

## Lead facts

- An estimated 1 fishing weight is lost every 6 hours of fishing per person. (*North American Journal of Fisheries Management* 26:206–212, 2006)
- 2700 metric tons of lead fishing weights are produced every year—primarily to replace lost weights. (*Audubon Society—Waterbird Conservation Study*)
- According to studies by Tufts University, over the last 30 years, lead poisoning accounts for up to 57% of adult loon deaths. (*State of NH, Fish and Game Dept.*)
- Up to 25% of dead eagles are the victims of lead poisoning (*Raptor Center at the University of Minnesota*)
- New Hampshire, Wisconsin, New York, Minnesota, Maine, and Vermont have banned or limited the use of lead sinkers. Massachusetts has banned the use of lead sinkers only at Quabbin and Wachusett reservoirs.
- Up to 25 species of birds are affected by lead poisoning with up to 31% of endangered Trumpeter Swans being killed by lead poisoning. (*Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative*)



## What you can do

- Replace your lead fishing weights with non toxic weights. Use only environmentally friendly fishing gear, like circle hooks and non lead sinkers.
- Tell others about the dangers of lead in the environment.
- Call your legislator and tell them that you are concerned about lead in the environment and want to ban the use of lead sinkers.
- Dispose of all lead including fishing weights in an environmentally responsible way: hazardous waste collection or a qualified recycling facility.

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**Want to know more about how YOU  
can help? Visit my website!**

**[www.replacelead.com](http://www.replacelead.com)**

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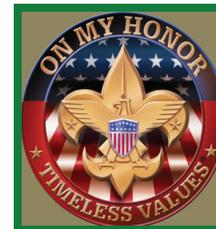
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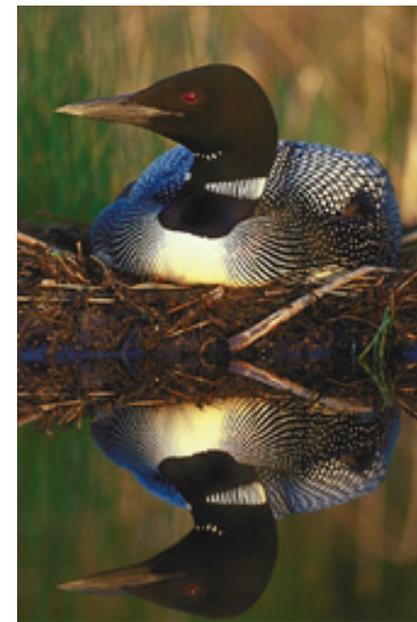


**Get the Lead  
Out of Fishing**

[www.replacelead.com](http://www.replacelead.com)

## Lead Fishing Weight Exchange Program

Dedicated to Educating Anglers  
About the Dangers of Lead  
in the Environment  
by Exchanging Lead Fishing Weights  
for Environmentally Friendly Ones



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# Why lead is dangerous in your environment

## Lead Kills!

Lead is a health hazard to both humans and animals. In humans, even very low amounts of lead poisoning may result in possible IQ reduction, learning disabilities, Attention Deficit Disorder, reduced growth, kidney damage, and hearing impairment. Higher levels of lead poisoning can cause mental retardation, coma, increased blood pressure, fertility problems, nerve disorders, muscle and joint pain, irritability, concentration problems and even death.



Animals with lead poisoning will exhibit physical and behavioral changes, such as loss of balance or tremors. This makes the animal more vulnerable to predators. Birds have trouble taking care of their young, feeding or nesting. Lead poisoning often kills the birds 2-3 weeks after ingesting the lead.

## How do birds and fish get poisoned?

Waterfowl such as ducks, swans and loons scoop food and pebbles off the bottom of ponds. They ingest lead fishing weights thinking the lead sinkers are stones that will aid in their digestion. The lead gets into their stomachs and dissolves, poisoning the bird. The fish become poisoned when they swallow lead fishing weights on fishing lines. Birds of prey such as eagles and falcons eat the poisoned fish and waterfowl, the lead ends up in their stomachs where it can slowly poison the birds.

## Is lead really that big of an issue?

Research studies in New Hampshire, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan estimate that up to 57% of loon deaths, up to 31% of Trumpeter Swan deaths, and up to 25% of Bald Eagle deaths are due to lead poisoning. Lead is responsible for poisoning deaths in 25 different species. Yes...lead really is a big issue!

## But it's just one small weight, how bad could it be?

Fishing tackle manufacturers produce nearly 480 million sinkers every year.—and 98% of those are made of lead. This translates to nearly 2,700 metric tons of lead being used by American anglers. Most of these new sinkers are used to replace old lead sinkers lost while fishing. In one study published in the North American Fisheries Journal, researchers estimated that every angler loses 1 weight for every six hours of fishing.



## What can I do?

A good first step is to replace all your lead tackle with safer alternatives, such as nickel alloy, bismuth, and tin. Other materials include ceramic, densified plastic, pewter, and stainless steel. Most tackle shops already stock these items. If they don't, ask for them! They cost only a few cents more than lead weights.

## What about my old lead weights?

Don't just throw them away!! Dispose of them properly at a hazardous waste collection site, or call a local metals recycler who can dispose of them properly.

## Where can I get more information?

- [www.replacelead.com](http://www.replacelead.com)—my website has lots of information!
- The Toxic Use Reduction Institute at UMass Lowell [www.turi.org/](http://www.turi.org/)
- Minnesota Pollution Control "Lets Get the Lead Out!" [www.pca.state.mn.us/oea/reduce/sinkers.cfm](http://www.pca.state.mn.us/oea/reduce/sinkers.cfm)
- Audubon Society Waterbird Conservation project [www.audubon.org/bird/waterbirds/The\\_Issues.html](http://www.audubon.org/bird/waterbirds/The_Issues.html)
- MassWildlife [www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/dfwloon.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/dfwloon.htm)

## Summary

- Lead is dangerous in the environment. Not only does it kill wild life, it can cause illness in humans, too. Many states and several countries have banned the use of lead fishing weights.
- Environmentally-friendly non-lead alternatives, such as nickel alloy, tin, steel, and bismuth are available at your local tackle shop. Just ask!
- Lead weights lost while fishing account for nearly 2,700 metric tons of lead added to our rivers, ponds, lakes every year.



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To date, the following has been accomplished:

- Won the President's Environmental Youth Award, April 2008
- Represented the United States at a United Nations Environmental Program, Volvo Adventure, in Sweden, May 2008
- Won Field and Stream magazine's first Boy Scout "Heroes of Conservation Award," September 2007
- Won Certificate of Merit from Wildlife Society April 2008
- Citations from the Massachusetts Senate and House of Representatives, June 2007.
- Collected and safely recycled over 40 pounds of lead.
- Became an Eagle Scout, November 2007
- Collected signatures and spoke before the Massachusetts legislature in support of Senate Bill 466 to ban lead in fishing.
- Invited to speak at over a dozen events to further spread the word about getting lead out of fishing.
- Started website ([www.replacelead.com](http://www.replacelead.com)) to give information and help others start lead fishing weight programs, April 2008
- Educated thousands of anglers through news stories that have appeared both locally and nationally.