

WHY BLANKET LEAD AMMUNITION BANS ARE NOT GOOD POLICY

State and federal governments are being pressured to implement bans on use of lead ammunition in hunting. Safari Club International opposes blanket prohibitions on lead ammo. Bans provide limited benefits, while reducing hunter participation and conservation funding.

- **NO ALTERNATIVE AMMO.** Non-lead ammunition is often hard to find, and many firearms have no viable non-lead alternative ammo available, including .22 long rifles (often used in small game hunting), air guns, muzzleloaders, older models, and rare calibers. **Many hunters will be forced to purchase not only new ammunition, but new firearms.**
- **LOSS OF HUNTER ACCESS.** Alternative ammunition is also not available in the quantities needed to support hunters. Nor will it become available. Manufacturers cannot easily switch from lead to copper, as the manufacturing processes and market forces are entirely different. **Non-lead ammo is already significantly more expensive and more difficult to find, especially for rural hunters. Greater expense and less availability will force some hunters to stop hunting.**
- **LOWER RECRUITMENT.** New, novice, and youth hunters are disproportionately impacted by lead ammo restrictions. These hunters often start with small game, smaller calibers, and lighter guns, for which fewer non-lead alternatives exist.
- **CONSERVATION FUNDING CUTS.** Fewer hunters means **diminished dollars from reduced license sales and matching funds from federal excise taxes on hunting equipment and ammunition.** These Wildlife Restoration Fund dollars are the primary source of state conservation budgets.
- **WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT IMPACT.** Hunting is the primary management tool for abundant species like deer and black bear. Less hunting results in less effective wildlife management.
- **LIMITED SPECIES AT RISK.** Lead ingestion does not impact species uniformly. While research indicates potential negative effects from lead ingestion on scavenging bird population growth, it does not reflect negative impacts on mammal species, even scavenging mammals.
- **NO POPULATION DECLINES.** Research on eagles and waterfowl has produced consistent results: lead ingestion can slow population growth rates but has not caused population declines. The California condor is the only wild species where research suggests negative population impacts due to lead ingestion, but current regulations already restrict use of lead ammo in condor range.
- **NO LINK FROM LEAD AMMO TO HUMAN HEALTH ISSUES.** The Center for Disease Control does not classify use of lead ammo in hunting as a health risk except to nursing mothers. Outside of nursing mothers, no studies link the normal use of lead ammo in hunting or the consumption of lead in game meat with illness in humans. Neither the FDA, EPA, or the American Academy of Pediatrics have warnings about eating game meat shot with lead.
- **AMMO IS NOT PAINT.** Lead is used commercially in several forms. The form in ammunition is not the same and is less easily absorbed into the bloodstream, then the form in paint or gasoline.
- **BLANKET LEAD AMMO BANS ARE NOT THE ANSWER.** An advisory council to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently **rejected a mandatory lead ban** on federal refuges, and prioritized voluntary, incentive-based programs to generate hunter buy-in and avoid the loss of hunter participation.
- **ALTERNATIVE POLICY CHOICES EXIST.** Hunter choice is key, because lead alternative ammo is not suited for every gun or hunting opportunity. Where lead ammo is permitted, regulators have other options to reduce potential ingestion by scavenging birds, such as requiring hunters carry out or bury gut piles, subsidizing non-lead ammo or bonded lead bullets, or more.