

Fishing Line Entanglement

Birds tangled in fishing line can drown, or become so trapped that they are unable to forage for food.



This entangled Common Loon was found dead on Tongue River Reservoir.

A gull that died after becoming entangled in fishing line.



Loon Organizations and Information:

Montana Loon Conservation Plan
<http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/commonLoon/>

Montana Loon Society
PO Box 2386, Missoula, MT 59801
montanaloonsociety@charter.net
<http://www.montanaloons.org>

Biodiversity Research Institute
19 Flaggy Meadow Road, Gorham, ME 04038
<http://www.briloon.org/>

Loon Lake Loon Association
PO Box 75, Loon Lake, WA 99148-0075
<http://www.loons.org/>

Ways You Can Help

Use non-lead fishing weights and tackle.

There are now many substitutes made out of materials such as **bismuth, clay, steel, iron, rock, and ceramic** that are not poisonous to birds and wildlife. Tin and zinc substitutes are not recommended as they can also be toxic to birds and the environment.



This juvenile Common Loon died at 15 months from fishing line entanglement.

Dispose of old lead sinkers, jigs, line, and other fishing gear properly:

1. Always **wash hands** after handling lead tackle.
2. **Gloves** should be used, especially by children and pregnant women when handling lead sinkers or lead fishing tackle.
3. **Pack it in-Pack it out**—Don't discard tackle around lakes. Remove fishing tackle before releasing fish.

Spread the Word! Tell other anglers about the risks associated with lead, and encourage them to switch to non-lead sinkers and tackle.

1. **Lead exchanges** have been implemented in other states with great success.
2. **Ask your local sporting goods store to stock non-lead tackle.**

A project by the Montana Common Loon Working Group, which includes **state, federal, tribal, Industrial, and non-profit partners.**



MONTANA Lead Free for Loons

Many Common Loons and other wildlife suffer from lead poisoning, as well as from being tangled in fishing nets and fishing lines.



The Common Loon above swallowed a fish with the fish tackle and trailing fishing line still attached.



Only 60 to 70 Loon pairs nest in Montana.

MONTANA COMMON LOON WORKING GROUP SUPPORTS MONTANA'S FISHING AND HUNTING HERITAGE

Lead Poisoning and Birds

Where do birds get lead?

- Some waterfowl ingest gravel to help grind food for digestion and mistakenly ingest lead sinkers.
- Waterfowl that eat aquatic plants also eat some sediment and are exposed to lead shot and lead sinkers.
- Waterfowl may eat fish with tackle inside or attached.

- Predators ingest other animals that have died from lead poisoning, such as this Bald Eagle eating a Common Loon.



Symptoms of lead poisoning in waterfowl are similar to lead poisoning in humans:

- Neurological and gastrointestinal problems
- Difficulty walking on land
- Inability to fly and escape predators
- Wings crooked and dragging on water or ground
- Emaciation with chronic weight loss

Animals known to have died from lead poisoning:

Geese	Scavengers
Cranes	Trumpeter Swans
Dabbling Ducks	Tundra Swans
Grebes	Fish-eating Birds
Herons	Otters
Common Loons	Golden/Bald Eagles

Lead Poisoning and Common Loons



This Common Loon died from lead poisoning after swallowing four lead sinkers, as you can see the x-ray below. Lead sinkers are ground up by the gizzard and lead is quickly absorbed into the bloodstream. Common Loons die from lead poisoning within two weeks after ingesting lead.

JUST ONE LEAD SINKER CAN KILL A LOON!

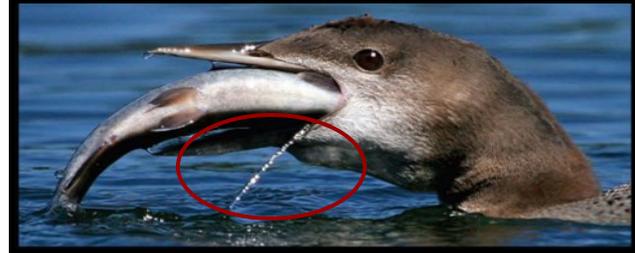


Gizzard Contents of Dead Common Loon
 Rows 1-3: 20 pebbles (small stones), normal for digestion
 Row 4: 4 lead sinkers (2 abraded), + fishing line segment



Discarded Tackle and Birds

Problems occur when loons ingest fishing lures and/or lead sinkers or when they swallow fish with attached hooks, tackle, lead sinkers and monofilament fishing line.



This loon chick's parent fed it a fish with broken fishing line attached.

LEAD CAN PERSIST IN LAKES FOR 300 YEARS



This Common Loon chick was entangled with fishing line on Flathead Lake. It was captured during research efforts and was cut free of the line and released.

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