



The Raptor Resource Project

11860 Saint Croix Trail
North Branch, MN 55056
Phone (612) 237-5793
amy@raptorresource.org | www.raptorresource.org

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Commissioner Sarah Strommen
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Raptor Resource Project (RRP) is a non-profit 501c3 incorporated in the State of Minnesota. Our mission is to conserve raptor populations, expand participation in raptor conservation, and foster the next generation of conservationists. We are writing this letter to support the petition for the adoption of rules prohibiting lead fishing tackle and lead ammunition submitted by the Friends of Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas on September 3, 2019. Lead is a toxic metal with no safe exposure levels for humans or wildlife, and effective, reasonably-priced non-toxic alternatives are readily available for purchase at stores and online.

RRP is concerned about the effects of lead on Minnesota birds, especially birds of prey. 90% of bald eagles received at the Raptor Center each year have elevated lead residues in their blood. 20–25% percent of these eagles have sufficiently high levels to cause clinical lead poisoning and most of them die or are euthanized. Data on the location of origin and seasonal timing of lead poisoning events in eagles clearly indicate that spent lead ammunition from both shotguns and rifles is the source of lead exposure. Nor are bald eagles the only Minnesota birds at risk of lead poisoning. A study conducted by the MPCA concluded that lead poisoning accounted for 11% of dead adult Common Loons with known causes of death. Lead poisoning has also been reported in Trumpeter Swans, Canada Geese, many other species of waterfowl, sixteen species of upland game birds, and 29 species of raptors. Requiring non-toxic ammo and fishing tackle will prevent lead-related deaths, result in safer meat for people, keep lead out of the environment, and help maintain the health of Minnesota's birds, fish, game, and waters.

Thank you for taking steps to protect Minnesota wildlife and wildlands.

John Howe | Director, Raptor Resource Project | www.raptorresource.org

- Tranel, Molly A.. “Impacts of Lead Ammunition on Wildlife, the Environment, and Human Health—a Literature Review and Implications for Minnesota.” (2009).
- Lead Poisoning, Raptor Center: <https://www.raptor.umn.edu/our-research/lead-poisoning>
- Copper Opportunities:
https://raptorlab.umn.edu/assets/documents/researcher/11_CopperOpportunities.pdf

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