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### In the NEWS

## The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Reacts to Petition Filed with EPA Concerning Fish and Wildlife Health and Lead Ammunition and Fishing Tackle

John Frampton, president of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) issued the following statement in reaction to the August 3, 2010 petition filed with the Environmental Protection Agency requesting a national ban on lead ammunition and fishing tackle.

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"State fish and wildlife agencies have legal, principal authority for conserving fish and wildlife on public and private lands and waters within their borders, which also includes regulating the means and methods of hunting and fishing.

For nearly 50 years, state fish and wildlife agencies and AFWA have been engaged in lead and fish and wildlife health issues, having provided critical leadership in the 1970s and 1980s in support of non-toxic shot for waterfowl hunting. The Association also maintains an active Lead and Fish and Wildlife Health Working Group composed of nationally recognized fish and wildlife conservation experts and scientists.

State fish and wildlife agencies have been and will continue to be alert and responsive to managing the use of lead ammunition and fishing tackle where circumstances of exposure threaten the health of fish and wildlife populations. Where specific wildlife health risks have been documented, state agencies have been proactive in enacting regulations and taking steps to reduce impacts of lead to fish and wildlife.

In the southwest where lead toxicosis has been documented as a likely source of mortality for endangered California condors, California enacted regulations that restrict use of lead ammunition in the condor range of that state, and Arizona developed voluntary programs to provide non-toxic bullets to big game hunters and implemented other measures to reduce the potential exposure of condors to lead fragments. In 2009, approximately 85% of the hunters in the condor region took voluntary lead reduction actions to prevent scavenging by condors.

In the northeast, five states enacted restrictions on the use of lead fishing tackle when studies identified lead toxicosis as a contributing factor to declining loon populations.

To date, 26 states have enacted state regulations that restrict use of lead ammunition that exceed federal regulations for waterfowl hunting based on specific wildlife health risks that fish and wildlife agencies identified in those states.

State fish and wildlife agencies will continue to manage the use of lead ammunition and fishing tackle based on the best science available and to work with public health officials; the ammunition and fishing tackle industries and trade organizations; and sportsmen and women to ensure that impacts of lead ammunition and tackle to the health of fish and wildlife populations are addressed appropriately."

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The **Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies** ([www.fishwildlife.org](http://www.fishwildlife.org)) is the organization that represents North America's fish and wildlife agencies, promotes science-based management and conservation and speaks with a collective voice on important fish and wildlife issues.