

What Can You Do?

Obey the law. As of January 1, 2007, it will be illegal to use a lead sinker weighing one-half ounce or less to fish in Vermont. Remove and properly dispose of all lead sinkers in your tackle box.

Although not illegal to use, **please remove** and properly dispose of **lead-headed jigs one inch or smaller** from your tackle box. These are just as deadly as sinkers.

Inform other anglers about the law. Encourage them to **find alternatives to lead-headed jigs.**



Pick up a sample packet of **FREE** non-lead sinkers at the following locations; F & W District Offices, selected State Parks, Fishing Clinics and other Educational Programs, and at all State Fish Hatcheries.

Other Helpful Actions:

Remove fishing line and other materials from Vermont waters and shorelines to reduce entanglement.

Maintain a respectful distance from wild animals. Travel with binoculars. If a bird vocalizes as you approach, immediately back off.

Do not approach a loon nesting area.

Help monitor loon activity either all summer or during the annual loon count held the 3rd Saturday of July. Contact Eric Hanson, VINS Biologist and Coordinator of the Vermont Loon Recovery Project, P.O. Box 22, Craftsbury, VT 05826 (802) 586-8064, ehanson@vtlink.net.

Support loon and other nongame wildlife management efforts by donating to the Nongame Wildlife Fund on your Vermont income tax form or on hunting and fishing license applications.

Buy Vermont Conservation License Plates for your vehicle.

For more information, contact:
Vermont Agency of Natural Resources
103 South Main Street, Waterbury, VT 05671-0501
(802) 241-3700 or www.vtfishandwildlife.com

WHAT HAVE OTHER RESEARCHERS FOUND?

Research in the northeastern United States and Canada where loons breed has found that lead sinkers or jigs account for 10 to 50 percent of dead adult loons.

Research in New England indicates that more loons die from lead poisoning than from tumors, boat strikes, fractures, infections, and conflict between loons.

Lead sinkers can be harmful to children's health too. There are two documented cases of children with elevated levels of lead in their blood due to lead fishing sinkers. In one case, the children were biting lead split-shot to put on fishing lines. In the other, the children lived in a home where lead sinkers were manufactured.

WHERE HAVE LEAD SINKERS BEEN BANNED?

Great Britain banned the use of lead sinkers in 1987. In Canada, it is illegal to use lead sinkers and jigs in national parks. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently considering banning the use of lead sinkers and jigs on national wildlife refuges where loons and Trumpeter swans breed. Lead sinker use is banned in three national refuges and Yellowstone National Park in the United States. **Maine** banned the sale of lead sinkers and jigs less than one oz. and **New York** banned the sale of lead sinkers less than one oz. **New Hampshire** passed a ban on the use of lead sinkers and jigs less than one oz. and less than one inch. As of 2006, a ban on the sale of lead sinkers and jigs will also be put into effect in New Hampshire.



Some of the information in this brochure was reprinted with permission from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, 11 Lincoln Street, Essex Junction, VT 05452
(802) 951-6313 www.fws.gov

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Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. Cover photo credit: Alden Pellet.



Let's Get
THE LEAD
OUT

Lead harms
our loons
and other waterbirds.

Let's help them!

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

Let's Get **THE LEAD** OUT

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Lead is a toxic metal. To reduce human exposure, we no longer allow it in our gasoline, paint, or plumbing.

Many wildlife species are harmed by lead. Loons, ducks, and other waterbirds can die of lead poisoning after swallowing lead sinkers and jigs lost by anglers.

Since 1989, 60% of analyzed loon deaths in Vermont were directly related to lead ingestion, entanglement with fishing line, or other impacts with fishing gear; 19 of 38 (50%) adult loons died of lead poisoning from ingesting lead sinkers. An additional four loon deaths (10%) were caused by entanglement or because of swallowing hooks or lures. In New England, from 1985-2005, over 176 of 381 (46.2%) adult loons died from lead fishing gear.



MITCH MORASKI

WHY CARE SO MUCH ABOUT LOONS?

Loons are ancient birds that have come to symbolize grace, beauty, and wildness. Loon sounds and behaviors provide an enriching experience for many people, including anglers.

The loon species that breeds in Vermont is the common loon. The common loon was placed on the Vermont endangered species list in an effort to protect the species and increase the population. Because of the protection, loon nesting and chick survival rates in the state have been on the rise in recent years. **Loon recovery was deemed a success when on April 23, 2005 the common loon was removed from Vermont's endangered species list.** Keeping lead sinkers out of Vermont waters will help ensure that the loon doesn't become listed again. With 53 loon pairs breeding in Vermont (2005) and successful pairs producing about one chick per year, the loss of one loon can be significant.

Loons are not the only birds affected by the use of lead sinkers. However, there is less information on the mortality of other wildlife from lead poisoning. This may be because some species are less noticeable or spend less time in areas where there are people so the effects of lead poisoning go unnoticed and undocumented. **Lead is toxic to all wildlife.**

HOW CAN ANGLERS HELP?

While fishing, you can help **by following the law; As of January 1, 2007, it will be illegal to use a lead sinker weighing one-half ounce or less to fish in Vermont.**

Many lead sinkers are similar in appearance to the small stones and grit that birds swallow to aid in digesting food in their gizzard. Switching to lead-free tackle will reduce the chance that loons and other waterbirds will swallow poisonous lead products that have accidentally fallen into the water or that were lost while fishing. Loons and other waterbirds may also eat fish that contain a hook and sinker broken from an angler's line.

TOM JONES



Anglers have been strong supporters of wildlife conservation for decades. Aiding loons, ducks, and other waterbirds provides yet another opportunity to extend this conservation legacy.

WILL SWITCHING TO OTHER MATERIALS AFFECT FISHING?

While using alternatives to lead sinkers, anglers may need to think creatively when rigging their lines because of differences in the weights of these materials. Many anglers have reported good success with the use of less weight, allowing for a more natural appearance and presentation of the bait or lure used.

**THESE LEAD SINKERS ARE NOW ILLEGAL:
PLEASE REMOVE THEM FROM YOUR TACKLE BOX.**



Split Shot



Egg Sinker