



Frequently Asked Questions

Fishing Tackle

Is lead tackle banned?

Lead tackle is not banned in Minnesota. However, there are lead tackle bans in 5 states: New Hampshire, New York, Maine, Massachusetts, and Vermont. Each ban varies by state, but most ban the use and sale of lead fishing tackle weighing less than 1 oz. Nationally, there are protected areas that limit or prohibit the use of lead tackle, such as national parks, US Fish and Wildlife Service refuges, and hatcheries.

What do I do with my lead tackle?

Lead should never be thrown in the garbage. Lead is a toxic material and needs to be disposed of properly at your county household hazardous waste facility. Check your county's website for their hours.

Where can I buy lead-free fishing tackle?

Start by going to your local bait and tackle store or large retailer, and ask them if they carry lead-free tackle. When shopping for lead-free tackle, look for these materials: tungsten, steel, bismuth, tin, or metal composite. While lead-free options are limited in store, there are plenty more available online. Visit GTLO's website for a list of lead-free tackle manufacturers: www.bit.ly/GTLO_LeadFreeList

How do I know if my tackle is made out of lead?

The packaging will have a lead warning on it. If you no longer have the packaging, here are tips that may help.

1. The reality is that most fishing tackle with any density to it, especially older tackle, contains lead, based on current and historic trends in the tackle industry.
2. Lead is a dense but soft metal that is easy to mold and shape. Using pliers is a good way to test this out
3. Lead is gray and dull. It will leave a dark gray mark if you scratch it on paper. If there is paint, it will still be able to leave a gray mark after the paint layer is scratched.

Please wash your hands after handling lead.

Loons

How does a loon ingest lead tackle?

1. Consume fish with lead tackle attached. The fish can either still be on the line or broke off with tackle attached.
2. Pick up lead tackle at the bottom of a lake when gathering pebbles to aid in their food digestion.
3. Strike at fishing tackle being retrieved.

Who do I contact if I find a sick, injured, or dead loon?

For sick and injured loons, contact your local wildlife rehabilitation center. The Minnesota DNR website has a list of permitted wildlife rehabilitation centers by county.

For dead loons, contact the National Loon Center in Crosslake, Minnesota. Their number is 218-692-5666. They will provide you with more instructions. In the meantime, keep the loon cool, refrigerated, or frozen, to prevent further decay.

What is lead poisoning like for loons?

Acid in the loon's stomach dissolves lead and it then enters their bloodstream. Their nervous system is affected and their body begins to shut down. Physical symptoms include: loss of balance, gasping, tremors, and limited flying abilities. Depending on the amount of lead ingested, death may occur in days to a few weeks. If a loon sickened with lead poisoning is found, the only course of action is to humanely euthanize it.

How many loons die from lead poisoning?

Lead poisoning is a leading cause of death for loons. The current national estimate is that 25% of loon deaths are caused by lead poisoning.

What other animals are affected by lead?

Birds of prey (raptors), especially eagles, are particularly susceptible to lead poisoning. Lead ammunition and lead tackle may be present in the prey raptors hunt or scavenge for. Birds that rely on rocks to aid in digestion, such as ducks, geese, and swans, are also species at risk.

What about hooks? Are they problematic?

Usually, they don't result in much injury. Loons regularly consume fish with various spiny fins, so their thick esophagus and gizzard walls can tolerate hooks. Hooks, and also paint on tackle, erode quickly in the gizzard. Most of the time when tackle is found in a loon during a necropsy, it's just the fatal lead component.

General Info

How is the Get the Lead Out program funded?

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's GTLO program is a Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) project. The work of this program is paid for with funds provided by BP as part of the 2016 settlement agreement with federal and state governments to compensate the public for injuries to natural resources and recreational use caused by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

Where can I find more information?

Website: www.pca.state.mn.us/leadout

Facebook: www.facebook.com/LeadOutMN

Instagram: www.instagram.com/LeadOutMN

E-mail: leadout@state.mn.us

For GTLO kit graphics, resources, and documents to print: www.bit.ly/GTLO_KitResources

Lead-free tackle works!

And it protects
our state bird,
the common
loon



What's the problem with lead?



Lead is toxic to wildlife. Even in small amounts, it is lethal to loons, eagles, and trumpeter swans. It is estimated that lead is responsible for up to 25% of loon deaths.



Loons pick up lost lead tackle while gathering pebbles for their gizzards. Loons are also exposed when eating fish that have ingested lead.



Lead is toxic to people, both when handling lead products and in the manufacturing process.



Non-toxic alternatives

- Tungsten
- Bismuth
- Steel
- Tin
- Glass
- Stone
- Metal composite

Teach your tadpoles!

Create a lead-free tackle box for your kids or grandkids.



Don't throw lead in the trash!
Bring it to your local *Household Hazardous Waste* dropsite.

For a list of **lead-free tackle manufacturers**, visit our website!