



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## 1. Isn't lead fishing tackle already banned in Canada?

*Unfortunately, the answer is **"NO"** - lead fishing tackle is only banned in Canadian Natural Parks and in certain National Wildlife Areas. Everywhere else in the country it is currently legal to use.*

## 2. Does My Tackle Contain Lead?

- Check packaging – if it doesn't specifically say "lead-free", likely it has lead
- Look for California's Proposition 65 Warning – this label means your tackle is made with lead - Lead is a carcinogen and harmful to reproductive health.
- It is made with lead if you can make a mark on paper with it or if you can dent it easily with pliers or your fingernail
- Lead is dull-looking versus metals such as steel (which are shiny)

## 3. How do I identify lead from non-lead pieces in my tacklebox?

- *Lead is a dull gray colour & it is a soft metal that's easily dented with pliers*
- *If you rub lead on paper, it will leave a gray mark*
- *If a magnet sticks to it, then it is steel*
- *Read the packaging/product specifications if available*
- *Use a lead testing kit if unsure - some painted lead-headed jigs are more difficult to identify (economical kits can be bought on-line - just make sure the testing product reads "Suitable for all surfaces")*

## 4. Is painted lead or lead encased in soft or hard plastics safe to use?

***No!** Even when lead is painted or surrounded by plastic, it is dangerous because the powerful grinding action of a loon's gizzard and high acidity in its stomach quickly break down paints, plastics, and even some metals (including hooks), exposing the toxic lead. Also, some paints found on tackle manufactured overseas still contain lead.*

## 5. Should I wear gloves while collecting lead fishing tackle?

*Yes, it is a good idea to wear disposable gloves while handling lead sinkers and lead jigs so that there is no possibility of accidentally ingesting minute amounts of lead residue via hand-to-mouth contact.*

*It is important to note that children are especially very vulnerable to the effects from any type of lead exposure. Letting children handle lead fishing tackle - whether it be during regular fishing outings or from sorting out a tackle box - is a very bad idea.*

*plus, individuals (of all ages) who consume large amounts of fish and wild game are also particularly susceptible to lead poisoning (eg, Indigenous people).*



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## 6. Are you trying to stop people from fishing?

Absolutely ***NOT!*** We are only concerned with stopping the accumulation of lead in our waterways and with preventing lead poisoning in our wildlife.  
Many of our supporters are avid anglers, including recognized tournament anglers who are already using tungsten tackle (we have witnessed this at various local fishing derbies in Ontario over the past few years).

## 7. Why is the proposed restriction set at a 50 gram lead weight and a 6.5 cm lead-headed jig length?

*Scientific studies have shown that more than 95% of lead tackle ingested by wildlife is of this size & weight, and smaller.*

## 8. What other species are affected besides the Common Loon?

*Studies have confirmed lead poisoning deaths in Eagles, Swans, Herons, Gulls & Terns, most Waterfowl (Common merganser, Mallard Duck, American Black Duck, Canada Goose), plus semi-aquatic mammals (River Otter & American Mink) - all from ingesting lead fishing tackle. There are many more wildlife species with documented proof of having ingested lead fishing tackle. See a more complete list here:*

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6675807/>

## 9. How can I help?

- (a) *You can help by becoming a volunteer to collect petition signatures. Simply download and print the Petition PDF & the Factsheet PDF, collect the signatures, and mail the completed Petition Forms back to us. You can find all the information you need on this website; for any other questions or comments, please feel free to email us.*
- (b) *You can also help by starting to switch your tackle box to lead-free. Begin by removing lead split shot, sinkers, weights, and jig-heads weighing one ounce and under, but bear in mind that eventually weights are expected to be banned for all lead tackle 1.75 ounces (50 grams) and under.  
You can also volunteer to help your neighbours switch to a lead-free tackle box.*

## 10. What are the alternatives instead of using lead fishing tackle?

*Currently the best alternatives are sinkers and jig heads made from tungsten, bismuth, ceramic, stainless steel, brass, and tin.  
Along with lead, it is also recommended ***NOT*** to use zinc, nickel, and galvanized steel - all four of these metals are toxic when ingested.*



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## 11. Why Lead-Free?

Summary courtesy of the Audubon Society:

- Environmentally safe
- Higher sound-producing qualities to call in those fish and up your catch
- Non Toxic materials such as steel, brass, and bismuth are harder than lead and less likely to get hung up on rocks
- Along with lead, fishing tackle containing zinc, nickel, & galvanized steel is also not recommended because all four metals are toxic to wildlife
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## 12. Which alternative will work best for me?

### Tungsten

- Outperforms lead in numerous ways
- Most widely used lead substitute
- Non-toxic metal
- Denser, harder, and more sensitive than lead, helps anglers interpret changes in the bottom and better detect bites
- Components are smaller and more compact than lead tackle of identical weight
- Attractive for anglers who finesse fish, ice fish, or use small jigs for panfish
- The heavy weight can help punch through vegetation better than bass fishing
- Tungsten is easier to see on Fish Finders than traditional lead-based tackle
- Costlier than lead
- Typically require alloying with secondary metals and a much higher temperature to pour, making the manufacturing process more challenging.

### Bismuth and Tin

- Less expensive than tungsten
- Relatively low melting temperature – easier to melt down and make various tackle items
- 20% less dense than lead – so tackle will be larger than lead counterparts - lighter lures have a more natural appearance and presentation

### Stainless Steel and Brass

- Used for decades, mostly for metallic rattles
- Used for heavy spoons for both jigging and trolling – sinkers and jigs can also be found made with these metals
- Sounds produced by these metals when contacting the bottom is different from the noise lead makes and can be an effective attractant for fish
- Brass and glass is a great combo for making noise by putting a glass or plastic bead between a swivel and a sinker



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### 12. Where can I buy non-lead fishing tackle?

*Here is a list, compiled by the Wolfe Lake Association:*

<https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/ae678d2c-44ea-4f50-a141-9455f84c0c74/downloads/Lead%20Free%20Manufacturers%20dq%20v17.pdf?ver=1744313032862>

*Here is another list, compiled by the State of Minnesota: <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/air-water-land-climate/where-to-buy-lead-free-tackle>*

*Other options are big box stores such as Canadian Tire or Cabela's, or on-line options such as Amazon.ca*

*(but make sure to read the product specifications before purchasing - if you cannot easily determine that the product is lead-free, best to avoid buying it).*

*Also, when you do shop in stores, encourage retailers to stock more lead-free tackle. This includes "mom and pop" bait stores as well as larger box stores.*

### 13. Will enacting this legislation actually make a difference in protecting Common Loon populations?

*Absolutely! In the State of Maine for example, when they enacted lead fishing tackle restrictions, Common Loon deaths went from the #1 cause of death to now the #3 causes of death. It very much helped stabilize the loon population there.*

### 14.. Are there any other places in the world doing this?

*Yes! - there are ½ dozen States in the U.S. that have some type of lead tackle restriction, with the State of Maine being the benchmark.*

*The country of Denmark has banned the use of lead in sport fishing tackle and ammunition since 2002, making Denmark a global leader in reducing lead pollution in fishing & hunting activities.*

*Also, the European Union is very close to enacting strict regulations on both lead hunting ammunition and lead fishing tackle.*