



North American Falconers' Association

POSITION STATEMENT Lead in Hunting Ammunition and Fishing Tackle

The mission and purpose of the North American Falconers Association (NAFA) includes promoting scientific study and conservation of birds of prey and an appreciation of their value in nature and in wildlife conservation programs. The health of raptors and many game species can be negatively affected by lead introduced to the environment via ammunition and fishing tackle. All these effects can impact falconry. Addressing impacts of lead hunting ammunition and fishing tackle on wildlife clearly falls within the organization's responsibilities and concerns.

NAFA finds:

- Lead has no functional or beneficial role in biological systems. Even at very low levels of exposure, lead is dangerously toxic;
- Hundreds of scientific papers provide compelling evidence demonstrating that wildlife ingests lead from spent hunting ammunition and lost fishing tackle; this lead is toxic to wild animals, and it accumulates in their tissues;
- Studies document more than 130 species, including humans, that have been fatally poisoned by ingesting lead;
- Sub-lethal effects of lead ingestion by wildlife include decreased fitness from nervous system degradation, organ damage, behavioral changes, and impaired reproduction;
- Lead poisoning from ammunition sources is a significant barrier to the recovery of the California condor and has the potential to exert population-level impacts on other species, including eagles, waterfowl, loons, and mourning doves;
- Since the United States Fish and Wildlife Service banned the use of lead pellets for shotgun hunting of waterfowl in 1991, steel shot and other substitutes for lead have been used by waterfowl hunters with no measurable diminution in their enjoyment of this sport; and
- The "precautionary principle" supports taking reasonable preventive action as a suitable way to stop the unnecessary and immoral killing of wild birds of prey and upland game birds that ingest spent bullet fragments and shell shot. Considering the scientific evidence and given the availability of quality lead-free alternatives in hunting ammunition and fishing tackle, taking reasonable preventative action presents a suitable course to conserve both wild birds of prey and game animals.

Therefore, NAFA:

- Recognizes lead in the field from spent hunting ammunition and lost fishing tackle poses a toxic hazard to wildlife;

- Advocates the replacement of lead hunting ammunition and fishing tackle with lead-free alternatives; and
- Encourages Members to facilitate cooperation and collaboration among interested groups and individuals, including wildlife watchers, hunters, anglers, wildlife scientists, policy makers, and the public, to:
 - support voluntary, regulatory, and statutory efforts to rapidly phase in the use of lead-free hunting ammunition and fishing tackle;
 - implement educational efforts to promote greater public awareness and understanding of the health consequences of lead exposure to wildlife, emphasizing the gains for wildlife and environmental quality from the use of lead-free hunting ammunition and fishing tackle;
 - promote additional research to add to the already compelling understanding of long-term population-level effects of lead on birds of prey and game species; and
 - continue the monitoring of lead exposure effects on birds of prey and game species.

Approved in a regularly scheduled meeting by the Board of Directors of the North American Falconers' Association this the 24th day of May, 2012.

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