

Margie Manthey
Marietta, NY / Wolfe Lake Association, ON
LD 958

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Dear Senator LaFountain & Representative Landry,

Sincere thanks for this opportunity to submit testimony in SUPPORT of LD 958 / Act to Expand Protections to ME Loons from Lead Poisoning by Prohibiting the Sale & Use of Certain Painted Lead Jigs.

My name is Margie Manthey. For the past 50 years, I have been an avid angler and come from a family of active anglers -- my father, brother, uncles and my own two sons all fish, and my older son was President of his collegiate bass fishing club at University at Buffalo and is active in bass tournaments. I also serve as Fishing Director for my lake association and have been actively engaged in that role for over a decade, combining my love of fishing and passion for conservation. In as much, I have spearheaded various projects to benefit the fishery including a large walleye spawning habitat restoration, sinking wood bundles for fish habitat, and preparing fishing reports/angling news to our lake community. These projects find me working alongside local conservation authorities and outdoor fishing & hunting clubs. I am currently the project manager for a lead (Pb) fishing tackle buy-back program that promotes lead-free fishing by raising awareness within the angling community on the dangers to wildlife (particularly loons and other aquatic birds) from lead tackle use. The program has collected 210 pounds of lead in its first year alone and was recently recognized with an annual achievement award by a cottagers' association with a reach of over 50,000 membership families. I have 3 years of research invested in lead toxicosis in aquatic birds and have personally covered the topic in my weekly wildlife column and other magazine articles, on radio programs and local televised news, during podcast interviews and in zoom presentations. My ongoing research on lead poisoning in wildlife encompasses frequent dialogue with biologists, veterinarians, and wildlife rescue staff, all of whom see firsthand the toxic impact of lead fishing tackle on loons, eagles, swans, and other aquatic avian species. Lead poisoning from lead fishing tackle is well documented in numerous studies which reveal facts through good science. We know, for example, that in some regions, lead poisoning from ingested lead fishing tackle is the number one cause of mortality in loons. Lead poisoning is also among the leading two causes of death in trumpeter swans and negative population impacts from lead toxicity have been observed in eagles. We also know that for 2-3 weeks' time after ingesting toxic lead, poisoned birds suffer immensely before dying. Studies also reveal, inarguably, that paint offers absolutely NO protection when a bird ingests lead tackle. Once a painted lead jighead or other painted lead bait is ingested by loons, the high acidity of their digestive tract coupled with the powerful grinding capabilities of their gizzard wears any paint off almost immediately; in a matter of fact, even metal hooks dissolve very quickly. The presumption that paint-coated lead jig heads are somehow safe for loons and other aquatic wildlife is not only inaccurate -- it's deadly and birds are continuing to die, again and again... The good news is that lead poisoning from fishing tackle is preventable. Biologists advise that loons are being killed by lead fishing tackle being used today; therefore, by reducing the accumulation of lead tackle in the environment, loons will reap an immediate benefit. This is something we can start today! We can surely do better. Lead-free fishing tackle options are available to anglers. I use lead-free baits to fish for numerous species with excellent results. They perform very well, and while some, like tungsten, cost more than lead, they are safer for wildlife and the environment. Maine is a breathtaking state, blessed with natural biodiversity and incredible natural resources. And aren't these things PRICELESS?

In closing, I respectfully urge that legislation be enacted to restrict the sale and use of painted lead jigheads in the state of Maine. Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony in SUPPORT of LD 958, expanding protection to Maine's wildlife

by prohibiting the sale and use of certain painted lead fishing jigs.

Sincerely,

Margie Manthey