazardous waste collection site or a scrap metal collector/recycler.

- List of metal recyclers that accept lead tackle [PDF]

Education

Another great way to help is teaching good stewardship to young anglers. Outfit kids´ with tackle boxes with non-lead weights. They are non-toxic and safer for youngsters to handle. Plus, inexperienced anglers tend to lose the most sinkers, so you'll be cutting down on the amount of lead getting left behind in Wisconsin lakes and rivers.

For more information on lead

For research reports and further background information, visit the following Web sites:

- Precautions for eating deer harvested with lead ammunition
- Lead exposure in Wisconsin birds [PDF] STROM, S. M., J. A. LANGENBERG, N. K. BUSINGA, AND J. K. BATTEN. 2009. In R. T. Watson, M. Fuller, M. Pokras, and W. G. Hunt (Eds.). Ingestion of Lead from Spent Ammunition: Implications for Wildlife and Humans. The Peregrine Fund, Boise, Idaho, USA. DOI 10.4080/ilsa.2009.0205
- Department of Health and Family Services - Lead [exit DNR]
- USGS - National Wildlife Health Center [exit DNR]
- LoonWatch [exit DNR] - Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute
- Lead Poisoning of Wisconsin's Birds [exit DNR]