



# Fish Lead Free Vermont: Use Non-Lead Tackle and Properly Dispose of Lead Fishing Gear and Monofilament Line

## Get the Lead Out

Lead is banned in paint, gasoline, and most other products used today. Every year lead tackle and discarded monofilament line kills aquatic wildlife dependent on Vermont's lakes, rivers, and streams. The smallest lead sinker will kill a loon.

- Dispose of lead fishing gear at a nearby collection bin or municipal solid waste station (go to [fishlead-freevt.org](http://fishlead-freevt.org) for the most up to date disposal sites).
- And properly dispose of or recycle your monofilament line so wildlife will not become entangled.



### Lead collection tubes are located at the following boat access areas starting summer 2023:

Lake Parker, Caspian Lake, Colby Pond, Lake Dunmore, Echo Lake (W.Charleston), Elmore Lake, Fairfield Pond, Lake Fairlee, Green River Reservoir, Harvey's Lake, Lake Hortonia, Joe's Pond, Lake Iroquois, Little and Great Averill lakes, Morey Lake, Neal Pond, Lake Ninevah, Lake Raponda, Lake Saint-Catherine, Waterbury Reservoir, Woodward Reservoir



More sites will be finalized with lake associations and VFWD. We hope to have short list starting in 2023 and adding more in 2024.

We will send updated versions of this list. The one-pager and this document will be available on VCE's website.

Regional solid waste collection sites will recycle metals.

## Even a small lead split shot is 100 percent fatal if swallowed.

- Every year lead tackle and discarded monofilament line kills aquatic wildlife, including loons, eagles, swans, geese, mammals, and other waterbirds.
- Nearly 50% of loon deaths from 1989-2022 in Vermont were caused by lead fishing gear, monofilament, and ingestion of hooks.



Two different loons on Lake Raponda dying of lead poisoning (left) and suffering from fishing line (right) in 2018 and 2021. Lead poisoning makes loons lethargic and they will often beach themselves before dying.

## How do loons ingest lead tackle?

- Loons need to consume small stones to grind food in their gizzards. Loons mistake small lead sinkers for stones.
- Loons catch slower moving fish that have been impaired by lead tackle and fishing line, and eat the fish that have lead tackle in them.
- Loons might chase tackle when anglers are fishing nearby. They can swallow the lead tackle and hook and become entangled in the monofilament line as well.

## What can you do?

- Use non-toxic tackle when fishing. Find an expansive list of non-lead manufacturers and retailers on the website [fishleadfreevt.org](http://fishleadfreevt.org).
- **Reel-in when loons are diving nearby. Loons will take live bait and lures. Use the 200- foot rule.**
- Encourage your family, friends, and local tackle shop to use and carry non-lead tackle (tin, steel, bismuth, ceramic, glass, tungsten and composites of these materials). Many of these choices are available at a similar or slightly higher price compared to lead.
- Dispose of your lead tackle (see list of collection sites to the left).
- Pick-up and Dispose of Monofilament Line. Most monofilament line is not biodegradable and will last hundreds of years in the environment. Often discarded near the shoreline, monofilament line provides hazards to birds and other wildlife.

Didn't the Vermont Lead Sinker Law Work? Yes and no  
As of January 2007, it is illegal to use and sell lead sinkers weighing 1/2 ounce or less to fish within Vermont. VCE documented a threefold decrease in loon mortalities from lead tackle from 2008 to 2018. The law worked. However, from 2019-2022, at least 10 loons have ingested lead fishing gear and died. That's almost 3% of Vermont's loon population. Lead is still in angler's tackle boxes and being used. Help us remove lead fishing gear from our lakes and ponds.

Funding for this project provided by a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to compensate for loon mortalities from the B-120 oil spill in Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

[www.vtecostudies.org/loons](http://www.vtecostudies.org/loons) [fishleadfreevt.org](http://fishleadfreevt.org)

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