

Why fish lead free?



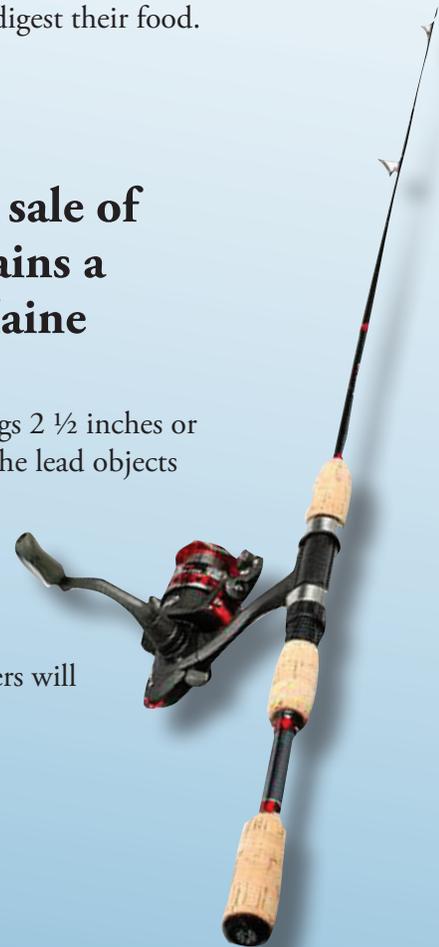
Fishing lead free is better for our wildlife and the health of our lakes. Lead poisoning is a leading cause of death for adult Common Loons in Maine. These deaths are completely preventable if we all make the switch to non-lead fishing tackle and work together to remove lost fishing gear from Maine's lakes.

We need your help to “Get the Lead Out!”

- Almost one-third of dead loons collected in Maine died from ingestion of lead fishing tackle.
- Adult loons catch fish with lead sinkers, jigs, and line, or accidentally swallow lead objects while picking up gravel from lake bottoms to help digest their food.
- Once ingested, lead causes death in as little as two weeks.

Despite a statewide ban on the use and sale of some lead tackle, lead poisoning remains a leading cause of loon mortality in Maine

- Maine's Fish Lead-Free Law bans the sale and use of bare lead jigs 2 ½ inches or less and 1 oz. or less, yet lead-headed jigs make up over half of the lead objects recovered from lead-poisoned loons in Maine.
- The sale and use of lead sinkers 1 oz. or less and 2 ½ inches or less are banned statewide, yet loon mortality from lead sinkers continues with ongoing use of old lead tackle.
- Doing your part to keep lead jigs and sinkers out of Maine waters will help Maine's loons and other wildlife continue to thrive.



What you can do!

1. Replace old lead tackle with new lead-free options.

Non-toxic tackle comes in many metal choices, and modern metal alloys offer a number of advantages:

- They are environmentally safe.
- They have more sound-producing qualities to call in those fish and up your catch.
- Tungsten is denser and harder than lead, which allows the angler to “feel” the bait more effectively.
- Tackle made from tin, bismuth, and steel alloys are lighter than lead, and many anglers have reported good success using lighter baits and lures because they have a more natural appearance and presentation.
- Any fishing tackle containing zinc is not recommended because it is also toxic to wildlife.

A list of online and retail stores that sell lead free tackle in Maine can be found at fishleadfree.org

2. Dispose of lead tackle safely.



A list of disposal sites in Maine can be found at fishleadfree.org.
If you know of a facility that accepts lead and is not on this list, please let us know.

3. Get the word out about fishing lead-free.

- Contact Maine Audubon for posters, and brochures to hand out in your community.
- Post “Fish Lead Free” signs and posters at boat ramps.
- Talk to fellow fishermen, boaters, and lake visitors about the threat of lead tackle and fishing line to loons, and share information about alternatives.
- Pick up and recycle discarded monofilament line. Loons can become entangled in broken or discarded line, which often impairs their ability to feed and fly and can lead to death.



Visit: fishleadfree.org

For more information on the *Fish Lead Free Initiative*, including posters, stickers, and collection bin designs, visit: maineaudubon.org/fff or call: (207) 781-2330 ext. 216