



Getting the Lead Out

"In 2009, the Fisheries and Wildlife Board unanimously voted to prohibit the use of lead sinkers, lead weights, and lead fishing jigs with a mass of less than 1 ounce in all inland waters of Massachusetts.

This regulatory change will not take effect until January 1, 2012."¹

Lead & Wildlife

According to MassWildlife, "ingestion of lead fishing gear is the single largest cause of mortality for adult loons in New England."¹

"Because lead pellets resemble grain or grit, game birds, waterfowl, songbirds, wading birds, and small mammals often mistake them for food or ingest them as grit."²

Wildlife officials want to get the lead out of Massachusetts fishing. "Ecologically safe alternatives to lead sinkers such as steel and bismuth are now readily available at cost-comparable prices to lead sinkers and come in a wide variety of styles, shapes, weights, and sizes to meet every type of fishing need."¹



Resources

- **Toxics Use Reduction Institute** at UMASS Lowell (TURI) provides research, training, technical support, laboratory services, and grant programs to reduce the use of toxic chemicals. (www.turi.org)
- **MassWildlife** is responsible for the conservation - including restoration, protection and management - of fish and wildlife resources for the benefit and enjoyment of the public. (www.MassWildlife.org)
- **Get the Lead Out of Fishing** was started by Eagle Scout Michael Browne in 2007 when he received a grant from TURI to help get the lead out of Massachusetts' inland waterways. (www.ReplaceLead.com)
- **Recycled Fish** is the national non-profit organization of "anglers living a Lifestyle of Stewardship both on and off the water, because Our Lifestyle Runs Downstream." (www.RecycledFish.org)



About Woodville Rod & Gun Club

Woodville Rod & Gun Club was organized in 1927. We are a not-for-profit organization dedicated to year-round fishing, hunting, and shooting. The Club owns approximately 20 acres of land and has over 200 members.

The purpose of the Club is to look after and provide for the protection and preservation of fish and game, song and insectivorous birds, the conservation and restocking of our forests and waters, in so far as same relate to the best interest of hunting and fishing, to engage in purposes incidental thereto, and to disseminate information relative thereto.

www.WoodvilleRodandGun.com

Woodville Rod & Gun Club
Great Sinker Swap
FUNDED BY A GRANT FROM TURI AT UMASS LOWELL



Funded by a Grant from the Toxics Use Reduction Institute at the University of Massachusetts Lowell (www.turi.org)

What's the Risk?

"While it is hard to get an accurate count of water birds and birds of prey that die from ingesting lead tackle, current research indicates that lead poisoning is a serious concern — and that such poisoning is avoidable because non-toxic alternatives are available."⁵

"Research around the nation has found that lead poisoning from lead fishing tackle is responsible for 12 to 50% of adult loon deaths."⁵

"Long-term exposure to lead in humans results in effects on the blood, central nervous system, blood pressure, kidneys, and Vitamin D metabolism. Children are particularly sensitive to the chronic effects of lead, with slowed cognitive development, reduced growth and other effects reported."³

What Can You Do?³

- Replace all your lead sinkers with safer lead-free alternatives.
- Ask your local tackle shops or retailers to stock the alternatives if they don't already.
- Dispose of your old sinkers properly at a household hazardous waste collection site or a local recycler.
- Wash your hands after handling lead.
- Pack it in and pack it out! Don't leave tackle or other waste around your fishing areas.
- Spread the word! Tell other anglers about the problem with lead and encourage them to switch too.
- Outfit kids' tackle boxes with non-lead sinkers. It's safer for them and instills a conservation ethic.

Can You Find the Lead Sinkers?

Take a look at the photo to the right. Can you find the six (6) lead sinkers? ***If you have a hard time finding them, how can wildlife tell the difference?***

When lead fishing sinkers are lost through broken line or other means, birds can inadvertently eat them. Water birds swallow lead when they scoop up pebbles to help grind their food. Raptors ingest lead by eating fish which have swallowed sinkers.⁵



Alternatives to Lead Sinkers

There are many alternatives to lead sinkers on the market today, including Bismuth, Brass, Ceramic, Copper, Steel, Tin, and Tungsten. Due to aquatic toxicity issues, sinkers made from Brass or Copper are not a recommended alternative by TURI.⁶ The most common lead alternatives on the market today are Tin and Tungsten.



Tin Sinkers



Tungsten Sinkers

Did You Know?

- On average, an angler loses one sinker for every six hours of fishing.³
- Although lead alternatives may cost more, switching to non-toxic weights will cost an angler an average of just \$10 more per year.³
- Massachusetts has banned the use of lead sinkers at the Quabbin and Wachusett reservoirs.³
- ME, NH, VT, and NY have banned the use of lead sinkers weighing ½ ounce or less.⁴
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has banned lead sinkers in two national wildlife refuges and Yellowstone National Park.⁴

¹ MassWildlife, "Lead Sinkers/Jigs and Loons in Massachusetts," Retrieved April 11, 2011 from http://www.mass.gov/dfwle/dfw/recreation/fishing/lead_sinkers_loons.htm

² Greenberger, Joni, Lead Warnings, *Massachusetts Wildlife Magazine*, Vol. LVIII, No. 4. pp. 30-37, 2007.

³ Toxics Use Reduction Institute, Get the Lead Out of Massachusetts Fishing, Retrieved April 11, 2011 from http://www.turi.org/community/lead_in_fishing

⁴ Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Let's Get the Lead Out: Non-lead Alternatives for Fishing Tackle, Retrieved April 11, 2011 from <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/sinkers>

⁵ Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Get the Lead Out!, Retrieved April 11, 2011 from <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/view-document.html?gid=11376>

⁶ TURI, Five Chemicals, Retrieved April 11, 2011 from http://www.turi.org/library/turi_publications/five_chemicals_study/final_report/chapter_3_lead_and_lead_compounds#3.3.3