

Use of Lead Fishing Tackle on Inland Waters

Understanding the law



Fishing lead free is better for our lakes and our wildlife. Ingested lead fishing tackle is the leading cause of death for adult Common Loons of which there are around 4,500 adults across the state. Keeping lead sinkers out of Maine waters will increase the survival of these birds and will allow for continued population growth of this species across the northeast.

Lead Sinkers

The sale and use of lead sinkers not meeting the length (2.5 inches) and/or weight (1 ounce) requirements is prohibited. If a lead sinker is over 2.5 inches in length or it weighs over 1 ounce or both it is legal to use and sell or offer for sale.

If a sinker contains ANY amount of lead, it will be considered illegal if it doesn't meet the length and weight requirements.

The Department will interpret the definition of lead sinker to include any tackle that is permanently manufactured to the lead itself. When measuring for a minimum of 2.5 inches, the manufactured tackle will be included in the measurement. This will not include any additional items that have been added to the original manufacturing device.

Please read the manufacturer's label carefully to determine the weight of the lead sinker. If the lead is manufactured as part of other fishing tackle, the entire piece of equipment needs to be more than 1 ounce in weight. ***The definition of a lead sinker DOES NOT include artificial lures, weighted line, weighted flies or jig heads.***

Bare Lead Jigs

As of September 2016 the sale of bare lead jigs not meeting the length (2.5 inches) and/or weight (1 ounce) requirements is prohibited.

NOTE: Effective September 2017, the use of bare lead jigs not meeting the length (2.5 inches) and/or weight (1 ounce) requirements will be prohibited.

For more information, please visit <https://fishleadfree.org/>