

LD 958 will help close a loophole in Maine's lead tackle laws that allows for the sale and use of small-sized painted lead jigs.

Lead poisoning has long been one of the leading causes of death for adult loons in Maine.

- Loons ingest a striking amount of fishing tackle that is either lost or left behind, or is in fish that have ingested tackle. Some of this tackle contains hazardous and life threatening chemicals – chief among them is lead.
- Despite Maine's existing lead tackle laws and educational campaigns, lead poisoning continues to be one of the leading causes of death in loons where the ultimate cause of death could be determined.
- It takes 2-4 weeks for adult loons to die once they have consumed lead. Blindness, disorientation, paralysis, seizures, and "wing droop" are amongst some of the most common symptoms associated with lead poisoning.

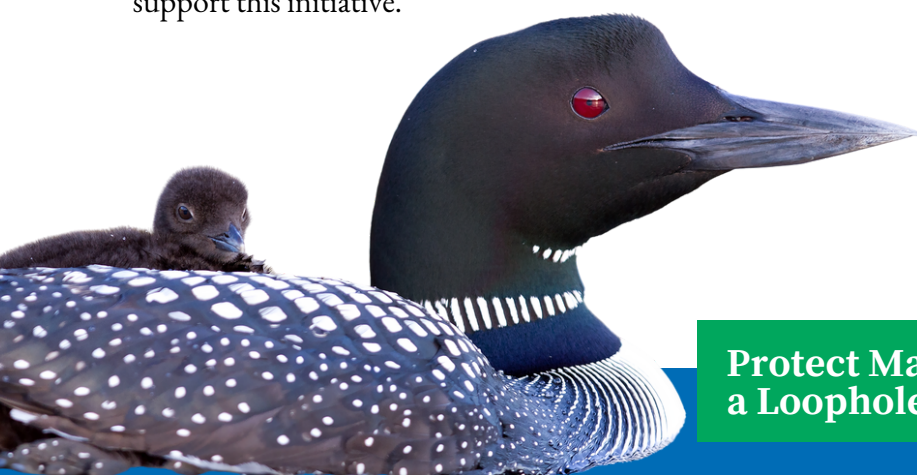
Death by lead poisoning is avoidable. Lawmakers have the power to put a stop to these traumatic and miserable endings for this beloved Maine species.

- Following a five-year phase-out process, it has been illegal to sell and/or use lead sinkers and bare, "unpainted" jigs (weighing an ounce or less or measuring 2.5" or less) in Maine since 2017. While this law and subsequent education programs have proven effective in many ways, a loophole allows for the sale and use of painted lead jigs within these size and weight limitations, which both experts believe and research indicate are still impacting loons.
- Recent studies show that a paint coating on fishing gear, specifically jigs, does NOT prevent the exposure of a lead-content core during the digestive process of the Common Loon.

Exactly ten years after the last bill to protect loons from lead was passed, the time is right to revisit this loophole to further protect the health and safety of this species.

- Phasing out the use and sale of painted jigs weighing an ounce or less or measuring 2.5" or less sends a clearer message to anglers about Maine's commitment to preventing avoidable deaths of loons and other wildlife from lead tackle.
- There are more than one thousand loon conservation volunteers that dedicate time and energy to observing and protecting Common Loons all across Maine – these people care deeply about this iconic species and are eager to support this initiative.

- Commons Loons are an iconic wildlife species in Maine. Protecting wildlife – especially those that are closely tied with the *Pine Tree State* – is an essential principle of our state's shared vision to conserve priority wildlife species and habitats.



Protect Maine's Common Loons by Closing a Loophole in Maine's Lead Tackle Laws

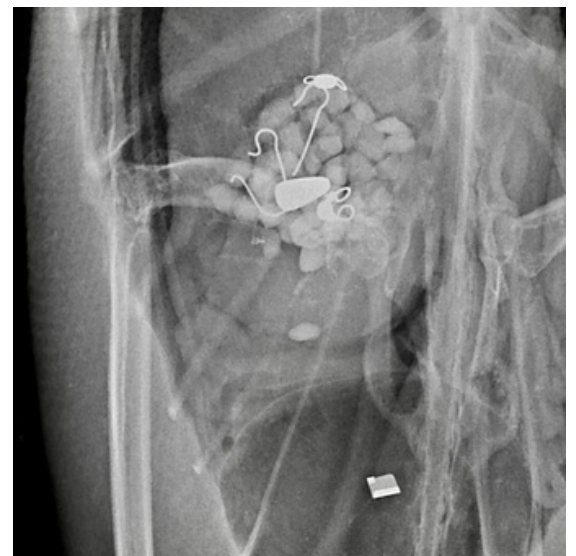
Updating existing law to phase-out the sale and use of painted lead jigs (*weighing an ounce or less or measuring 2.5" or less*) will more comprehensively address lead-caused mortalities in Maine's Common Loons.

To reflect on a recent example, this loon was found by dedicated loon volunteers on Great Pond in Belgrade, ME in September 2022. With a "sky high" blood test for lead poisoning directly attributed to ingestion of both a lead sinker and jig, there was no other option than to euthanize the bird to put it out of its misery.



Death by lead poisoning is avoidable.

By advancing LD 958, we can help avoid these traumatic endings for this beloved Maine species.



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