



Each Scout that collects 8oz of lead will earn this patch.

Each Unit will get a tracking sheet to use to track their collections through 5/31/2025. The top Pack and Troop that collect the most will receive a plaque from the Loon Preservation Committee.

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How does lead impact loons?

Lead is a poisonous metal that, if swallowed, harms most living things (including people and wildlife). Lead poisoning affects nearly every organ in the body, especially the brain. Loons are fish-eating birds, and because of that, they sometimes swallow tackle accidentally. Lead poisoning resulting from the ingestion of lead fishing tackle is the number one cause of known adult loon mortality in New Hampshire. 38% of the documented adult loons that have died in New Hampshire from 1989–2023 died from lead poisoning caused by swallowing fishing tackle.

Which types of tackle do we want to collect?

Because of its impacts on loons (and other fish-eating wildlife), certain lead tackle is illegal to sell and to use in freshwater in New Hampshire. Illegal lead tackle includes lead sinkers and lead-headed jigs that individually weigh one ounce or less. A lead sinker is a weight made of lead that is attached to a fishing line that is used to make the line sink under water. A lead-headed jig is hook with lead molded onto it to add weight. Sinkers and jigs come in many shapes and sizes—the images below show examples of both. In New Hampshire, lead sinkers and lead-headed jigs that weigh 1 oz. or less are illegal to use in freshwater, regardless of whether or not they are painted. We are asking NH scouts to:

- 1) Help us educate anglers in their communities about New Hampshire's lead law and the impact that lead tackle has on loons and other wildlife.
- 2) **Collect lead sinkers and lead-headed jigs that individually weigh 1 oz or less from anglers in their community so that this tackle will not be used in our lakes and ponds. Scouts that collect 8 oz (1/2 pound) of lead tackle will earn the LoonSafe patch.**



Lead sinkers come in many shapes and sizes. They are small weights that are used to sink fishing lines. Lead sinkers weighing 1 oz. or less are illegal to sell & to use in freshwater in NH.

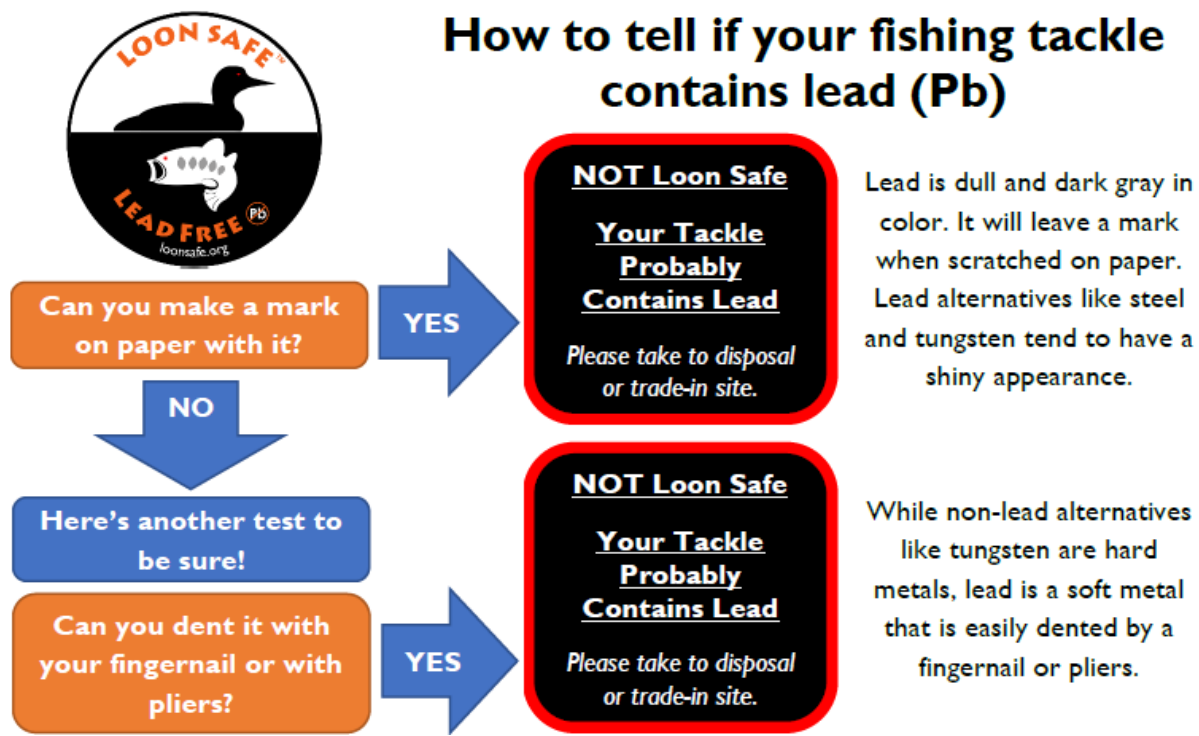


Lead-headed jigs can also come in many shapes and sizes, but they always consist of a hook with lead molded to it. This photo shows examples of what a lead-headed jig may look like.

Is it lead?

It can be difficult to tell if tackle is made of lead if you no longer have the packaging. The charts below can help you figure out if tackle you are looking at is made out of lead. If tackle leaves behind a gray

mark when you rub it on paper, it is likely made of lead. Lead is softer than many other metals, so if you are able to dent your tackle with a pair of pliers, it is likely lead. Finally, you can sometimes tell if your tackle is made of lead by when and where it was purchased. Tackle purchased outside of New Hampshire is more likely to be made of lead, as New Hampshire has the strictest lead tackle laws in the nation. Sinkers purchased in New Hampshire prior to 2000 are likely to be lead, and jigs purchased in New Hampshire prior to 2016 are likely to be lead.



Lead Safety

In addition to being deadly to loons, lead is also toxic to people. We want to make sure that scouts keep themselves safe while pursuing this merit badge. Please follow these guidelines:

- 1) Whenever possible, have an adult handle the lead tackle.
- 2) Wear gloves whenever handling lead tackle.
- 3) Do not handle lead tackle in areas where you eat or drink.
- 4) Always wash your hands after handling lead tackle. Do not touch your face or eat until you have washed your hands.
- 5) If lead tackle looks dusty or powdery, wear a mask when handling it in order to avoid inhaling lead dust.
- 6) Keep lead tackle away from infants, toddlers, and pets.