

LOONS AND LEAD: A DOZEN DETAILS

1. Loons are designated a Threatened Species in New Hampshire and face growing challenges throughout the state.
2. There have been 119 adult loon deaths caused by ingesting lead fishing tackle from 1989-2010. These 119 deaths represent 50% of the total adult loon mortalities collected by The Loon Preservation Committee (LPC) during this time.
3. Lead sinkers weighing one ounce or less and lead jigs measuring less than an inch in length (including the hook) are presently illegal per RSA211:13-b,IV. New Hampshire enacted this legislation in 2000, the first in the Nation to do so. The proposed amendment would define a lead jig as a lead weighted hook that has a weight of one ounce or less.
 - 21 years of data collected by LPC support this amendment.
 - Legal lead jigs have caused at least 24 loon deaths in the last 10 years.
 - Since 1989, we have averaged 5.7 loon deaths per year from ingesting lead fishing tackle.
 - Lead jigs are sold by weight and style-not by length.
4. Much of ingested lead tackle in lead poisoned loons comes from current fishing use. Loon mortalities peak with the peak of tourism and fishing season.
5. Lead fishing tackle is the largest contributor to documented **adult loon** mortality in the state.
6. Adult loon survival is the largest factor influencing the growth & viability of NH's loon population.
 - The average life of a loon is thought to be 25 - 30 years.
 - Loons do not breed until 6-7 years of age on average.
 - Losing an adult loon is more than three times as bad as losing a chick as far as the loon population is concerned.
7. **The growth of NH's loon population since 1975 has been accomplished by intensive management by LPC professionals and volunteers.**
8. Humans, through lead poisoning from loons ingesting lead fishing tackle, caused the death of an average of 1.1% of the adult loon population each year from 1989-2010. In 2010 this number reached 1.8%.
9. LPC's intensive raft program produced 33 chicks in 2010. This productivity was more than negated by 11 adult loon deaths from ingested lead fishing tackle in 2010.
10. Lead poisoning occurs when ingested lead is absorbed into the blood stream. Lead is fatal to loons. A loon with lead poisoning will die within 2-4 weeks after ingesting lead tackle.
11. If we had not lost 119 adult loons to lead over the last 21 years, our adult loon population of approximately 550 adult loons would be much larger.
12. Reasonable and better non-toxic alternatives to lead jigs and weights are available.



(Compiled by The New Hampshire Lakes Association and The Loon Preservation Committee)