

TAKE ACTION

The National Wildlife Federation is working with hunters and anglers across the country to get the word out about safe and effective alternatives to lead shot, bullets, and tackle. Today's non-toxic ammunition and tackle are high-performance alternatives to lead that are reliable, accurate, and affordable. The benefits of lead-alternatives include:

- Cost-effectiveness and proven performance of steel shot
- Better penetration and bullet retention of copper bullets
- Healthier game meat
- No poisoned non-target wildlife
- Better public perception of hunters as this country's leading conservationists



Non-toxic, recycled, American-made steel shot. Photo: Ervin Industries

Please talk to your fellow hunters and anglers about switching to non-toxic alternatives.

LEAD FREE LANDSCAPES



FOR PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE



A LEGACY OF CONSERVATION

Hunters and anglers are sometimes called the “original” conservationists. Starting with hunters who were profoundly disturbed by the impacts of market hunting near the turn of the 20th century, the community used their resources and influence to form the foundation of modern wildlife conservation. Today, the hunting and angling community remains committed to the conservation of all of America's wildlife, including those species that are not hunted or fished.

www.nwf.org/leadfreelandscapes

WHY HUNTERS AND ANGLERS ARE SWITCHING TO STEEL AND OTHER NON-TOXIC SHOT AND TACKLE

For many years, the only options for hunters and anglers were ammunition and tackle that contained lead, which is toxic to all living organisms. The result is untold tons of lead spread across our landscapes and waterways, and concentrated at popular hunting and fishing spots.

This situation has led to unintentional poisoning of songbirds, waterfowl, upland birds and other wildlife that ingest lead shot. It has also impacted predators, most specifically birds of prey, that either ingest poisoned animals or consume gut piles from game that has been shot with lead ammunition.

In 1991, a ban on using lead shot for hunting waterfowl brought about the rapid development of steel and other non-toxic shot choices. As a result, there are now highly effective alternatives to lead shot, bullets, and fishing gear.

Hunters and anglers have seen firsthand the impacts lead has had on the environment. Lead pellets and bullet fragments have been found in the meat hunters bring home, and in the field hunters have observed lethargy, weakness, and muscle wasting in game birds.

Lead fragments in Mule deer. Photo: FWS



REDUCE YOUR EXPOSURE TO LEAD AND REDUCE ITS DISTRIBUTION ACROSS THE LANDSCAPE

BEST PRACTICES FOR SHOTGUNS AND UPLAND GAME HUNTING

- Switch to steel or other lead-free shot, which is readily available in all sizes.
- If you aren't sure, try steel shot which is proven and priced similarly to lead.
- When you go hunting, remember your non-toxic shot because lead at hunting grounds cannot be regulated or reclaimed like at shooting ranges.
- If you have a really old shotgun that could be damaged by steel shot, use non-toxic shot when you can.
- Make sure your shotgun range allows steel shot so you can practice.

BEST PRACTICES FOR RIFLES AND BIG GAME HUNTING

- Control for bullet fragmentation as much as possible. Generally, rapid-expansion bullets such as lead fragment more than controlled expansion bullets such as copper, which cut down on wasted meat and reduce consumption of lead by humans and wildlife alike.

- Use careful shot selection. Bullets that strike the lethal area (heart/lungs) are less likely to fragment than bullets that strike more heavily boned areas. Copper bullets help because they penetrate better and the bullet holds together.
- Process your kill carefully. Trim liberally around wound channels, discarding meat that is bruised, discolored or contains hair, dirt or bone fragments. Although lead particles can be found up to 18 inches from the wound channel, most lead particles are located in the immediate vicinity of the channel and associated damaged tissues.
- Bury or pack out your lead-shot gut piles to avoid lead ingestion by non-target wildlife.

The only definitive way to remove the risk of lead poisoning to humans and wildlife is to use lead-free ammunition. There are many non-lead options now available.

BEST PRACTICES FOR FISHING WITH LEAD TACKLE

- Use lead-free lures, sinkers, and weights as much as possible.
- Double check your fishing knots to reduce the likelihood that tackle will break off.
- Make sure to collect any damaged sinkers, weighted lures, etc. for proper disposal away from waterways.

It is safest to fish without lead tackle. Please call on manufactures to offer lead-free alternatives.

To learn more please visit www.nwf.org/leadfreelandscapes

“As someone who hunts on public lands, I see it as my responsibility to conserve wildlife and leave our public lands better than I found them. One important way I can do that is by hunting lead-free so that these landscapes and non-target wildlife are not poisoned from my activities.”

–Aaron Kindle Sr. Manager, Western Sporting Campaigns, National Wildlife Federation