

Pete Schiot
official loon counter
LD 958

I am the official loon counter on Lake Chikawaukee in Rockland/Rockport, Maine. I row the lake daily in a racing shell with Dr. Lloyd Roberts of Rockport. We know the loons by name and spend time each day watching them and observing their habits. One significant habit is their diving into the shallows where marsh grasses and other lake greenery exist. It is in these locations that fishing line gets caught and exposes lures, and other fishing gear. I have pulled numerous lead jigs painted and unpainted out of the weeds as they sway in the current and are attractive to loons.

Next to the public access on the lake is a boat ramp and dock. On the other side is a large area of marsh grass. It is here that most of the lead sinkers are found. These lines are from fisherman casting bait from shore and the dock. It is the only public access on the lake. The sinkers found in other areas are from boaters. Many of the boaters talk with us and are responsible fisherman who fly cast or use lures.

I have watched loons catch fish of all sizes from tiny minnows to bass. The speed they swim is remarkable and a tiny gray lead weight swaying in the weeds must be attractive and ultimately fatal

These lead sinkers should be banned.