

Bald Eagles and Lead: A Deadly Mix

Bald Eagles have made an amazing recovery in NJ since the 1980s. Today the eagle population still faces challenges and one of those is lead poisoning. Lead in the environment is dangerous to eagles as well as humans, and is often deadly. Unintentional poisoning of eagles can occur when they scavenge gut piles from deer or other game species shot with lead ammunition. It takes just a tiny fragment of lead to sicken and kill an eagle.

Each year avian rehabilitators receive eagles that are diagnosed with lead poisoning and most will die. There is no good treatment for lead poisoning. The lead that causes toxicity in eagles is the result of ingestion, and most lead is acquired from hunter-shot carcasses and gut piles left in the field. Unretrieved and unfound game carcasses are part of that problem. Bald eagles and other scavengers eat these carcasses and ingest the lead ammunition fragments in the carcass tissue.



Eagle with lead poisoning at Tri-State Bird Rescue
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Hunters Can Help!

- Switch to non-lead alternatives for ammunition. You will be protecting eagles *and* your family from unintended lead exposure.

For great information on hunting without lead, see these sites:

<http://www.huntingwithnonlead.org/>

https://www.raptor.umn.edu/sites/raptor.umn.edu/files/copper_brochure.pdf

- Properly recover and dispose of the carcass or gut pile so that it cannot be eaten by scavengers. Bury the gut pile and carcass remains, or wrap and dispose of in trash.

**Help prevent the tragedy of lead poisoning in
New Jersey's Bald Eagles and birds of prey.**



R. Lubischer

