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Conservation Notes

Current topics and issues affecting hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation in our North Dakota.

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Lead Free Wildlife

Hunters and anglers are the primary funders of wildlife conservation through license fees and excise taxes on equipment like fishing tackle, guns, and ammunition. What we have learned in the past few decades, though, is that lead in ammunition and tackle from hunters and anglers is killing non-target species like eagles and other scavenging birds, and waterbirds like swans, pelicans, and common loons ingesting lost sinkers and jigs.

For many years, the only options for hunters and anglers were ammunition and tackle that contained lead, the result is untold tons of lead spread across our landscapes and waterways. In 1991, a ban on using lead shot for hunting waterfowl brought about the rapid development of steel and other non-toxic shot choices. As a result, there are now highly effective alternatives to lead shot, bullets, and fishing gear, including steel and bismuth shot, copper bullets, and tungsten and tin fishing weights.

Lead is toxic to wildlife and people. Over the past several decades we have wisely taken steps to get lead out of our gasoline, paint, water pipes and other sources that are dangerous to people. Hunters and anglers have always been leaders in supporting conservation issues. Now it is time for North Dakota to work with conservation groups to take the lead in encouraging sportsman to replace lead in the hunting and fishing sports with effective non-lead alternatives to save wildlife from needless poisoning.

For more information on this message or other conservation topics, contact: John Bradley, Executive Director, North Dakota Wildlife Federation, (jbradley.ndwf@gmail.com), Mike McEnroe, Past President, North Dakota Wildlife Federation, (memcenroe@midco.net) or Rick Nelson, Past President, North Dakota Chapter, The Wildlife Society, (bluebill@bis.midco.net). For a complete list of Conservation Notes visit (www.ndctws.wordpress.com)-articles.